

What Will I Tell My Daughter? Women Who Immigrate With Their Spouse or Partner:

Issues, Challenges and Successes

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the past fifteen years, Manitoba's aggressive immigration strategy has brought thousands of newcomers to the province, many of whom relocated with spouses and families. The proposed study aims to explore the struggles and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba primarily for their partners' work opportunities, with the intention of informing education and settlement services for these women. The study adopts gender role theory as the main theoretical framework, exploring assumptions and the impact they might have on the relationships and decision making of couples who immigrate to Manitoba (Mincer, 1978). Data collection techniques include a semi-structured interview and email communication. The findings will illuminate the experiences and perspectives of immigrant women who relocate with their partner or spouse to Manitoba, and may inform the work of educators, policy makers, settlement services, and dual-career consultants who support this population.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for this thesis is based on my own personal experience as an immigrant woman who relocated for her spouse. Between the years 1999 and 2004, I moved from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Scotland, back to Winnipeg (while I waited for a work visa that would allow me to work in the United States), to a college town in New Hampshire, then a hamlet in Vermont and, finally, following the demise of my marriage, I returned to Winnipeg.

While my environment kept changing at this time, so too did the human landscape of Canada and Manitoba in particular. These changes were due to immigration which provides Canada with population and economic growth (Guruge & Collins, 2008). Approximately 228,000 newcomers arrive in Canada each year, with the majority of these new Canadians settling in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta (Carter, 2009). In an attempt to increase the number of skilled newcomers that immigrate to Canada and to promote immigration throughout the country the Provincial Nominee Program was created. The aim of this program is to recruit skilled newcomers that will meet the demands of the labour market and to settle in second tier cities such as Winnipeg and smaller urban and rural communities (Carter, 2009).

Of the total number of newcomers that settle in Canada each year, Provincial Nominees account for a small portion nationally, but their numbers are significant in Manitoba. Between the years of 1999-2008, over 38,000 provincial nominees immigrated to Manitoba, accounting for over 50 percent of all the provincial nominees who moved to Canada during this time period (Carter, 2009). Approximately 5,000 provincial nominees arrive in Manitoba each year,

and with their dependents the total rises to 7,000-8,000 (Winnipeg Free Press, 2012). Spurred on by the success of this program, in 2003, the Province of Manitoba established an immigration target of 10,000 newcomers per year. This goal was reached in 2006, and as a result the Government of Manitoba set a new benchmark, to double the annual immigration levels by 2016 (Winnipeg Free Press, 2011).

It should be noted though that newcomers do not settle in equal numbers throughout the province. In 2006, Manitoba had 1,148, 401 residents with the majority of residents residing in Winnipeg (Carter, 2009). The Metropolitan Area population of Winnipeg was 694,668 in 2006, which comprised sixty percent of the total population in the province. The majority of Manitobans continue to call Winnipeg home, and this is reinforced with the fact that since 2000, 77 percent of newcomers arrive in the city (Carter, 2009). Immigration however, is reaching virtually every corner of the province, and since 2000 approximately 16,000 newcomers have immigrated to over 100 communities in Manitoba. The majority of new immigrants move to the areas around: Winkler, Steinbach, Brandon, Morden and Thompson (Carter, 2009).

Despite welcoming over 16,000 Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) applicants and their families in 2011 and being lauded for doing a good job of selecting and settling applicants the future of the PNP program in Manitoba remains uncertain. In April 2012 the federal government announced that it would be withdrawing from the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement that it signed with the Province in 1996. This agreement made it possible for Manitoba to administer federally funded settlement services directly and to retain control over the Provincial Nominee Program. In an attempt to reduce the “duplication of immigration services across the country” and “offer consistent levels of services” the federal government

announced that it would be taking over settlement services in Manitoba in April 2013 (Owen, 2012, p. B1). The impact of the federal government taking over settlement services saw the roles that immigrant serving agencies provided being “dramatically altered” and a 16 percent drop in Manitoba’s immigration to 13,391 in 2012 compared to the previous year (Owen & Kusch, 2013, p. 1). How this will impact the PNP long-term is unknown. What is sure is that given the numbers of new arrivals previously, the social and educational supports required to meet the needs of immigrants in Manitoba will continue for years to come and how in particular the needs of spouses of principal applicants will be met remains to be seen.

Scotland

Born and raised in Winnipeg, my life changed significantly on February 4, 1999 when my spouse and I left Winnipeg and moved to Scotland. We had been married just over a month and my husband had been offered a fellowship at a prestigious university in Scotland.

Despite being a world renowned university and recruiting both nationally and internationally I soon realized that it did not appear to be a priority of the University to assist the spouses of the academics they hired. I spoke with other women who had relocated for their partner’s careers and it seemed that acclimating and locating employment was the responsibility of the trailing spouse. There were no supports in place for the spouse. If a woman was not able to secure a job in this rural area (there was a dearth of employment opportunities) commuting to a larger centre such as Dundee or Edinburgh might be necessary or a career change might need to be considered. Motherhood was also presented as an option that I might want to explore and appeared to be embraced by other female spouses who were

not able to find employment in surrounding area. It appeared to me that the University and the community had little comprehension or concern that:

Women may now forego or delay childbearing, have fewer children, or may themselves have labor-force interests. These developments suggest that women, as adjuncts to the labor-force, may no longer be merely victims, accessories, passive, facilitators, or reluctant/negative about the move. On the contrary, partnered women may have their own labor-force interests at the destination, which may lead them to be active migration decision-makers, embracing migration more positively. (Hiller & McCaig, 2007, p. 459)

During this period we moved three times and my spouse embraced his new job and the prestige and networking opportunities that it provided. I struggled to adjust in so many areas, including the population difference (Winnipeg had over 600,000 residents while the town I lived in had around 13,000), difficulty finding employment and the lack of a social network to name a few. My spouse, who had lived in the United Kingdom for two years while completing his first doctorate and then in the United States for his most recent Ph D, appeared to make the transition much more smoothly. He was also mindful that his position was temporary and was already considering our next move.

The brief periods of time I spent living in Germany and the Netherlands did not prepare me for the culture shock that I would experience following my immigration to Scotland. Prior to immigrating my comprehension of culture shock was limited but I would soon realize that:

Whether moving across the world or across the country, culture shock presents one of the most unique and complex transitions we can face in our lives. As well as relocating, sojourners are also faced with career, family, social and even language transitions. Culture shock is associated with stress, anxiety, confusion and feelings of being lost or out of place. It effects the way we think about ourselves and others, the way we interact and how we handle our emotions. (Morris, CareerIntelligence.com, 2013)

Almost immediately after immigrating my life became a maelstrom. My time in Scotland was punctuated with profound homesickness, frequent bouts of crying and screaming

matches with my spouse. We frequently debated the merits of trying to return to Canada. Desperately lonely and craving the familiar, I was convinced that moving back to Canada was the answer to our problems. My spouse did apply for jobs in Canada and his academic achievements, combined with his relatively young age, were questioned by some of the universities during his application process. He was short-listed for one position but was not the successful candidate. He felt that Canada had rejected him and he was eager to apply outside of the country. Without easy access to my support system back home, and feeling emotionally and socially isolated, I relied on my personal journal as a way to record my thoughts during this time of change. Excerpts from these journals provide me today with a data source that I will be analyzing and weaving throughout this thesis.

My spouse and I argued about the opportunities this move offered both of us and its effects. I struggled in my new milieu with creating a social network and support system, maintaining my friendships in Manitoba, spending so much on living costs and receiving such little pay. I raged at the university for having no interest in supporting the female spouses and at my husband for insisting that I should be happy to follow his career trajectory with no questions asked. I started to wonder (silently and out loud) why as young girls we are read fairy tales about women (or princesses) who leave the life they knew to ride off with their prince. For the first time I began questioning why society reinforces the expectation that a woman will shed her old life in exchange for putting on the skin of her partner and his life. I found that the words of McCollum (1990) resonated within me:

In our virilocal society, marriage has commonly occasioned a woman's move-almost always away from her natal home and quite often from her community as well. There is a skew in both losses and gains-whereas the man's identity will be perpetuated, the woman's will be unravelled; whereas the man's work will be furthered, the woman's will be transformed. And the interplay between the marriage and the move is likely to

reverberate in a woman's self esteem, imbuing work in the marketplace with unexpected meaning. (p. 177)

Would you like ketchup with that?

My first couple of days in Scotland were spent wandering around the town aimlessly while my spouse went to his ready-made work environment. I soon realized that the community had three main streets and due to the prestigious university and the famous golf course it was very expensive for us to live in. By the third day I discovered the employment office and like other trailing spouses I began my "job campaign in earnest" (Shahnasarian, 1991, p. 181). I visited the office every day that it was open. I was determined to obtain employment not only for my own sense of self-worth but because I was also feeling financial pressure to contribute to our household. I was very disappointed when I realized that the majority of jobs that were advertised were for the service industry and paid minimum wage. Eight days after arriving I wrote in my journal: "*It is kind of depressing to think that I went to school so long so I might be able to ask, 'Would you like ketchup with that?'*" (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 02/12/99).

It was not until years later that I would realize that my experience of looking for employment in Scotland and the United States had many parallels with immigrant women who might be searching for paid work in Canada. Lacking social networks I had no idea where else to look for employment other than the local employment centre or how to get my credentials recognized. Without Scottish recognition of my degrees my skills were "devalued or underutilized through de-skilling, a process whereby newly arrived immigrants who are educated and possess professional knowledge and skills have difficulty entering the...labour market" (Guruge & Collins, 2008, p. 181). Determined to not remain unemployed I felt pressure to apply for non-skilled jobs and recorded my thoughts in my journal: "*This whole*

searching for a job gets me so depressed. Can you believe I have actually applied to clean toilets at one of the university residences (and I even have to mail that application in)” (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 02/22/99).

By the third week I realized that I should try to secure an unpaid work opportunity. My motivation was similar to the women from sub-Saharan Africa that, following their relocation to Halifax, decided to volunteer “to compensate for their inability to find paid work or used this avenue as a means of acquiring Canadian work experience so that they would be more marketable when looking for paid employment” (Topen, as cited in Tastsoglou & Jaya, 2011, p. 165). I proceeded to walk around town looking for a volunteer opportunity. For such a small community, I was surprised by the number of charity stores that it supported. Eventually, I located Oxfam and they agreed to accept me as a volunteer. My job involved working the cash register, steaming clothing that was donated and keeping the storefront presentable. At that time I also joined a Scottish country dancing group (be warned, it is much more difficult than it looks). I mentioned to some of the participants that I was a teacher in Canada and they told me about a publication that advertised teaching positions in the United Kingdom. The next week they brought me a copy of the Teachers Educational Supplement. Every Friday for the next couple of months I would rush to purchase this paper and would quickly scour the pages for any posting that might match my qualifications.

After approximately two months of searching I secured my first paid job in Scotland. I was hired as a chambermaid in a local bed and breakfast. The position paid minimum wage and I was expected to change the sheets, clean the bathrooms, empty garbage cans, vacuum etc. in less than twenty minutes per room. My goal of cleaning toilets had become a reality. It is

possible that my experience in Scotland might be similar to immigrant women in Canada who are:

...more likely to be underemployed or unemployed than immigrant men. Occupational patterns shown segmentation in the occupations of Canadian-born women and immigrant women, with immigrant women being employed more often in manual occupations, and also in terms of earnings, with immigrant women earning less than their Canadian-born counterparts. (Tastsoglou & Preston, as cited in Jaya & Porter, 2011, p. 115)

When spouses of Manitoba Provincial Nominees were asked to reflect on their integration experience and offer advice for other immigrants considering relocating to the Province they suggested that newcomers:

...come with a job that guarantees their credentials will be recognized in Manitoba, bring well-documented education and training information from their home country, and, at least in the beginning, be willing to work in jobs below their qualifications or accept whatever job they could get including physical labour jobs. (Carter, 2009, p.103)

It should be noted that immigrant women are not only more educated than the average Canadian woman but they are also more likely to have education and training in fields that are traditionally male-dominated. Acknowledgment of their education and training continue to present a significant challenge and often result in lengthy disruptions that require retraining (Neumann, as cited in Tastsoglou & Jaya, 2011, p. 67-68).

Since my job was part-time I spent the rest of my day searching for full-time employment and researching how I could get my credentials recognized. This process involved forwarding my degrees from Canada, paying for and undergoing a physical and waiting. I was fortunate that Canada was a Commonwealth country and because our education system was similar several months later I was informed that my degrees had been recognized.

I would eventually have a different experience in the United States. Prior to moving, I discovered that if I wanted to teach in New Hampshire or Vermont I would either have to do a portfolio presentation in front of a panel or pay and rewrite several exams to prove my competency. Both of these requirements are considerably less stressful than the hurdles that many women face when they immigrate to Canada.

Salaff and Greve (2004) analyzed how dual-career couples from the People's Republic of China organized childcare for their children prior to and following their move to Canada. During their research they realized that:

...wives have trouble gaining professional acknowledgement abroad. They have to get Canadian professional certification which in several cases entails doing most of the education they have over again. They also bear much of the family responsibilities...Foreign-earned credentials are rarely recognized by Canadian organizations. (p.156)

Credential recognition and the challenge that it presents for newcomers in Manitoba was identified by spouses of Provincial Nominees as one of their most pressing concerns.

Spouses suggested that:

...the immigration representatives and the Province of Manitoba should be up front with newcomers that there is a very good likelihood that their credentials, training, and/or work experience will not be recognized. Often the participants felt they were misled about their job prospects in Canada. (Carter, 2009, p. 105)

Seeking Employment with the Council

When I immigrated to Scotland my visa was accepted because of my spouse and his employment. I was never asked about my education, work experience or how I might contribute to the Scottish economy. Never being given the opportunity to comment on my qualifications and my entry being based solely on my spouse and his qualifications left me with

the feeling that my skills were not as valued as his were. I would soon learn how other's perceptions of my visa status would impact my life.

I can clearly recall an incident when I was penalized because of my visa status and the assumptions that it created in people's minds. Approximately two months after arriving in Scotland I was hired to work for the Fife Council (the area where I lived in Scotland) in a home with five adults who had *profound needs*. This was a logical choice because during university I worked for several years with mentally challenged adults. I was informed by the person on the phone that I would have to wait six weeks for the job to begin. So I waited and waited. A month and half later I received a phone call informing me that if I didn't get a work permit by Monday "they would have to hire someone else" (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 04/15/99). Stunned, I called back and explained that I was entitled to work under my spouse's permit according to the British High Commission. I ended up speaking with one of the women who interviewed me and she asked me if I was still interested and suggested that if I was I should visit the home where the individuals lived. Fortunately a colleague of mine from the cancer charity where I was working (and honing my envelope stuffing skills) agreed to drive me. Upon arriving at the residence I was informed by a staff member that since they noticed that my spouse's permit "was until January 2000 they assumed that we would be leaving and that they will have to offer the position to someone else" (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 04/15/99). I was livid but what could I do? Based on their comment it was clear to me that they deduced that, of course, I would terminate my employment as soon as my spouse's fellowship was concluded. What else would a good wife do? They did not even entertain the idea that I might stay on in the position and that perhaps he might be the one looking for future employment in their country. I wonder if this might have gone differently had my visa not been tied to his and

I was admitted as an economic class immigrant? Would they have been more motivated to invest their time and energy in me? I also question whether the staff ever considered that perhaps I was the main or equal bread winner and my husband relied on me? There were several months when my teaching salary combined with my part-time job teaching drama on the weekends exceeded my spouse's income (much to his total chagrin). Throughout our stay in Scotland my spouse's income usually exceeded mine, but we also relied on my financial contributions to help keep us afloat. One might not imagine that this could be the situation if they based all of their assumptions on my visa status.

Even at this early point in my relocation experience, I realized several things as an immigrant woman who relocated for her spouse. The lack of support from the University and the complete apathy and absence of information regarding female immigrant spouses highlighted the fact that despite an “assumption that women merely follow immigrant men as their wives and daughters, much less is known about women's migratory process” (Delaet, Gestaldo et al., 2004, as cited by Guruge & Collins, 2008, p. 7). The cost of this absence of information has far reaching implications and it should be noted that “conceptualization of them as followers can and does play important roles in shaping immigration policies and regulations” (Guruge, 2007, as cited by Guruge & Collins, 2008, p.7) and such “policies and regulations, in turn, shape immigration flows, consequently, influence expectations of family roles in the settlement countries” (United Nations, 1993 as cited by Guruge & Collins, 2008, p. 7). My attempt to secure employment with the Fife Council demonstrated that the visa status that I was assigned by the Scottish Government created certain expectations in the minds of people regarding the role that I would play in my family and my potential employer at the Fife Council through their actions confirmed and reinforced these expectations for me.

Three months later I started my first full-time job, answering the phone, making photocopies and stuffing envelopes at a cancer charity. By June I was offered a part-time *supply* position for September. This involved teaching the equivalent of grades 6-11, with all the responsibilities of a regular teacher but with none of benefits. I was paid only for my contact hours but was responsible for lesson planning, progress reports, parent/teacher interviews and participating in extracurricular activities such as running the drama club and attending field trips with the English Department. I was expected to utilize three different marking systems for four different grades, with one of them ranking F as the highest grade and A as the lowest. I was given one of the worst teaching schedules and some of the most challenging classes. One of my administrators described it as *baptism by fire*.

While still in Scotland, my husband accepted a temporary job in the United States, while continuing his search for a tenure track position. It was at this point that I started to realize that due to his specialised field and *our* decision to put his career first our chances of ever returning to Canada were growing slimmer by the day and might dictate all our future moves. I was exhausted by the move to Scotland and did not have a work visa for the United States. I was later informed, when I went to visit my spouse in the United States, I had *alien* status and as a result, if it was discovered that I was working, studying or even volunteering, I could be thrown in jail. As a result, we agreed that I would stay in Winnipeg until my husband had secured a more permanent position and I had a work visa. Conscious of the fact that my time in Winnipeg was probably temporary, I thought that it would be prudent to only accept contract positions and thus began my foray into teaching English as an Additional Language to adults.

I returned to Winnipeg in December 2000 and by February 2001 my spouse was offered two positions; the first was in a large state school in Oregon and the second at an Ivy League college in New Hampshire in a smaller academic town. By this time I had a better understanding of academic job talks and knew that:

Although Affirmative Action guidelines prohibit asking questions about marital/partner status during the interview process, the eventual decision to take a job, especially if the position requires relocation, brings the partnership issue to the forefront for both candidate and the hiring unit. The challenge to address this issue is particularly great in geographical areas where the population is small and employment opportunities for partners may be especially restricted. (Wolf-Wendal, Twombly, Rice, 2000, p. 293)

We tried to discuss the options over the phone, but after my experience in Scotland with a small university town, difficulty finding employment, and feeling isolated, I was reluctant to repeat this experience and was pushing for the larger state school, because I believed that it might be easier for me to secure employment in a larger urban environment. My spouse was adamant that the Ivy League college was the better choice. Again we were at loggerheads. I insisted that I be given the opportunity to visit the town in New Hampshire before I made a decision.

My insistence that I visit the area before considering relocating was a common request. Due to the small size of this college town and the distance from the nearest large centre, spouses/partners frequently insisted on visiting the town before making a decision. Perhaps the College understood that the spouse and their perspective towards relocating might yield considerable strength. Brett and Reilly et al. (as cited in Challiol & Mignonac, 2005, p.48) elaborate:

The attitude of the spouse (or partner) is one of the few explanatory factors found to be constant, both in the direction and significance of the results, across different studies of relocation decision-making. Studies converge to show the partners own

willingness to be mobile has a definite influence on the employee him or herself, whether the mobility is within the same country or involves moving to another country.” (p. 48)

Less than three weeks later my spouse flew me down and we spent the weekend in New Hampshire. Anyone who has lived through academic job talks knows how intense they can be. For two days, every breakfast, lunch and dinner was scheduled with professors from the college, all of them perpetuating the idea that their school and community is the best, all the while assessing you as an individual and as a couple.

I remember meeting a female professor for lunch and telling her how I was concerned that it might be difficult for me to find employment due to the community being a small college town and in a rural area. She appeared to understand that:

Dual-career couples need to maximize not one but two careers. Employers in industry, government, and universities are finding that old hiring practices do not always succeed in this new marketplace and are crafting new ways to anchor top talent to their institutions. (Schiebinger, 2008, p. 9)

She pulled out a binder full of employment opportunities with local companies and promised me that she would personally aid me with my job search if I agreed to move to the town. Despite this confirmation I still believed that the position at the larger university offered a greater opportunity for both of us to find employment.

During our last prearranged lunch with another professor and his spouse my husband asked about areas where we might consider living. The professor *suggested* that we live in or quite close to the town, since the college preferred that staff live in the vicinity. As Rusconi and Heike (2008) explain: “Consequently, employers are less keen to hire and promote individuals who commute, and thus penalize individuals and especially women who have chosen such a private solution to the problem of reconciling a private/family life with mobility

career requirements” (p. 14). I immediately realized how this would present several challenges. Housing in or near the college was very expensive and buying a home nearby was out of the question. I also worried about my job prospects in the immediate vicinity. The more I contemplated the possibility the more difficulty I had.

My spouse and I fought vehemently regarding which offer we should accept. After meeting with numerous academics and their spouses I told my spouse that I did not want to live in the smaller community. It would likely be hard for me to get a job and I wanted to move to the larger city. At that point he raged at me, “Are you trying to ruin my life?” I was stunned by the intensity of his anger and could feel myself start to capitulate. Our return trip to Boston was full of tense discussions regarding the job offers and dominated our conversations for the next two days. I recorded this time in my journal:

We fought like hell this weekend and I am very unhappy (but not surprised) to say that David (pseudonym) has accepted the job at Winterland (pseudonym). I was really less than thrilled and tried everything but David refused to even consider Oregon as an option. I feel hurt (but not surprised) and warned him that this could be a serious blow to our marriage and lead to its demise. (R. Kopytko, 02/19/00)

Months later I found out that the female professor I met while in the town accepted another position in Buffalo, New York. She moved before I arrived. I never saw that binder again or received any employment assistance from the College. It became very clear to me that the College did not understand that:

For successful employee relocations, employers now need to provide some form of meaningful re-employment assistance for the employee’s partner or significant other. The partner may say, “What about my career? I make the same amount of money, and I like my job. I worked hard to get where I am. This isn’t fair.” (Leonard, Sommer, 1995, p. 41)

Several months after accepting the offer from New Hampshire I continued to agonize over *our* decision and wrote:

I wake up (still) with my heart pounding in my chest. The idea of moving to the States tears (sic) my heart out and makes me sick. I feel totally in limbo. I don't want to move but how can I keep my marriage together? I just do not want to start all over and see how the recreation process goes. (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 08/08/02)

I spoke about this situation with my spouse and each time I was dismissed. After approximately five months of sleep deprivation, I was referred by a friend to a very good therapist. I started taking sleep medications and anti-depressants to help me cope. Every week for the next six months I would meet with the therapist and I would agonize over the decision to move, if I had the right to resent or question the choice and worked towards finding a way to make peace with the move to New Hampshire and starting over again.

While waiting for an appropriate US work visa, my spouse and I agreed that since it was illegal for me to work, attend school or even volunteer in the United States without the appropriate government documents, I would work in Canada and we would maintain our union through phone calls, letters and flights back and forth. Our decision to remain married but work in two countries that were in close proximity to one another was not unique. When faced with difficulty finding employment for one spouse abroad, couples sometimes decide they will work in neighbouring countries while maintaining their union until a more suitable arrangement can be reached (Reynolds & Bennett, 1991).

My first job after returning to Winnipeg was teaching English as an Additional Language for the Military Family Resource Centre. I was hired to teach English to French speaking spouses of military personnel. All of my students had relocated recently to Winnipeg from Quebec. It was a small class, with only about five students, and all of them were women.

It soon became obvious to me that the consistent topic of conversation among the women was about their relocation to Winnipeg. They spoke passionately about their

employment struggles, separation from family and friends, and uncertainty regarding where they might move next. They frequently compared their life in Quebec to their time in Winnipeg and would comment on the different culture and the lack of recreational activities in their new locale. At least once a week, one of the women would cry as she spoke about the challenges of relocating and the class soon became less about grammar and vocabulary development and more of a support group. As these women talked I felt as if my heart was going to break. Due to my own relocation, I felt that I could relate to so many of the points they raised. It was difficult for me not to join them in their tears.

My teaching experience at the Military Family Resource Centre got me thinking. What was it like to immigrate or relocate to the city that I was born in? Was the phrase on our license plate true? Were we in fact *Friendly Manitoba*?

Several months later my spouse began his job at the college and the next two years were spent navigating the minefield of immigration requirements for the United States (US). We decided to apply for a temporary work visa for myself, while starting the application for a Green Card for the two of us. Every couple of months, we would receive notice from the US Government that we would have to report for finger prints, then photos of our ears (because, as I was told, the human ear is more difficult to replicate than the human face), at a specific site on a particular day. If we did not fulfil these obligations our applications would become null and void. Each step required several flights for me and time off from our jobs, as they were never done simultaneously. Guiding us through this process was an immigration lawyer that cost thousands of dollars.

New Hampshire and Vermont

Approximately two years later, following many trips and a humiliating required physical examination, in April 2003, I immigrated to New Hampshire with a work visa in hand. By this time, we were already in the process of applying for a Green Card. Initially, the move to New Hampshire felt euphoric compared to the same time period in Scotland. We had more money, two cars, and I knew what I had to do: find a place to volunteer, gain a local work reference, research job opportunities and make a concerted effort to become more gregarious in an attempt to establish a new social circle.

While preparing for a job interview I met a woman who had moved to the area from Massachusetts. We briefly spoke about some of the challenges of moving to this part of New England, when she recommended that I locate a copy of the book *The Trauma of Moving: Psychological Issues for Women*. She explained that the author, Audrey T. McCollum, had relocated to a town in New England when her husband was offered a position in the community. McCollum (1990), a psychotherapist, was interested to “explore in depth how the experience of moving shapes women’s lives, and how the psychology of women shapes their moves” (p. 17) and embarked on a two-year longitudinal analysis of forty-two women who had migrated to a small city in New England. Reading this book was a revelation. This was the first time I had ever heard about any research on this topic. I felt as if some of the women that she interviewed were telling my story. Despite being too painful to read (at that time) in its entirety, the book gave me hope. I was not alone; other women had similar stories and I was not crazy.

In December 2003 after purchasing our first home in rural Vermont I had heard about a group that was starting for women who had recently relocated to the area. The group was only for one month and would meet once a week. The women had relocated from throughout the country but I was the only woman who had immigrated to the United States. Some of the women had relocated for their own careers and others for their spouse.

What will I tell my daughter?

Each week we discussed a different aspect of moving and shared our thoughts with the group. It was during our third gathering that the facilitator said that she noticed that I was very quiet and asked me to share what I was thinking. My words were vitriolic. I said, "If I had a daughter what would I tell her? That you can go to school, get a career...that you can do anything...just to give it up and follow a man?" My question was met with a wall of silence and I remember watching tears roll down the face of the woman in front of me. I will never know if the woman was crying for me, for herself or for some other reason.

Three months later, I shared this incident while visiting friends in Winnipeg. One of my friends then asked me: "Are you really concerned about what you might tell your daughter, or are you more concerned about what you will tell yourself?" It was at that moment that some of the haze surrounding my life began to clear. And I feared what I saw.

At that time my spouse had three more years on his contract before he could apply for tenure, but still we continued to argue vehemently about where we might live next, how we might decide and if I had the right to make such a decision for us or even for me. His career had become a juggernaut and there was little interest in acknowledging or addressing this situation. I repeatedly told my spouse that our marriage was in jeopardy. Finally, exhausted and

desperate, I told him that I would like him to drive one of our cars back to Canada in the summer and that I was going to stay in Winnipeg for the summer. I was hoping that this time apart would be the catalyst for my husband to have an epiphany. I assume that he did come to a realization, but not the one I had imagined.

I Could Not/Would Not—I Want a Divorce

September 18, 2004 was a day that I am unlikely to ever forget. I suspect that I will always recall this day and the weeks leading up to it with absolute clarity. On that day I was standing in a farmhouse that was built in 1836, in Vermont, watching people that I had known less than a year, all gathered together eating, talking and laughing. They had assembled for a final supper in my house because the next day I was moving back to Winnipeg. It was surreal to watch that happy event, considering my husband had recently informed me he wanted a divorce because he *could not/would not let me decide where we might move next*. The life I had worked so hard to create, suddenly, after a brief conversation, was no more.

Back in Winnipeg

Following my searing divorce, I returned to Winnipeg, on September 19, 2004. Aware of the burgeoning immigrant population in Winnipeg and having previously worked in the field, I decided to return to teaching English as an Additional Language to adult immigrants. I thought this might be easier than trying to embark upon a new career at a time when getting out of bed was a major challenge.

Cognizant of the fact that for both myself and the women that I taught at the Military Family Resource Centre our decision to relocate was motivated by our spouse or partners employment, I began to question how common it was for women to relocate for their spouse. I

yearned to hear the stories that other women might share about their experiences relocating for their spouse. Was it true that as women's participation in the labor force increased, they might play a more prominent role in the family migration decision-making process (Bird & Bird, 1985, p. 755)? I wanted to explore what kind of role women might play in the family migration decision-making process and how they navigate the decision with their partner.

Between the years of 2004 to 2008, I felt as if I was continually trying to pull myself out of a vortex. My life during this time included getting a divorce in another country (and trying to understand the paper work that I continued to receive in Canada, with little support from my American lawyer), leaving my house, friends and the life that I had created in Vermont and New Hampshire, repatriating to a city (and a country) that I thought I would never live in again, shedding/losing many long-term friendships and creating new ones in Winnipeg.

I struggled to adapt to the change in my standard of living and rebuild my career. I soon found out that during the time I was in the United States there was a change in the requirements for me to be able to return to teaching EAL to adults and now I had to complete the Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL) program before I could be considered for a position in the school division that I previously taught in. If I had not moved, I would not have had to go back to school and could have saved myself several thousands of dollars. Employers in the mainstream public school divisions were also reluctant to hire me because they did not know me and my references were from outside Canada. I was not sure if my experience of incurring a significant difference in my standard of living and the employment barriers represented a common phenomenon experienced by women who relocated for their spouse or if I was in the minority. I wanted to investigate and unpack claims

such as: “Rather than a route to upward social mobility, family geographic mobility often has adverse effect upon women’s employment continuity and earnings” (Duncan & Cummings Perucci, 1976, p. 252). I hoped to find out whether this held true for other women. Did they experience a change in their employment status or a decline in their earnings? Or did geographic mobility provide opportunities for them to expand their social spheres and maintain or increase their employment earnings?

As I floated between contract jobs with different employers, I found that my perception of my students had changed and the types of questions that I wanted to ask them were not the same as when I started in the field in 2001. I would frequently look at the women in my class and wonder if their stories regarding immigrating were similar or different from mine. What were their experiences and was anyone asking them? Did anyone really care? Did they immigrate for their spouse? Did one partner have more influence or did they make the decision together? What was it like to immigrate to Winnipeg? I knew what it was like to immigrate to Scotland and to the United States but I had no experience of immigrating to Winnipeg.

Teaching EAL to adults provided me with a firsthand opportunity to witness Manitoba’s active recruitment of new immigrants and to play a part in their settlement process. By 2009, Manitoba welcomed over 13, 250 new immigrants and this number represented an increase of 20.4 percent over the previous year’s total. The result was that Manitoba received the highest number of new immigrants since 1946 (Manitoba Immigration Facts 2009 Statistical Report). During this same year, male newcomers would account for 51.1 percent and female immigrants for 48.9 percent of this growing population (Manitoba Immigration Facts, 2009).

Pilot Research

Intrinsically motivated by my own immigration experience and spurred on by statements such as, “There is reason to suspect that women play a far more complex role—especially in migration within advanced capitalist countries where women are more likely to have a more specialized role in the economy” (Hiller & McCaig, 2007, p.458), I entered the master’s program in second language education at the University of Manitoba to pursue my research interest. Through my graduate course work, I had the opportunity to do a preliminary study and conduct qualitative interviews with three women who had recently immigrated to Winnipeg. The recruitment of the participants was through purposeful sampling and each woman was interviewed once. Two of the women moved to Winnipeg in 2000, the first from the Ukraine and the second from Taiwan, while the third participant was the most recent arrival, having emigrated from Korea in 2008.

The interview questions addressed: 1) reasons why they initially moved to Canada; 2) whether they feel that the decision to relocate was a joint decision; and 3) the most significant challenges they faced in reference to family, career, relationships, government services and career recognition.

For the first question the women were asked to explain some of the reasons why they initially moved to Canada. Two of the women identified their partner/spouse as their first reason: “My boyfriend is here, so I came here. I learned English for awhile. I would like to stay in another country” (R. Kopytko, 2009, p. 1A) and “Because my husband is from Winnipeg and also we could not stay in Korea. My husband wanted to be a fireman, so he could not do it in Korea and it’s easier for us to move here, for both of our future I think (R. Kopytko, 2009, p.

1A). The third woman mentioned her and her husband as the first reason: “We know people from the Ukraine, immigrated to States, but it’s much harder to have education for us, for our kids. Problem for medical insurance there isn’t, that is why we decided to immigrate to Canada (Kopytko, 2009, p. 1B). As I listened to their answers I could not help but wonder how much truth there is to Shihadeh’s (1991) statement that “women are often socialized to place family first and personal goals second when it comes to critical household matters” (as cited in Cooke, 2003, p. 420). To what extent does this finding resonate with other women and what were the implications of their decision to immigrate?

For the second question, the women were asked if they felt that the decision to relocate was a joint decision. All three of the women indicated that they believed that they made a joint decision with their partner/spouse to immigrate. One woman said: “It was my decision to immigrate, but, like two three days...my husband was ready to go. We did not argue about immigration...we make decision, actually together” (R. Kopytko, 2009, p. 2B). Another participant commented that:

I think the decision is yeah, a joint decision, I think, because he has a job here and it is a secure job. So, so yeah, I even don’t need to work. I can depend on him. So, I think it’s quite a smart choice to come here, and if he, well if we both stayed in Taiwan, then, yeah he won’t have those kind of job. He’s married, also he has family here, like he has a daughter he needs to take care of. So, we think in a long run after she becomes university student, then we both could move to Taiwan, because he likes Taiwan also. (Kopytko, 2009, p. 3A)

As I reflect on these comments, I realize that I should have explored in more depth how these women decided with their partner to immigrate to Canada. In my coming research I will explore the following:

Did movers experience a sense of choice about moving? Did they exercise that choice or abdicate it to others? Did they make a choice responsive to their own wishes and needs or only to the needs and wishes of others? Did coupled women share the

decision to move with their partner? Did they seek involvement as a woman making decisions to safeguard or enhance their own well-being, or as wives helping a husband make the decision that would serve his goals? (McCollum, 1990, pp. 27-28)

The third question asked the women to reflect on the most significant challenges they faced in reference to family, career, relationships, government services and career recognition. The participants decided to comment on those areas that were most relevant for them. One woman explained: “The first one, family relationship, I think it is a big challenge. Second one is career, yeah. If I cannot find a job I can depend on my boyfriend, but of course I have to find something to do. I cannot do nothing everyday (R. Kopytko, 2009, p. 10A). This comment was followed by another participant who stated that “[e]verything was a challenge, everything, even now, but you know, that you leave all your family back home. And you can’t expect to have them here” (R. Kopytko, 2009, p. 16B).

The participant then proceeded to offer some suggestions that might ease the transition following immigrating to Manitoba:

To make it easier for us, speak the same, so it is not a big problem. I wish to know from the beginning where to go, to get information, how I get my education, what is possible and what is not and which way. I did many wrong steps. I lost at least two years. If I knew what to do earlier, I can stop after three years. Go back to school, what to do, but I wasn’t sure what to do and where to go. So, I lost two year, my husband lost much more. (R. Kopytko, 2009, p. 16B)

Several months after my preliminary study I began working as a Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Worker initially in Inkster and later in Seven Oaks. As of the most recent available Statistics Canada data (2006), the Inkster area was home to 8,935 individuals born outside of Canada. This figure represented 30.7 percent of Inkster’s total population, with the majority of newcomers coming from Philippines, India and Vietnam. I later transferred to Seven Oaks where 16,280 individuals were foreign-born in 2006, thus accounting for 29.8

percent of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2006). The majority of newcomers move to Seven Oaks from the Philippines, India and Poland. In this position I am responsible for providing information and referrals regarding settlement services to new immigrants and refugees regarding: employment, housing, credential recognition, EAL classes, post-secondary training etc. I meet them at my office or in their homes. I am also responsible for organizing special events and information sessions for my clients. Between the two areas, I have provided settlement support to over 200 newcomer families to date.

Soon after starting in Inkster in April 2009, I learned of a research study that was being done at the University of Winnipeg. This project, titled *An Evaluation of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program*, was multi-faceted and involved personal interviews with over one hundred principal applicants and fifty spouses of principal applicants of the nominee program. I was very interested in this study since it was the first time that I had heard of any research being done regarding the experiences of spouses who relocated to Manitoba. It should be noted though, that the spouses were not identified by gender.

I discovered that some of the findings echoed the comments made by my research participants. The research stated that spouses struggled with a range of adjustment problems such as adapting to the climate in Manitoba (25 percent), language problems (22 percent), cultural adjustment (17 percent) and missing their country, family and friends. Out of fifty spouses that were interviewed, twelve (or 24 percent) claimed to have experienced difficulties when they tried to access education or training in Manitoba and explained that “these difficulties were related mainly to poor language skills or financial costs” (Carter, 2009, p. 90). Language skills also had an impact when spouses (despite being highly educated) were seeking recognition for their credentials and found that “language skills play a key role in credential

recognition and successful integration, particularly labour force integration” (Carter, 2009, p. 89).

Despite acknowledgement that “[o]btaining acceptable employment soon after arriving has been identified as the most compelling reason why new immigrants stay in the community they initially intended to settle in,” many spouses face obstacles such as credential recognition that hinder their ability to secure employment that is equal to the position they held in their home country (House of Commons, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2003, as cited in Derwing & Krahn, 2008, p. 193). Even though forty spouses possessed trade certificates, college diplomas or university degrees, twenty-six out of twenty-seven spouses that attempted to get their credentials recognized “reported having problems” (Carter, 2009). As a result of these challenges, many spouses “were not working in their intended occupations” or “in their field of expertise” and “[m]ore than half were taking education or doing so to try to get a Canadian education that might get them closer to employment that meets their previous qualifications or skills level” (Carter, 2009, p. 90).

Carter confirmed that “many spouses hope to be working in other occupations within five years” (p. 86) and when he asked the spouses if they want to be working in the same job or type of employment they were currently in, thirty-four identified that their goal was to secure employment in an unrelated field. Newcomers were hoping that within five years, they would be able to leave behind their current low paying job, in sales/service and processing/manufacturing and secure a “better” job (Carter, 2009, p. 86). Perhaps the most telling feedback from the spouses was revealed when they were asked to rate their satisfaction with their community and the kind of job opportunities it provided for them. Carter discovered that:

Forty percent strongly disagreed with the statement “There are good opportunities here for me” and another twenty percent disagreed. Over fifty percent believed that it would be easier for them to find a job in some other community. (Carter, 2009, p. 99)

Such results led me to question how successfully these communities are meeting the employment needs of newcomer spouses. If they are not able to secure satisfactory employment soon after arriving, frequently struggle to have their previous credentials recognized and report that other communities might offer them more opportunities perhaps it was time to delve a little further and provide more opportunities to hear the voices of newcomer spouses.

Intrigued by the findings of Carter’s research and experiences of the participants that I interviewed for my pilot project, I was driven by several goals. Professionally, my role as a researcher is to uncover the struggles and successes that women face when they immigrate to our province. The importance of exploring the successes and challenges that immigrant women face who have relocated for their spouse to Manitoba is to provide insight regarding how adequately their needs are being considered and met by settlement services that are provided by the Province of Manitoba. Personally, I would focus on newcomer women “[b]ecause they tend more readily than men to open the portal of their subjective experience, because I am among them and hoped their stories might illuminate my own” (McCollum, 1990, p. 17).

Current Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the struggles and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba primarily for their partner’s work opportunities, with the intention of informing education and settlement services for these women. The research questions are: 1) What are the main considerations affecting women’s decisions to

move? 2) What were their successes and challenges during and after relocating? 3) What types of services might relocating women benefit from?

This study will shed light on the experiences and perspectives of immigrant women who identify relocating for their spouse as the main reason for their move to Manitoba. It also provides an opportunity for educators, policy makers, settlement services and dual-career consultants to gauge how effective their programs and the decisions regarding newcomer support are and if they are meeting their target audience.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The face of Canada is taking on a new complexion and women are partly responsible for this change. Foreign-born women comprise over 50 percent of the newcomers that immigrate to Canada today. Currently, almost one out of five women in Canada was born outside of the country and their numbers are rapidly exceeding the growth rate of the native-born female population. Between the years of 1996-2001, the number of foreign-born females grew by almost 10 percent, while the Canadian-born female population grew by less than 3 percent per year in the same time period. This growth pattern has resulted in the largest number of foreign-born women in Canada in more than 50 years (Women in Canada, 2006).

It is important to note that between 1994 and 2003, 72 percent of the female immigrants who moved to Canada came as “either family class immigrants or spouses or dependents of economic class applicants, whereas this was the case for just over 50 percent of their male counterparts” (Women in Canada, 2006, p. 214). These statistics and the categories assigned to the women are worth noting because:

Under the present immigration laws, professional women who migrate with their spouse are often admitted as family class immigrants, even when both women and their husbands hold equal qualifications. The implication is that they are dependent on their spouses, rather than being counted as economic class immigrants. In reality, professional women may be the sole or higher income earners for their family during resettlement. However, under the present legislation, their classification as family class immigrants fails to acknowledge their potential for economic contributions. (Guruge & Collins, 2008, p. 4)

What are the implications of these immigration laws on how others view these women once they have moved both personally and professionally? Do such laws influence the way that women view themselves when they immigrate with their spouse?

What is the rationale for exploring the experiences of immigrant women? The reasons for exploring the experiences of immigrant women extend beyond family roles to include a variety of other areas. Kanaiaupuni (2000) explains further:

...as policy concerns in receiving societies about immigrant politics, housing, access to health care, education, and other social services parallel the more traditional complaints about job displacement and wage deflation, and as more women come to join the global migrant market as economic agents, studies that neglect that migration of women are left severely incapacitated. They only tell half the story. (2000, p. 1336)

Research in the Field

Before it is possible to explore the other half of story, the research that has been done so far regarding family migration warrants analysis as do the perspectives that have been used regarding human migration. Human capital theory, also known as the neo-classical market theory assumes that individuals or employees make decisions regarding their careers that are based on their investment in human capital (van der Velde, Bosink, Jansen, 2005, p. 83). This perspective is based on the assumption that all people have invested in and possess their own *capital* such as education and training and the general consensus is:

...that the more individuals invest in their human capital, the more sacrifices they will be willing to make, and thus the more they will be willing to accept an international assignment of their own, but the less willing they will be to follow a partner abroad because this will entail a break in their own career in which they invested time and energy. (van der Velde, Bosink, Jansen, 2005, p.83)

The costs incurred due to a move are viewed as an investment that will occur only if the relocation is expected to pay off in the future, similar to investing in one's education or the

physical capital of equipment (Markham & Pleck, 1986, p. 123). This theory is likely the most prevalent and influential micro-level approach to human migration (Swain & Garasky, 2007, p. 153). According to this theory, women are less likely to move because “widely accepted and enforced norms assign women primary responsibility for child care and the obligation to relocate to follow a spouse’s career” (Markham & Pleck, 1986, p. 123). It is worth noting that “[m]ost family migration research recognizes the narrowness of the economic perspective in that it does not consider how gender roles enter into family migration decisionmaking” (Cooke, 2001, p. 420). The connection between gender roles and migration decisions will be explored in further detail following an overview of Mincer’s work regarding the role of the family in migration decisions.

Mincer’s work in the 1970s was the seminal work that started to look at the role of the family in migration recognizing that previous economic studies of migration failed to clarify between personal and family decisions. Mincer decided to focus solely on the family context and, in *Family Migration Decisions* (1978), he explored the relevance between family ties and migration decisions and examined their effects on the probability of migration. He explored the resulting changes that family members might experience in regard to employment and earnings, whilst taking a look at the impact on the integrity of the family itself (Mincer, 1978). Through his research Mincer established a theoretical framework for family migration grounded in the foundation that an individual or a spouse “forfeits a personal gain because he or she derives greater utility from enhancing family well-being than from personal well-being” (Bielby & Bielby, 1992, p. 124). Mincer defined those spouses whose moves are “tied to family circumstances that are counter to his/her private calculus” as tied-movers, while spouses who would have benefited from a move but do not capitalize on the opportunity because the

losses incurred by their partner would have exceeded their gain are called tied-stayers because “capitalizing upon his/her personal gain would have made the family worse off” (Swain & Garasky, p. 153).

Through his research Mincer reached several conclusions. Family ties can act as both a grounding force for a family to refuse relocation but they can also motivate families to move. Dual-career families are less likely to accept an offer to move than single earning families (p. 770). Mincer stated that “[t]he deterrent effects are stronger when the wife’s attachment is more permanent and, in general, when her permanent earning power is higher” (p. 771).

As a result of his work Mincer deduced that:

Migration tends to reduce the unemployment of men and to increase the unemployment of women, since women tend to be tied movers...Migrating wives experience increases in unemployment, reductions in employment, and labor force withdrawals at destination, and these effects increase with distance. Tied migration results in postponement of job search until after the move, changes in intrafamily [sp] income, and substitution variables due to market gains of husbands and market losses of wives, and at least temporary increases in family demand for household activities. Not only tied movers but also family stayers [sp] experience adverse effects in the labor market. The restriction of job mobility to short distances reduces the scope of job search and opportunities for advancement and increases the probability of job mismatch, unemployment, and labor force withdrawal. (p. 771)

Mincer’s work spoke to me personally on many levels. Every location that my spouse and I considered moving to had to provide my husband with an opportunity to maintain his employment or better his employment and to increase his marketability in his field. Despite being part of a dual-career couple my job or ability to maintain employment was not considered, because his earning power exceeded mine and I (according to my former spouse) did not know what I wanted to do for my career. I was always a tied-mover. Also, when I

arrived in my new locales I was unemployed and had to begin the process of searching for employment again.

The restriction on job mobility also rang true to me. While in Scotland, our limited income, combined with the reduction in train services during Margaret Thatcher's political reign, made it difficult for me to look for employment outside the immediate vicinity. Most people in the area drove everywhere, and we could not afford a car. If it were not for my colleague at school who had offered me a ride my daily commute to work would have taken around two hours by bus. In both Scotland and New Hampshire my spouse had to walk ten minutes to his office.

While in New Hampshire and Vermont, I also faced significant limitations career wise, as we were not near a major centre resulting in reduced employment opportunities for myself. If we had not been able to purchase a second car for me in New Hampshire that allowed me to access nearby communities I am not sure what type of job I could have secured.

In regards to dual-career families, Mincer stated that women would be the most likely to experience unemployment and that the:

Adverse effect on wage growth can occur even without discontinuity of employment, since the mere interruption of job tenure reduces incentives of workers and employers for job-specific investments. Tied migration ranks next to child rearing as an important dampening influence in the life-cycle wage evolution of women. (p.771)

Mincer concluded his article by stating that “[b]y imposing private externalities on at least one of the spouse's, family decisions can be a challenge to family integrity. Indeed, when the externality (T) exceeds the gains from the marriage (M) for whatever reason, the greater its vulnerability to tied migration decisions. Moreover, the less stable the marriage, for whatever

reason, the greater its vulnerability to tied migration decisions” (p.772). Mincer’s work provided an important framework for future research but it does have its limitations. Marriage breakdown is not quantifiable. It is a complex phenomenon that encompasses a wide array of decision making. Are his conclusions about tied-movers and tied-stayers still accurate?

Mincer’s work also fails to shed light on how cognizant women are of the decisions that they make regarding relocating for their spouse and who makes the decisions. Why does the man’s career appear to come first? Does gender play a role in the decisions husbands and wives make and if it does how important is that role regarding decision making? Mincer does not comment on the social conventions that women are expected to adhere to and how these unwritten rules might present themselves in relocation decision making within couples.

Theoretical Framework

Gender Role Theory

To explore many of these questions I will focus on gender role theory as a lens that will inform my study. Gender role theory is based on the premise that the gender roles that men and women are socialized into influence the decisions that they make regarding family migration decision making (Cooke, 2001). In the partnership, it is the husband that will experience the impact of migrating on his earning potential and not his wife (Cooke, 2001). Markham and Pleck (1986) provide us with some reasons why a man’s career might take precedence through their statement that “unlike men, women are socialized and rewarded for subordinating career to family” and refer to Coser (1975) when explaining that “moving for occupational advancement is thus viewed as inappropriate for women and negatively sanctioned, since it implies freedom from social control and pursuit of personal advancement (p. 123).

Cooke (2001) cited several studies that supported the gender role perspective, with the first being done by Wallston et al (1978). In the early 1970s dual-career PhDs were surveyed and were asked to comment on hypothetical migration scenarios. Both partners stated their desire to locate a destination that would meet both of their career goals and were willing to become the *trailing spouse*. Several years later it was the wife who was “much more likely to be the trailing spouse” (Cooke, 2001, p. 421). Why were the women more likely to be the trailing spouse? Is there truth to Cooke’s summary of the gender role perspective that regardless of women’s income or occupational status they all “will be tied migrants” (Cooke, 2001, p. 420).

Rives and West (1993) collected data on families where the husband had lost his unionized job in 1989 due to a plant shutdown and through this work reached several conclusions regarding the role of women and the impact of their earning potential on migration decision making. If the husband was able to secure a buyout the family was not likely to relocate. If the husband was not able to obtain a buyout and the wife was employed this deterred the family from migrating. Cooke (2001) concluded that:

Thus, it appears as if economic rationality in family migration decision making occurs only on the margins: families will consider the wife’s career development in making migration decisions only if she has a very high-status job relative to her husband or if the husband is unemployed and the family has no other economic resources. But, even in these cases, less weight is given to the wife’s human capital characteristics than to the husband’s human capital characteristics when deciding to move. Otherwise, family migration is orientated towards improving the career prospects of the husband with little regard for the career prospects of the wife. (p.421)

Is it only traditional couples that experience the ripple effect of gender roles? Traditional families are those where the husband is deemed the “head” of the family (McCollum, 1990, p. 54). What about dual-career couples? Dual-career couples refers to any

two people who are in a relationship and committed to each other-they can be married or unmarried, heterosexual or homosexual and both are pursuing careers (Fleig-Palmer, 2003).

Bielby and Bielby (1992) explored the impact of gender roles by reflecting on the results from a 1977 Quality of Employment Survey to examine why wives in dual-career couples were less likely than husbands to relocate for better employment. They discovered that non-traditional wives were “more sensitive to their husbands’ earnings than nontraditional husbands were to their wives’ earnings” and, even when spouses had higher levels of earning, “nontraditional females were more likely to report a reluctance to relocate because of family consideration that were nontraditional males with comparable work and family situations” (Bielby & Bielby, 1985, p. 1258).

Similar results have been reported in research of dual-career couples. Aware of the increasing number of dual-career couples that are being hired by universities and the gap in research regarding such partnerships, Stanford University’s Clayman Institute for Gender Research conducted a study of dual-career couples in 2006. This extensive research project involved more than 9,000 full-time faculty members at thirteen universities. The report was divided into three sections with the second focusing on the career paths and priorities of academic couples. Three different types of couples were interviewed: those that had an academic partner, an employed non-academic partner and a partner who stayed at-home. When asked “in your relationship, whose career is considered primary?” academic couples most frequently stated that their careers were equal (Schiebinger, Henderson & Gilmartin, 2008, p. 35). Upon reflecting on the results from all the partnerships, the researchers discovered that “men privilege their careers over those of their partners at significantly higher rates than do women. Sixty-eight percent of all male survey respondents report that they consider their own

career more important than that of their partner. Less than one-third of women did so” (Schiebinger et al., 2008, p. 35). Upon closer inspection of academic rank, full or endowed female professors identified that their career and that of their partners were “equal” but it should be noted that this “trend of lending equal weight to both careers in the partnership increases as women move up the academic ladder. Men at all ranks, even the lowest, give priority to their careers significantly more than do women” (Schiebinger, 2008, p. 36).

Do gender roles play a factor in the relationships of couples that immigrate? Are there similarities or differences regarding the impact that gender roles have on traditional versus non-traditional couples and what are the ripple effects? Through their work, Bielby and Bielby (1992) concluded that:

Our findings support the notion that the gender-role ideology a wife and husband subscribe to defines the range of role options they consider and the resources and contingencies that are (and are not) taken into account when deciding role responsibilities. (p. 1260)

The findings reached by Bielby and Bielby were echoed in a recent study of dual-career couples in Germany. In an attempt to promote gender equality in academia centers for dual-career couples were established at many universities. In a research study of over 160 couples with at least one of the partners pursuing a career in academia, participants were asked to evaluate hypothetical job offers that included a one-year transitional position for their partner. Through this study it was concluded that:

...gender roles as well seem to influence the reported moving probability to a large degree when female partners care much more about the employment options of their partners than they do it the other way round. Female scientists, moreover evaluate child care provision as more important compared to male scientists anticipating their major responsibility for family work. Additionally, there is evidence that gender differences regarding the evaluations of moves are more pronounced in couples with traditional than non-traditional gender role attitudes. (Auspurg & Hinz, 2011, p. 15)

The comments made by Bielby et al. (1992) provided me with new insight regarding my own upbringing and the influence it had on the choices that I made in my life and in marriage. My father was the main breadwinner and my mother stayed at home to care for my sibling and myself. My mother did not return to work until we were in high school and usually worked part-time. My father was the head of the household, controlled the majority of the income and frequently made the final decision for the family unit. His decision was binding and rarely was open to negotiation. My sibling and I were encouraged to pursue a post-secondary education and I always knew that I wanted a degree that I could utilize in other countries, while traveling with my spouse. I never imagined a life where my career would dictate where we lived or that I would earn a higher income. I did envision a life where my spouse and I would have a more egalitarian partnership and the gender roles were less traditional than the household I had been raised in. I would soon realize that there was no correlation between what I had imagined my life would become and the reality I was living.

When I met my husband I knew that he had invested more in his human capital of education (for example, had spent more time in school, moved to England and the United States for his Ph Ds and lived away from his family and friends for years) and, as a result, would more readily make sacrifices that would justify his investment and the choices he made. His earning potential was higher than mine and his job prospects appeared to be more limited (we did speak several times about the idea of him seeking employment in private industry which might have offered more opportunities for employment; he dismissed this). Shortly after immigrating to Scotland, I became concerned that he was willing to sacrifice our marriage if it put in jeopardy his ability to achieve the academic success that he felt he deserved. We argued frequently about the move to the United Kingdom and how it was working for each of us. I

allowed his self-imposed career restrictions and his higher earning potential to dictate many of the choices we made (or failed to make) regarding where he would apply for jobs, possible locations we might move to and how I as his wife should conduct myself. On several occasions my spouse stated that several women in his family (mother, aunts, grandmothers) had moved for their husbands, appeared to have enjoyed the experience and he could not understand what I was complaining about.

Despite my concern and anger with the decision to accept the job in New Hampshire, I agreed to move again. While maintaining our long-distance marriage (that we both agreed to previously) we continued to debate the *opportunities* that this move might provide us with. In my journal entry I wrote:

I am still so upset about this Winterland (pseudonym) move that I can't/don't even think about it. David (pseudonym) and I keep fighting about it and I don't even think that he is getting it pretty much at all. He has sent me job listings from Winterland and I barely look at them. I can't even stomach thinking about moving there. I do not know what this will do to us. (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 01/23/01)

My spouse knew how I felt about the decision to accept the job in New Hampshire and how we made the choice. I was dreading searching for employment and living in another small academic town. He insisted on sending me copies of the local paper (despite my acknowledgement that I was not reading them). It was painful for me to even look at them; I was trying to deny the inevitable. When I tried to discuss the idea of myself looking for employment in a larger urban area, such as Boston, and commuting or renting a place in the city, he was not interested. During this time he started to tell me that “we have lived apart for almost as long as we have lived together and that he didn't get married to live by himself” (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 05/05/02). Through his comment it became quite clear that my

spouse was relinquishing on our previous agreement regarding our long-distance living arrangement and that he expected me, as his wife, to follow him.

In an attempt to make peace with the decision to move to New Hampshire and to prepare myself for the move, I continued to attend regular counselling in Winnipeg. One month before I immigrated to the United States my spouse came to visit and agreed to attend a session with me. During our counselling session together I spoke about my extreme frustration finding suitable employment in Scotland, the impact on my self-esteem, my concern about securing employment in another academic town and other issues with our marriage. At that time I was unaware of Reynolds and Bennett's research that identified the correlation between the trailing spouse and the impact that employment challenges would have on my self-esteem and our susceptibility to divorce (1991).

My husband acknowledged that with my upcoming move to the USA I might feel isolated and lonely. He stated that I would not have to work and that we would return to Winnipeg for our vacations. I then told him that "things would have to change and couldn't stay the same" and he replied that "his job is who he is, how he couldn't not do his job" (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 08/15/04). And so it was.

Choice and Decision Making

When women move for their spouse, what kind of choices or decisions do they make? Are the choices they are faced with today different or similar to those that have historically confronted women when they are considering relocating? McCollum (1990) explains that, "[i]n the past, the tradition of virilocality was strong in our culture and most others as well. Where man went, women went too, and that was a mandate widely embodied by law" (p. 27). Is the

heartbeat of virilocality pumping as hard today as it might have been in the past? Are women actively involved in the decision making process? Are they cognizant of the decision that they make or that they concur with? What type of ramifications might women experience as a result of their role in family migration? Do the choices that women make regarding relocating for their spouse impact their perception of the move?

Through individual interviews with 42 migrant women and group discussions with 100 other women in New England, McCollum (1990) identified several types of choices women might utilize when considering a move. Some of the woman made a long-distance choice. They were living elsewhere and agreed to the move without visiting beforehand. This was the type of choice I made when I agreed to move to Scotland. I did not do any research regarding employment opportunities for myself despite the fact that the move provided my spouse with an instant work structure and environment. In reality this idea did not even enter my mind. As mentioned previously, I was just so happy that I would be able to live with my spouse in the same country that I failed to plan beyond that fact.

Women might make a merged choice with their spouse. They might actively research the area beforehand by exploring employment opportunities, the economic environment and other elements before finalizing their decision with their partner. Hiller and McCaig (2007) reported that, “[i]n most cases, the actual migration decision went through an incubation period in which an idea was planted that required time to germinate. Many reported thinking about relocation seriously over a period of a year or more” and that “For partnered women especially, migration was very rarely a sudden impulsive decision” (p. 465).

McCollum (1990) identified a variety of reasons why women might choose not to participate in the decision to migrate. By avoiding the decision making process women might be able to “evade disturbing conflicts and avoid resolving them” and can potentially “transfer unwanted responsibility to another person’s shoulders” (p. 44-45). McCollum also noticed that the women who felt that they did not have the right to make a choice regarding relocating shared several similarities in their upbringing and life experiences. It was if the researcher was telling my life story. My family had only moved once in my life, so relocating was not an experience that was common to me. I was raised in a two-parent traditional family lead by my father and my mother rarely worked outside of the home while I was growing up. Both of my parents had very high expectations and I was reared “to please” (p. 47). My life experience was limited, as I went straight from post-secondary education to being a wife. McCollum concluded that the moves “fostered dependence and feelings of helplessness” amongst the women (p. 48). In hindsight, I could not agree more.

During her research McCollum (1990) noted that:

Among all the coupled women in my population, 60 % believed that they had exercised some choice or full choice in the decision to move .Yet, in many cases that choice was illusionary, based on conscious or unconscious disregard of the movers’ own needs and disregard of characteristics of Northland that would prove highly significant in terms of the movers’ well-being. For just this reason, satisfaction would not be expected to correlate closely with choice. (p. 251)

Adopting a subordinate role in a husband-centered migration might yield some unexpected consequences for women. In his research with married mothers who relocate for their spouse, Shidadeh (1991) explored the impact on their employment and concluded:

The most powerful determinant of employment returns among wives was not their economic and demographic background characteristics but whether or not they played a subsidiary role in the family migration. The odds of obtaining postmigration

employment were substantially decreased for those wives who deferred to their husbands in the reason to move. (p. 432)

The type of move women make might also influence their reaction to the relocation experience. A sponsored move is a move that might be requested or demanded by an employer. They might provide couples with some opportunity to choose the final location but because the employer is absorbing the cost of the relocation the “spouse is expected to acquiesce” (Hiller & McCaig, 2007, p. 459). My time in Scotland and working for the Canadian Military Family Resource Centre in Winnipeg provided me with many opportunities to meet women who had participated in a sponsored move. While I was in Scotland I worked with several women whose husbands were employed with the Royal Air Force (RAF). They told me how the RAF would come to your home, pack everything up, send it to the new location, and set up all your belongings in several hours in your new home. They spoke of the pressure placed on their husbands to accept the postings if they wanted to progress in their careers and the responsibilities they faced helping their family settle in the new location and look for employment for themselves. I heard similar stories while I was teaching French-speaking spouses for the Military Family Resource Centre in Winnipeg.

Women might engage in an independent move with their spouse. This type of move is not sponsored and as a result couples must absorb all the financial costs and risks associated with the move. Unlike sponsored moves, where employment or training is prearranged for one of the spouses, with an independent move neither spouse has a job waiting for them. As a result there is “a greater sense of equality in the evaluation of the move” and “...couple dynamics are more likely to come into play and women are more likely to have a voice” (Hiller & McCaig, 2007, p. 469).

From their research Hiller and McCaig (2007) deduced that:

The data demonstrated unequivocally that the overall assessment of the move for women who were partnered was much more likely to be positive if they were actively part of the decision-making process. Resignation and unhappiness was expressed in the strongest way when women felt that they did not have any choice in the migration. (p. 468)

Isolation and Social Interaction

Once the decision to move has been made what is it like for immigrant women who leave behind social networks in their home environment and must create new ones in their new milieu? How important are ties with family, friends and colleagues back home after the woman has moved to her new location? What are the benefits that women might reap from being faced with the opportunity/challenge of establishing social ties in their new environment?

As I reflect on these questions, I cannot help but recall a conversation that I had several years ago with a group of women that had recently immigrated to Manitoba. At that time, I was leading a conversation circle for recent female immigrants who had relocated with their family. The participants had diverse backgrounds. Prior to immigrating they had worked as pharmacists, teachers, studied law or medicine or were stay-at-home mothers. The women were students in a community based language class that provided free childcare for their children while they studied English. If childcare had not been provided all of the women would not have been able to attend the program. There were approximately eight women in the group and we would meet once a week to discuss a variety of topics related to their immigration experience. When I asked the women about the differences between life in their home country and Canada they did not hesitate to share their thoughts freely with the group.

One of the women was a social worker from South America who had worked for a non-governmental organization back home. During this time she had one child who was cared for by a nanny and her mother during the week while she worked in a nearby city and would return home on the weekends. She commented that since the birth of her second child and moving to Winnipeg, she no longer had access to family members or a social network that would assist her with childcare. Salaff and Greve (2004) explain: “Most social networks that offer tangible services such as childcare depend on location and proximity. These are difficult to mobilize across continents and when people migrate they leave this kind of social capital behind” (p. 151). As a result, her ability to seek employment and explore her immediate community was impeded. She longed for the supports she had in her home country and the freedom they provided her with.

Several other women from Africa and Asia joined in the discourse and explained that in their country of origin they would occasionally leave their children with extended family or neighbours while they worked, ran errands, and attended school. By immigrating to Winnipeg, many of them had relinquished access to such familial connections, losing not only the childcare but also the emotional support they provided. The women repeatedly stated how difficult it was to establish an authentic rapport with most of the people that they met in Winnipeg. They commented how the majority of conversations with locals were superficial and that some of their most authentic dialogues were occurring within this group.

The women’s comments echoed research that has been done regarding isolation and social interaction related to women who immigrate. Guruge and Collins (2008) stated that:

Social isolation is a significant reality for immigrant women. Many women who arrive in Canada come from societies where extended family is a critical part of their

support system. Despite comprising about 20 percent of the Canadian population, they are often without their extended family and community... Uprooting from familiar culture, family and community can leave a social vacuum in women's relationships that can have a negative impact on women's mental health. (p. 9)

Magdol's (2002) research further confirms the important role that social ties play in the lives of immigrant women: "I also found that women are more dependent on social ties with kin and other network members for their psychological well-being" (p. 559).

Through individual interviews and group discussions with migrating women McCollum (1990) deduced that "[a]mong the longings that newcomers expressed, none were more intense than the longing for friendship....Over time, those relationships underwent transformation, and the changes were experienced as grievous loss" (p. 124). I could not agree more with McCollum's findings. Approximately two months after my move to Scotland I wrote, "*I miss my friends and family so much I just feel this deep ache. I worry that when I go back to Canada I will almost die when we have to return*"; and several months later added, "*Moving here has tested my friendships in ways that I never wanted to test them and maybe the results are kind of not what I wanted to see*" (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 06/12/99).

During my time abroad, I had very limited internet access and none of my friends even owned a computer. The only way to maintain contact was through phone calls or writing letters. Calling long-distance was cost-prohibitive as we did not learn about a more economical phone plan until our second year abroad. The six hour time difference also proved to be problematic. Desperate to maintain my friendships one month I spent my entire earnings on the phone bill. I soon discovered that phone calls were not enough to maintain some of my longest friendships and this realization would prove to be agony for me.

Most of my friendships were long-term with some having lasted over twenty years. I first met the woman who would be my maid-of-honour in grade 1. Our friendship had survived moves around Winnipeg, numerous boyfriends and brief trips overseas. As soon as I announced that I was getting married and moving though, things started to change. Perhaps McCollum (1990) is correct when she said:

All who move away desert those who are left behind. Those who stay have to wrestle with sadness and anger and envy and fear for themselves, mingled with gladness and hope for the mover's good fortune. Those who leave must wrestle with regret and guilt about the pain they are inflicting on colleagues, customers, clients, and patients, as well as family and friends. (p. 84)

Determined to maintain the friendship I called my friend every weekend (with the time difference this was the only practical time to try to get in contact). Miserable in my own life, I was desperate to hear any new news from back home and to speak freely with people that I knew. I recorded my thoughts in my personal journal: "*Sally (pseudonym) has been really depressing me. I have not heard from her in about 5 weeks. This is getting me really down. I wish I knew what the hell was going on. I am so terrified about losing my friends this is one of my greatest fears about this moving around bullshit*" (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 03/30/00). Our conversations became less frequent and more superficial. It eventually became obvious to me that as soon as I announced my intention to move my friend started to pull away. For years, I mourned the loss of this friendship.

Another factor that I did not consider prior to the move was what it would be like to try to establish social networks in a new country and the important role they played in my life. I had moved to a small town where many of the locals shared a common history. I was (yet another) brief interloper in their lives who would likely vanish once my spouse's fellowship was finished. Like the women in my conversation circle, I struggled to permeate the superficial

levels of conversation with the locals. I craved authentic dialogue, but I failed to realize that it had taken years in Winnipeg to establish such bonds of trust and the expectation was that I would stay around to reciprocate support in moments of need. The locals knew very well that I would probably not be staying so I believe they were hesitant to invest their time and energy in me. Now, as I look back upon it, I do not blame them but at the time I craved nothing more than an authentic friendship. I wrote in my journal: *“I miss my friends and family so much. I wish I could just talk to someone”* (R. Kopytko, Personal Journal, 07/23/99).

Despite initially masquerading as hurdles many of the challenges might actually provide learning opportunities and moments of clarity for relocating women. McCollum (1990) commented:

For almost all of the movers, the work of making friends involved narcissistic risk-ruptures and wounds to their sense of self. It could also involve narcissistic gain—a clearer sense of self, clearer and more purposeful choices about how and where time and energy should be invested. (p. 159)

In an attempt to construct new social networks, gain employment and learn more about the community, I realized that I had to advocate for myself and try to become part of the community. I joined and participated in Scottish country dancing, American line dancing and a belly dance group (and performed at a medieval dinner). I attended aerobics faithfully, volunteered at Oxfam for several months and even initiated (the ill-fated) Foreigners Club. I recorded my thoughts in my journal entry: *“...good thing about being here is that I think I (am) braver. I will join everything and call anybody (it is amazing what desperation will do to you)”* (R. Kopytko, 05/23/99).

Immigrant Women with Children

Women that immigrate with children might face additional challenges. These challenges could be due to a variety of reasons such as their visa status, lack of social networks that provide assistance with childcare or lack of credential recognition. During her study of mothering across cultures, Yax-Fraser (2011) interviewed two groups of women who immigrated to Halifax. One group had partners from the same country and the second had married Canadian-born men. The majority of women were assigned the status of “dependent” either because they accompanied their spouse who had already secured employment or because they immigrated under the family class category. She stated that “the invisibility of women resulting from their immigration status impacts their lives in a myriad of ways and for many years after their arrival” (p. 313). As a result of their immigration status some of the mothers were unable to access settlement services, parenting information or even the same resources as their husbands, such as EAL classes that were not designed to meet the needs of parents with small children. It was common for these women to glean more information about services that existed through people they met, often delaying their ability to access such services.

Yax-Fraser (2011) concluded:

Becoming a stay-at-home mom was not always an option for some of these mothers but it was often the result of their immigrant category and legal status; inadequate knowledge of the English language and inadequate access to English language training; lack of accreditation of their foreign credentials; and their lack of Canadian work experience. (p. 314)

Salaff and Greve (2004) examined the barriers that Chinese immigrant women struggle with while attempting to re-establish their careers following their immigration to Canada. Their research demonstrated that “[w]hen the social arrangements in Canada do not match their

needs, women either leave the labor force or call on previous arrangements, turning to their multiplex arrangements... For many social capital is transnational”(Salaff & Greve, 2007, p. 160). Newcomer mothers might attempt to recreate the childcare supports they previously had in their home country by altering the location or proximity of either their support networks or their children. I knew a woman who had immigrated to Winnipeg approximately ten years ago from Eastern Europe. She had moved with her husband and their son (who was approximately 2 years of age at the time). Initially she was working full-time and was the main breadwinner while her husband worked part-time and went to school full-time while trying to get his credentials recognized from their home country. Acknowledging her family’s need for childcare, the cost of such care, and her limited social networks the woman applied for a short term visitors visa for her mother. This visa allowed her mother to stay with her family in Winnipeg for extended periods of time while providing childcare free of charge and offering familial support. During the family’s first years in Winnipeg the woman also sent her son back home for several months to stay with his grandparents. Without such options, the couple would not have been able to work extended hours and it would have been more difficult for the husband to prepare for the exams required for credential recognition and go back for further training. The visitors visa status also made it possible for the family to have two more children and provide the children with an opportunity to spend more time with their grandmother in Canada. The visitors visa should not be viewed as a panacea for all the challenges that immigrant mothers may face. For some women sending their children back home or bringing their mothers or mothers-in-law to Canada provided them with support that let them “reconstitute their careers. Others suffer considerable downward professional mobility.

Transnational social capital facilitates but does not guarantee a rejuvenated career” (Salaff & Greve, 2004, p. 160).

Language and Racism

When newcomers apply to immigrate to Canada they are assessed using a point system. They are evaluated and receive a score in a number of different categories with two of the areas being formal education and language proficiency. These two areas “have been determined as the two most important attributes for success in the Canadian economy by the federal government” (Topen, 2001, p. 158). One’s ability to be fluent in either of the nation’s official languages plays a prominent role in the point system and, as a result, a significant number of immigrants are fluent in English. However, “a considerable number of women do not speak fluently in either of Canada’s official languages” (Guruge & Collins, 2008, p. 5).

When spouses of Provincial Nominees were asked to give advice to friends or family members that might be considering immigrating to Manitoba under the nominee program with the goal of integrating successfully into Manitoba society, “[t]he most common advice was to learn English before coming here” (Carter, 2009, p. 103). When asked about adjustment challenges they might have experienced following their arrival to Manitoba, 22 percent identified language problems (p. 100). Spouses were provided several statements that correlated with successful integration and were asked to rate them on a scale with one being “not at all important” and five being “very important.” When participants were presented with the phrase “being able to speak English very well,” 100 percent of participants rated this as “very important” (p. 102). Carter’s (2009) findings conclude that:

.... language barriers are greater for spouses than for principal applicants. Close to half were working to upgrade their education and training skills, although with language barriers, and for some responsibilities in the home, taking further education and training was a struggle. (p. 106)

For spouses that are not able to speak English or French fluently or very well, integrating into Canadian society can become more problematic and might expose larger issues such as racism. Immigrant women that were asked to share their experiences on trying to access healthcare in Atlantic Canada identified that a lack of English language that required interpretation services could prove to be very challenging since interpreters were not available in primary healthcare settings. The women perceived the shortage of interpretation services as part of “systematic racism and racial discrimination... Both of these factors, poor English skills and lack of access to interpreters in hospitals and clinics discouraged immigrant women from non-English-speaking countries to visit hospitals and clinics” (Weerasinghe, as cited in *Immigrant Women in Atlantic Canada*, 2011, p. 250).

Spouses were also asked if they had experienced discrimination or racism since they arrived in Manitoba and nineteen (38 percent) indicated that they had (p. 101). Fifteen stated “that this racism or discrimination was in the workplace, at their place of employment, or when searching for a job, four indicated it was in everyday life situations in the public realm, two with housing” (Carter, 2009, p. 101).

There is a dearth of literature regarding female spouse’s experiences with language and racism following their immigration to Manitoba. My study will be providing further investigation into these areas with the goal of potentially informing these issues.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The nature of this study is to understand the issues, challenges and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba with their partner or spouse. The importance of exploring the challenges that women confront is twofold: 1) to provide insight regarding how adequately their needs are being considered and met by educators, policy makers, settlement services and dual-career consultants; 2) to unlock the “taken for granted worlds” that many of us who have never immigrated might live in and to raise our awareness of “the assumptions under which we operate” (Bogden & Knopp Biklen, 2007, p. 5). The proposed study will still adopt gender theory as the main theoretical framework, as it provides us with an opportunity to explore assumptions and the impact they might have on the relationships and decision making of couples who immigrate to Manitoba. Gender role theory is based on the premise that the roles that men and woman are socialized into impact the choices they make regarding family decision making, with the result that men will inherit the power and make the decisions and “women are socialized to place family first and personal goals second when it comes to critical household matters” (Shihadeh, 1991, as cited in Cooke, 2001, p. 420). With a desire to explore participant perspectives and an “interest in how different people make sense of their lives,” a qualitative approach will be employed (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007, p.7).

As with all research, choices must be made regarding the methodology one will utilize. The decision to implement a qualitative approach is grounded in McCollum’s (1990) seminal work with women who have relocated. McCollum explains: “The use of standardized

instruments such as rating scales or questionnaires may yield precise, factual, or manipulable data, yet depth and richness of insight are likely to be sacrificed. An investigation of the subjective experience of being a women undergoing a move explores self-definition” (p. 18).

Examination of the way that one defines their self:

Is a sensitive construct...dependent upon the woman’s ability to be introspective concerning the way she sees and assesses herself within the context of the social roles she holds and within her relationships.... (Peck, 1986, as cited in McCollum, 1990, p. 18)

Qualitative Inquiry

Since the proposed research is intended to gain a better understanding of the issues, challenges and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba for their spouse, I found that the overarching paradigm which I will draw on involves a qualitative inquiry. Employing a qualitative approach provides me with a way to explore certain assumptions or world views about knowledge and the nature of reality. This research approach also allows me to conduct an in-depth study of several cases with the goal of gaining “a deeper understanding of unique lived experiences” (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2002, p. 81). As the researcher I examined a social phenomenon; through key episodes or testimonies that would facilitate the use of “narratives to optimize the opportunity of the reader to gain an experiential understanding of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 40).

The research traditions utilized in qualitative studies can trace their origins to anthropology, psychology, and sociology (Polit & Tatano Beck, 2006). Creswell (2008) delineates common features that qualitative researchers share. Qualitative researchers are dependent on their participants to share their views of their experience, utilize broad, general questions, gather data that is often represented in words, identify themes within the data and

carry out their research in a “subjective, biased manner” (p.46). Data that is collected might be *emic* or *etic*. Emic data is information supplied by the insider (the actor) in the study. The information could be gathered through interviews, observations and other forms of data collection. Etic data represents the outsiders’ interpretation of the actors’ perspectives. In an attempt to provide the reader with an empathetic understanding the qualitative researcher might utilize *thick description* which would clarify not only the behaviour of participants but the context that it occurred in. The actors’ perspectives of their actions are of central interest and appropriate techniques such as interviews can be utilized.

Qualitative research explores a central phenomenon. There are a variety of ways that one might approach the phenomenon such as phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case study (Creswell, 2008). With the goal of challenging “generalizations based on other types of research,” I select a case study approach for this study (Polit & Tatano Beck, 2006).

Case Study

Case studies can be found in a significant portion of books and articles in education, political science, anthropology, sociology, biology, management, and medical science (Flyvbjerg, 2011, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The primary intent of this study is to document the experiences of immigrant women who have relocated for their spouse because their voices and perspectives have been underrepresented in the literature and to inform policy and programming. Case studies are in depth explorations either of individuals or small numbers of entities that focuses on “relationships among different phenomena or examine trends over time” (Polit & Tatano Beck, 2006, p. 242). Case studies may examine programs, events, or activities that the individuals might be involved in. Most definitions of case studies

involve a bounded system, individual nature of the case, significant data collection and the value of numerous sources of information. It is my belief that all of these accounts support my research agenda with the goal of this study.

My study involved five immigrant women or individuals. These women are part of a bounded system, since they all either immigrated with their partner or spouse or to join them in Canada. As in the case of an individual, the goal of the study is to explore the individual's life stories and their function in their authentic environment.

Multiple Case Study

A multiple case study was employed as analytic conclusions arising from two cases or experiments are “more powerful” than the results coming from a single case, and if the results show similar conclusions from two cases the research will have “immeasurably expanded the external generalizability” of the findings (Yin, 2003, p. 53). The choice of utilizing multiple case studies for this study is grounded in previous studies of migration. Ralston (1991) employed in-depth biographical case studies to explore the race, class, gender and work experiences of South Asian immigrant women in Atlantic Canada and George (2008) also utilized case studies to examine Mexican migration to Canada.

Sampling. In the researcher's positioning of this section the researcher worked in the field of immigrant education and settlement. I drew on this community to recruit participants. The participants will be chosen through purposeful sampling and will focus on recruiting five women who have been settled in Canada for different amounts of time and are from various racial and linguistic backgrounds. The women were from the Philippines, India, South America, Eastern Europe and Africa. In an attempt to better encapsulate the immigration

experience of newcomer women who relocate for their spouse to Manitoba participants resided in both urban and rural areas.

Data Collection Procedure. Since the focus of this study is to explore the issues, challenges and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba primarily for their partner's work opportunities, introspective and retrospective interviews were employed as the main data collection method. To obtain a greater understanding of each woman's lived experiences I utilized both structured questions and open ended questions.

In-person interview sessions took place once with each participant between November 2012 and June 2013. The interview lasted two hours and I met with each woman in her home. Before I met the participants I contacted them by phone, reviewed the purpose of the research, their involvement and confidentiality. Following their agreement to participate in the research, I sent each woman an information letter and a consent form.

Upon meeting the participants the information letter and consent letter were reviewed as well as confidentiality. Following their agreement to participate the consent letter was signed and each woman decided upon a pseudonym she wanted to use.

Each interview was audio-taped using two different recording devices and transcribed within days of the actual interview. As the researcher, I did all the interviews and transcription myself. It is possible that during the transcription period, natural filtering might have occurred and as result subtle nuances might have been lost. Each participant was then emailed a copy of their transcribed interview for member checking. In May 2013 the participants were contacted again by email to determine if they were available to share their insights regarding some further questions either through an individual interview or via email. Initially four of the

women responded and indicated that despite childcare issues, work schedules and travel back home they would try to respond to some of the questions. In actuality, three women responded and provided further data.

Data Analysis. All the experiences of the participants were analyzed extensively and described in full detail in a narrative form. All the data were initially analyzed based on the categories outlined in the literature review. Category construction began with reviewing the first five transcripts and making notes and comments in the margins. These marginal notes were reviewed to identify patterns related to: choice/decision making, isolation/social interaction, employment, immigrant women with children, language and racism. My data analysis was informed by what Stake (1995) advocates for analysis and interpretation in regards to case study research. The data were analyzed using the following steps.

- 1) Categorical aggregation: After reviewing the transcripts I made codes for the data, examined the data again thus making it possible for me to identify and analyze examples from the data and identify relevant issues.
- 2) Direct interpretation: I examined a single instance (comment or event) and attempted to make meaning from it. The process involved separating the data and reconfiguring it ways that would prove to be more meaningful and informative.
- 3) Establishment of patterns: Once categories were established I delved further to see if connections could be made between them. I searched for similarities and differences amongst the categories.

Upon further examination, new categories were added as were preliminary categories formed. Both the new and preliminary categories were reviewed an additional time and were

incorporated as they reflect the purpose of the research, incorporate salient themes and enhance the findings. Member checks were applied so as to provide both the participants and the researcher with an opportunity to clarify the information recorded. Additionally, at the close of each interview, participants were asked if they wished to add any further information that had not been previously discussed. The descriptions of the findings follow a chronological flow based on their life experiences such as their education/work in their home country, their migration to Canada, their successes and challenges following their immigration to Manitoba and their advice to other women who might be contemplating immigrating.

Researcher and the Participants. Engaging in this research provided me with opportunities to act as both an insider and an outsider in this qualitative study. Sharing the same gender and biography provided me with an inherent ability to understand some of the women's experiences regarding relocating. I too, for example, knew what it is like to immigrate to another country with your spouse, to leave all your familial connections and social supports, to look for employment in a foreign land. I was also an insider because I already worked in the settlement field, thus providing me with a network base upon which to recruit participants and knowledge regarding who the gatekeepers were and how to navigate the process efficiently. This allowed me to reduce the amount of time searching for participants which often can be a time consuming process.

On the other hand, I was also an outsider in terms of certain situations and relationships with the participants. Even though I had immigrated to other countries I had never personally experienced immigrating to Manitoba. I also did not share the same mother tongue as any of the women that I interviewed. Thus I did not know what it was like to immigrate and face challenges around language. The majority of women also had children, which added to their

responsibilities and provided them with another dimension of settlement challenges which were unknown to me. All of these differences provided me with new learning opportunities that allowed me to grow as a researcher.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Before exploring the research participants' challenges and successes following their immigration to Manitoba I will briefly introduce their life stories focusing on: their country of origin, familial supports, spoken languages, education, professional background in their home country and previous experience with immigrating. I will also identify some of the reasons why they immigrated and what they knew about Manitoba prior to immigrating. Descriptions of the participants follow in the order of Vera, Rosa, Mariam, Amandeep and Angela. This chapter functions as holistic scenery for the following chapters where I compare and contrast the participants' experiences following their immigration regarding: the spousal relationship before and after immigrating, choice and decision making, isolation/social interaction, credential recognition, employment, childcare, language and racism.

Participants	Year of Arrival	Country	Languages Spoken	Occupation in Home Country	Family Members	Did Family Migrate Together	Who Initiated the Move	Previous Experience with Immigration	Work After Coming to Canada	Preparation Undertaken (ie: language training, research about Manitoba)
Vera	2012	Kazakhstan	Russian	Assistant-Ne	Spouse 2 children	Yes	Vera	None	Settlement assistance	English class research on internet
Rosa	2011	Paraguay	High German Low German Spanish	Homemaker	Spouse 2 children	Yes	Decided together	None	Homemaker	Visited Manitoba prior to the move, took English classes
Mariam	2008	Mali	French, Bambara	Physician	Spouse 2 children	Yes	Spouse	Yes-France	Call centre, settlement assistance for Francophone newcomers	Took English classes
Amandeep	2008	India	Punjabi, Hindi English	Math teacher	Spouse	No	Amandeep	None	Volunteered, counter help at coffee shop, worked at flour mill, insurance clerk, currently studying power engineering	Spoke with
Angela	2012	Philippines	Filipino, Visaya, English	Senior accountant supervisor	Partner	Yes	Angela	Yes-Japan	Overnight stocker, currently studying to become a certified genealogist, accountant	Researched population, historical population, traffic, Filipino population

Table 1: Participant History

Vera

Vera and her family emigrated from Kazakhstan in 2012 and were one of many families who opted to live in a regional community outside of Winnipeg. During the previous year their community received 138 new permanent residents and was ranked as one of the top ten communities receiving newcomers in Manitoba (Manitoba Immigration Facts 2011 Statistical Report). Vera moved with her husband and two children, a son (10) and a daughter

(7). She is fluent in Russian and studied English for three years prior to immigrating to Manitoba.

In Kazakhstan Vera obtained a bachelor degree in political science which allowed her to work as a laboratory assistant and a tutor of religion, political science, ethics and social science in a private institute. As she increased her scientific-theoretical skills she obtained employment at a research institute and wrote three articles in a book of scientific works. Vera then obtained her master degree in philosophy and began working as a specialist in the Department of Education and finally as an assistant notary.

Vera's parents and her sister (her only sibling) are engineers and reside in Ukraine. Her husband is an engineer with a specific focus in oil and mining. Following her marriage, Vera and her family resided with her father and mother-in-law in their home. Vera had no previous immigration experience prior to moving to Manitoba.

On her maternal side, the roots of her family are German. They were deported from Russia in 1942 and have lived in Kazakhstan for several generations. On her paternal side, her family originally came from Ukraine and her father moved to Temirtau around the age of 20 to work in a metallurgical company. Following the disintegration of the USSR, a lot of her relatives moved to their historic homeland Germany (including her brother-in-law) and her friends relocated to Russia. By the time her parents moved to her father's homeland country of Ukraine Vera said, "We were sitting on suitcases," and often thought, "I need to move to another country, I need to change something in my life" (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012). As a Russian living in Kazakhstan, Vera explained:

I can only say that it was very difficult to find suitable jobs with decent payment in Kazakhstan. I didn't see a future and opportunities for me and my children. To be honest as the years passed I changed my mind several times and when I finally made up my mind and decided what I want to have in future not only for myself but for my family and for my children, I am resolved on leaving Kazakhstan. (Vera Interview 1, November 17, 2012)

Prior to immigrating, Vera had some general knowledge about Canada that she acquired from reading Russian forums online but her knowledge about Manitoba in particular was limited. This was because when she was still living in Kazakhstan she didn't have a particular preference for any one province but after immigrating she stated, "Now I understand it, very different province, with very different laws maybe, different rights" (Vera, November 17, 2012).

Rosa

Rosa emigrated with her husband and two young sons from Paraguay in 2011. Rosa's family have also decided to call rural Manitoba home. Rosa's community has a population of over 1,000 people. She speaks High German, Spanish and Low German, reading and writing in High German and Spanish. Rosa studied English in her home country but did not have many opportunities to practice the language prior to moving to Canada.

Rosa studied nursing for a year and a half and after marriage she worked occasionally. Once her first child was born she decided to stay home full-time to raise her family. Prior to immigrating, Rosa's family lived in close proximity to her parents as her father is not well and they were a source of support to her parents. Rosa's husband worked as a baker and a truck driver. Rosa had no previous experience with immigrating but had moved several times within Paraguay following her marriage.

One week after she got married, one of Rosa's brother-in-laws and his wife immigrated to Manitoba and were later joined by another sibling and his spouse. In 2009 Rosa's good friends also immigrated to Manitoba and Rosa and her family travelled to Manitoba to visit their family and friends. All of the couples currently reside in communities less than two hours from Rosa's family. Rosa and her family visit their good friends every week and get together with their extended family for major holidays and other events.

When asked to identify some of the reasons why her family decided to immigrate to Manitoba Rosa explained: "To know another country, to know other language and the different cultures. I know that in Paraguay has lots of cultures too but not so lots as here in Manitoba yeah" (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012).

Mariam

Mariam emigrated with her husband and two young sons from Mali in 2008. Three months after immigrating she discovered she was pregnant and eventually delivered her twin boys in Winnipeg where her family currently resides. She speaks French and Bambara and reads and writes in French. Mariam did study English in school but decided to focus on German as her alternative language choice.

Mariam's parents reside in the capital city of Bamako and she has one brother who is married. Following her wedding Mariam lived with her husband, two brother-in-laws and two maids. She had many friends from the faculty, school etc. and spoke of her extended family comprised of uncles, aunts, cousins.

Mariam worked as a general practitioner at a medical organization. She worked on health projects and also worked at clinics doing some medical consultations and ultrasounds.

Mariam's husband also worked as a physician. Mariam did have some experience living abroad as she went to France for nine months to study and during this time she gave birth to her second son.

Mariam explained that in Mali it is common for more affluent citizens to send their children abroad after high school to study in France, Canada or the United States. Immigrating to Canada appealed to Mariam and her husband because they were familiar with the immigration system and it would also provide opportunities for both their children and themselves to study. Mariam explained:

We know that one time we will go somewhere else and find some money, find some education and citizenship and....but going back is always better you know, like if you get all the...family, friends and so on. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Mariam's spouse has several family members living in North America. Her husband has a brother and sister in Canada and another brother in the United States. Initially her husband decided that his family would join his brother in Alberta so he went to Edmonton to prepare for his family's move but, after speaking with a family friend in Winnipeg and learning about the lower cost of housing, French and English environment and other opportunities in Manitoba, he said to Mariam, "You know what, I think I want to go to Winnipeg" (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012).

Amandeep

Amandeep immigrated to Manitoba in 2008 from India to join her husband who moved to Winnipeg the previous year. She speaks, reads and writes in Punjabi, Hindi and English. Amandeep has her master degree in mathematics and taught math in high school for one year prior to emigrating. In 2011, Amandeep and husband welcomed their first child, a son.

Amandeep lived with her parents and her brother and sister in a town of about 10,000 people. She described her move: “I was in a small town and I just from I came out of country so it was a big change for me yeah. I even never went out of the province...” (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012). Despite her limited travel experience Amandeep was very clear regarding her long-term goals. The matrimonial advertisement her parents placed for her in a newspaper sought: a Sikh boy, of a specific height and qualification, who resided in Canada, Australia or the United States. When asked why she specified these countries she stated, “Because I don’t want to stay in India” (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012). Upon further discussion she explained:

...in India this is a problem as I already told you like, corruption, we don’t get good jobs. So it doesn’t matter, that is why people have good qualifications like they are having master degree and everything but they are not getting good jobs. One problem is population and the other is corruption. It doesn’t matter how what percentage you have and what degree you have but only that person will get a good job who has good...connections. (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012)

Angela

Angela and her partner emigrated from the Philippines in 2012. She has a bachelor of science with a double major in accounting and business administration. She speaks Filipino, Visaya and English and reads and writes in Filipino and English. Angela lived with her partner and her mother. She has a brother who is married and has six children.

Following her graduation Angela began working at a Japanese firm that manufactured automotive wiring harnesses. She originally started working as a production inspector but was quickly promoted and excelled in her progress through the ranks. She was sent twice by the company to Japan for six months for further training. After working in production for six years, Angela decided to return to her profession and started working in the accounting

department of her company as a cost accounting staff. By the time Angela resigned she was the senior supervisor in her department. The decision to leave the company was not easy for

Angela:

Twenty three long years, so that is why when I decided to...to move, to move and to make a difference it was so hard for me to leave the company because that is my life and the people there...I had my staff are so kind. We were just family and my bosses are so good also it was hard for me to leave. It is hard for me to move. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

The idea of immigrating to Canada ruminated within her for many years. She first thought about immigrating whilst a student: “I had a dream to come to Canada. I don’t know why” (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012). Initially she applied through an agency as a federal immigrant but when two of her partner’s sisters moved to Manitoba she encouraged her partner to ask one of them if they could be a sponsor. Her sister agreed and Angela began preparing their documents and researching the history of Winnipeg, the population, historical sites, traffic and the percentage of Filipinos in Winnipeg.

Angela and her partner had similar rationales for immigrating. Angela’s partner desired a job that might make it possible for her to support family members back home. Angela wanted to:

....help my brother’s children and I know that going to Canada is one of the solutions for the children’s education because if you have 6 children in the Philippines you can not able to go to bring them to schools at the same time with the salary that you receive it is not enough. So that is why we decided to immigrate and I did not think twice with immigrate. I did not think twice, I did not. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic Analysis

As discussed in Chapter Two, gender role theory is the theoretical framework which guides this study. Advice is interwoven with a chronological and thematic analysis and the following themes are identified: 1) spousal relationship in their home country; 2) discussion/ decision making and choice; 3) resources utilized during initial settlement period; 4) immigrant women with children; 5) employment; 6) language and racism; 7) spousal relationship following immigration; 8) isolation/social interaction; 9) accessibility of services. Based on this analytical framework I describe findings about the participants comparing and contrast their stories and experiences with current research in the field.

In this chapter, I examine the participants' relationship with their spouse or partner prior to immigrating, who initiated the conversation about moving to Manitoba and the type of discussion that followed. An overview of their first year in Manitoba and how they accessed resources will also be shared as well as the role that childcare plays in their life. Their introspective and retrospective interview accounts were the main data for this chapter.

Spousal Relationship in their Home Country

When asked to describe their relationship prior to moving to Manitoba, the women's answers were as unique as the women themselves. Following their arranged marriage, Amandeep's spouse returned to Manitoba and she moved in with her in-laws for six months while she waited for documentation allowing her to immigrate.

Angela first met her partner in Japan. For four years they worked together until her partner moved to Malaysia for work. Following her partner's return from Malaysia they decided to live together despite the disapproval of others. Angela explained that:

...our relationship is not...accepted in our society. It is only here in Canada and in some countries that living common law is accepted. So we struggled a lot because we face so many...ridicules from her relatives...but now it is okay because they saw that...we do nothing...we are just we just want to be happy. (Interview, December 23, 2012)

Eventually her partner's relatives accepted their relationship and now they have lived together for twenty years with the support and approval of their family members. During their time in the Philippines, Angela and her partner lived with Angela's mother in her home and practised traditional gender roles. Angela worked outside the home and financially supported everyone—her mother, partner and herself. Her partner was responsible for all of the domestic duties as “[I] did not do the laundry, I did not do the cooking...she prepared everything for me” while also caring for Angela's elderly mother (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012).

Reflecting on her life in Kazakhstan, Vera described her relationship with her spouse as “a little bit separate” and explained that during this time they “had a lot of friends and he had parents with whom he lives” (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012). Vera followed this up by stating that her relationship with her spouse was “different” back home and explained: “...we had very good jobs, not a very good salary, good social status” (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012). Prior to moving to Canada, Vera and her husband lived with his parents throughout their marriage and had never experienced living as a couple in their own residence before immigrating to Canada. Vera's husband worked as a mining engineer and supervised numerous employees at his work site and was responsible for the safe operation of the mine. Vera also

had a *good job* as a notary republic but their salaries did not afford them the ability to buy their own home.

Despite being part of a dual-career couple and having a full-time job, Vera was expected to balance some traditional gender roles within her marriage. Vera reflected on this time:

....you know that Kazakhstan is a Muslim country. First of all, it is a man and then it is a woman. It doesn't matter if you have a Russian culture as my husband but we have responsibilities in our house. For example, I because I am female and woman I must to clean, I must to prepare, cook and so on so on. I must to bring up my children, must to check their homework for example because I am female. (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012)

Rosa explained that she worked occasionally following her marriage but stopped once she had her first child. She described her relationship with her husband as harmonious and followed this up by stating: "We make the decision to tell one to the other what he is feeling about this thing or other thing" (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012).

Mariam described her relationship with her spouse as good but stated that they were both busy working full-time as physicians, often returning to work in the evening with the result being that they were "a little bit distant" because of the limited amount of time that they spent together due to work and social life (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012). Their schedule allowed them to spend time together in the morning when they were getting ready, at lunch if Mariam was at home, maybe three or four hours in the evening and occasionally they would "spend the entire evening together" (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012). With her husband at work on Saturday she would spend the day at her parents and on Sunday her family would visit her in-laws where Mariam would spend some of her time cooking. When her husband was not working, "sometimes he would go out to find his friends, boyfriends...to chat"

(Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012). In her research with South Asian women who immigrated to the United States as dependent spouses Abraham (2000) noted:

Back in their own home country...a husband's lack of interpersonal interaction may be compensated by the social ties to her own family, her friends, or other members of the community. Members of families and friends may act as a buffer against stress.... (p.232)

Mariam and her spouse were both busy—professionally and personally. If one of them was not working they would frequently fill the other's absence through contacts or visits with other supports, such as visits to parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, neighbours and friends. The one day a week that they both were not working, they chose not to spend the time together with their nuclear family. Instead they would go visiting her in-laws. During this time Mariam would "...go to the kitchen, cook, and then we would go to do some more stuff...like we won't be together" (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012). Visiting as a family did not guarantee time together for Mariam and her spouse; instead it translated into time connecting with and utilizing other support systems.

Discussion, Decision Making and Choice

How did the conversation about immigrating to Manitoba start? In their study of unsponsored migrants Hiller and McCaig noted that in the majority of cases the decision to migrate went through an "incubation period" and that "migration was very rarely a sudden impulsive decision" (2007, p. 465). In the case of three of the women in this study (Angela, Amandeep and Vera), the decision to immigrate took anywhere from several years to several decades to grow roots. Two of the women (Angela and Amandeep) expressed the desire to immigrate while they were still single and, over time, actively pursued their goal of relocating to another country. The third woman (Vera) initiated the conversation with her partner, maintained the

dialogue and was the motivating force behind the decision to move. For the remaining women though (Mariam and Rosa), the idea of immigrating was initiated by their spouse and they agreed to relocate following a conversation/negotiation.

For Mariam, it was her spouse who contemplated the concept of immigrating abroad for years. With two brothers and a sister living in Canada and the United States, Mariam's husband had a history of migration in his family. Mariam did not initiate the idea or sustain the conversation. She could not recall the first time that her spouse presented the idea of immigrating to Canada and said, "I think he used to say—when we were dating—that we will go in Canada one day once we will get married" (Mariam, Email Follow-Up, May 30, 2013). During this time, Mariam's spouse had been unsuccessful in his application for a "very good job" that he applied for due to his lack of English. Her first clear recollection of her spouse's statement of intent was after they had been married for five months and she was pregnant with her first child. "He stated officially his desire to immigrate and he wanted to start the application once we would have the baby" (Mariam, Email Follow-up, May 30, 2013).

Mariam stated that the advantages to immigrating were: to provide a better life for her children, obtain further training, to learn English and to become a Canadian citizen. The disadvantage was that it was not easy to immigrate; however they "did not talk about the cons, although we knew that there were some cons" (Mariam, Interview Follow-Up, May 30, 2013).

In her work with women who had relocated, McCollum (1990) noted that many of the coupled women that she interviewed had "difficulty recognizing what was important in their own lives as distinct from their men's lives" and she had heard of several examples where women had disregarded aspects of their life that were previously important to them and how

these decisions would affect them “adversely for months or even years” (p.223). It is not clear if Mariam spoke with her spouse about the challenges she might encounter regarding language, employment options or what it might be like for her to not have access to or support from extended family and friends. Following her move Mariam struggled in all of these areas. When asked how long they discussed immigrating to Canada Mariam stated: “The process of taking the decision wasn’t too long as my husband was thinking to that for a long time” (Mariam, Interview Follow-Up, May 30, 2013).

Mariam did stipulate to her spouse that her agreement to immigrate was based on the understanding that her family would not stay permanently in Canada and would eventually return to Mali. Her husband agreed and they moved forward with the immigration process. Mariam agreed with the stipulation “[a]s long as we won’t stay there forever” (Mariam, December 4, 2012). Mariam’s long-term goal is to be managing a health project either in Mali or in a country close by and for her oldest child to be attending university in Canada and for her other children to be studying in “a very good school” (Mariam, Interview Follow-Up, May 30, 2013).

Mariam’s request that her family eventually return to their home country was familiar to me. Two months before my own wedding I started to sense that there was a possibility that my husband and I might never return to Canada. Up to that point we never actually discussed where we would go after his fellowship in Scotland. It was November 1998 and my heart was filled with fear when I repeatedly asked my then fiancé during our long-distance phone call: “Can we go back?” He sounded surprised and I repeated the question numerous times. Eventually he replied “yes” and I felt the terror subside. I would soon realize that the ominous fear I felt was legitimate. Approximately a year after moving to Scotland my spouse began

searching for employment and when I reminded him of his promise that we would return to Canada he informed me that since I did not specify where I wanted to return to he did not need to fulfil his commitment. I was stunned since it was this promise that helped sustain me in making this move and he lured me with this agreement. I was a woman who immigrated and my reality of moving home was becoming a non-reality.

As mentioned previously, Angela dreamt of moving to Canada while still a student and her desire to emigrate and provide for her siblings was echoed by her partner. Angela articulated her desire to continue to provide financial assistance to her family “because first of all why am I here because I want to give them...I already give them but I want to give them more” (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012). Approximately twenty years after her initial thought of immigrating to Canada, Angela broached the subject with her partner and her partner agreed, as she too hoped to provide for her siblings and their families and believed that moving to Canada would turn this dream into a reality.

Well aware that the matrimonial advertisement her parents placed for her would dictate the type of men who would respond, Amandeep and her parents listed several criteria including height, level of education, religion and country of residence. Amandeep was aware that she wanted to emigrate, knew which First World countries she would like to live in, and realized that marriage might make this possible. She also realized that she would not speak with her potential spouse until their parents had spoken and she would then have an opportunity to see if their “views were the same” (Amandeep, December 10, 2012). Following her parents’ conversation with her future in-laws Amandeep spoke with her potential spouse, discussed their values amongst other things and after talking they agreed to get married. Amandeep’s marriage was arranged, but now, she pointed out, it is a love marriage. When asked to describe

their conversation about immigrating she replied, “When he went back and married me it was obvious I move here” (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012).

In her study McCollum (1990) noted a difference between coupled women who relocated and women that moved independently; those women who moved independently “... felt a clarity about their needs and took responsibility for trying to fulfill them” (p. 223).

Amandeep knew that she wanted to leave India and she wanted a partner that she considered her equal who resided in one of the countries that she would like to live in. Reflecting on her immigration experience Amandeep shared her opinion on how Manitoba is meeting the needs of female immigrant spouses:

Because the country that I came from, I think it is more than enough. You know...there is normally back home nobody care about you if you are earning money, if you are eating every day or not. Here like, if you come here... I come here it was my choice. Nobody call me here...even then they are supporting us. They are giving us support so that we can establish...they are giving us like free English classes. It is our responsibility for we are going to any...if I am going to any country which is not speaking my language then it is my responsibility to learn the language...I think that if somebody wants to be established here...they can do that. Maybe it is bad luck if situations are not according to...and something goes wrong. (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012)

Following her family’s move to Ukraine, Vera felt uncomfortable, perhaps because of the absence of her familial supports, and began thinking about immigrating. For Vera and her husband “immigration was not a spontaneous decision” as they thought about leaving Kazakhstan for several years (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013). They agreed that by staying in Kazakhstan opportunities would be more limited for their family but had to decide which country they would immigrate to in the future. Initially her husband hoped to immigrate to Russia where they already had relatives and would experience the same culture and language, but decided against it when they heard about some of the problems that immigrants

might encounter in Russia such as an unstable economy, high levels of crime and low salaries. Vera and her spouse researched their options and had many conversations about immigrating and her husband was not easily persuaded but Vera “had a lot of arguments and one of the strongest arguments was our children and their futures... I told him you need to think about children” (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012). After deciding that Canada provided their family with more order and security they moved forward with the immigration process.

As mentioned above, Vera stated that they “did a lot of research and considered all the pros and cons.” However, she followed this up by saying, “It is difficult to say that we have carefully weighed the pros and cons because it is only on arrival here that we understood that many of our ideas were incorrect or invalid” (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013). Unlike Mariam who took considerably less time to make the decision to immigrate, Vera and her husband contemplated the decision for years, and yet both couples did not fully explore the disadvantages to immigrating. The reasons for this remain unclear.

Rosa’s husband first thought about emigrating when he was approximately 20 or 21 years of age and single. He was considering immigrating to Jamaica and working as a baker. Following their marriage Rosa and her spouse spoke about travelling and when they heard that an immigration agency from Manitoba was coming and would be giving a presentation they made the decision together that they would attend. Rosa explained that she was one of the first people to call and told them, “Yes, we will meet the people and I will, I will see to immigrate to Canada” (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012). When they were informed that it was possible for her husband to apply for permanent residency based on his profession, they decided to initiate the immigration process. When asked how long they discussed the idea of immigrating Rosa explained, “So it doesn’t take long to make the final decision. We just wait

after send all the things, about three years” (Rosa, Interview Follow-Up, May 21, 2013). For Rosa and her husband the decision to immigrate was a mutual one.

In his work Mincer (1978) explored the connection between family ties and migration decisions and the effects on probability of migration. Through his research Mincer reached several conclusions, one being that dual-career families are less likely to accept an offer to move than single income families. The findings of this research challenge this conclusion. Mariam, Amandeep, and Vera were all part of dual-career families that not only agreed, but in the case of Amandeep and Vera, each woman advocated for immigration. None of the women had secured employment prior to immigrating to Manitoba and all of them commenced their job search after their arrival.

Mincer (1978) also deduced that family ties can act as both a grounding force for a family to refuse relocation but they can also motivate families to move. For four of the women, family ties played an important factor in their decision to move. Amandeep moved to join her husband, while Mariam, Rosa, Angela and Vera immigrated with their spouse/partner and children. Vera emphasized their children’s future when speaking with her spouse about migrating. When asked to identify the most important thing about her immigration experience Rosa stated:

That we live together—that we didn’t leave someone else in the other country. My first thing was...I hear about other people they have to move, just for example, the husband’s passport is there but the woman’s is not, so he has to move to Canada and she has to stay in his country and wait, his or hers passport is coming. I make the decision at this time I will never go alone. Me with my child, me, me keepeth this child. So when we go, every time together. So when he will to visit my country I will go with him. So I didn’t want to stay here alone. (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012)

Rosa's insistence that her family immigrate together as a unit was likely a prudent decision. Utilizing the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation data that examined 282 newcomer adolescents from China, Central America, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico youth who had relocated as a family unit were "less likely to report depressive or anxiety symptoms than children whose families had separated" and that children who had not been separated from their mother or had been separated from their father for less than two years experienced the lowest levels of psychological distress (Suarez-Orozco, Bang, Kim, 2011, p. 248).

Resources Utilized During Initial Settlement Period

Following their immigration to Manitoba, the women had to navigate the settlement process and this included learning about housing, employment, credential recognition, government services and social supports. After interviewing the women and reviewing the data, the results show that all of the women utilized government or settlement agencies to learn about resources in the community and benefited from conversations with friends, family and other acquaintances who had immigrated to the province; while one woman found the presenters, fellow students and teachers in her EAL classes to be a significant source of information.

Angela, Mariam, Amandeep, Rosa and Vera all accessed government or settlement services. Rosa and her family lived with her sister-in-law and brother-in-law during their first week in Manitoba and during this time they helped them obtain their Manitoba Health Card, Social Insurance Number, mailbox and apartment. They were introduced to a local settlement worker who spoke Low German. Initially Rosa attended English language classes; she also

continued to maintain contact with the settlement organization through phone calls and attending activities such as fitness classes for newcomer women. Rosa attended these fitness classes weekly as they allowed her to “...leave a little bit my home, my children so that...in the afternoon my husband is home with the boys and I can go outside to relax one time a week” (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012). Approximately fifteen to twenty-five immigrant women from various countries such as the Philippines, Ukraine and Paraguay participated in the classes. Rosa indicated the classes were important to her because it allowed her to do something different and she “could have some time just for me, and that was a good idea to go in the fitness class. I was looking for more participation, but it doesn’t work for every event. I think I would like to attend in the future” (Rosa, Interview Follow-Up, May 21, 2013).

When asked if the settlement organization that she accessed is meeting the needs of female immigrant spouses, Rosa said:

They try, they try do that. You can attend every month a meeting about different...themes...so when I am interested to attend them I think it is good. They make lots of decisions you can, you didn’t have to stay at home and just angry and say nothing is helping me....I think (immigrant service agency) they know each other and they know the new people. (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012)

In an attempt to meet the needs of their clients, the agency Rosa used offered services in English, High and Low German, Russian, Spanish and Tagalog. The free services included settlement assistance providing information regarding housing, education, immigration information, a free notarizing service and language classes. The organization also provided language partners, temporary bed and breakfasts, orientation to the community at large, support and guidance when making large purchases such as automobiles and houses and support and friendship during the adaptation period. Activities such as men’s basketball, parenting groups

and an indoor version of football called *futsal* were held on a regular basis (information accessed via conversation with Program Director on May 23, 2013).

Residing in an urban environment Mariam, Amandeep and Angela had access to more government organizations and settlement supports. This does not mean, however, that they utilized all of services available to them or used them as their exclusive source of settlement information. Amandeep attended the Entry Program which offers settlement assistance to newcomers with a range of English language levels. For those with more limited English there is a four week information program, while a one week Express Orientation is available for those with more advanced English. All attendees learn the same information regarding employment, places to go, laws and health (accessed via internet site June 2, 2013, <http://entryprogram.ca>).

Amandeep explained that she learned about her rights in Canada, the police, overtime pay, emergency services. Amandeep's main source of information regarding resources and settlement information, however, was from her husband who was already living in Winnipeg. Following her participation in the Entry Program Amandeep had her English language skills assessed through Canadian Language Benchmark testing. These tests assessed her reading, writing, listening and speaking in English. Having decided at this time that she did want to resume her teaching career, she focused instead on becoming a Certified General Accountant which required a Benchmark 7 in all areas. Aware that she would need to improve her writing and reading score, Amandeep attended evening classes twice a week at Enhanced English Skills for Employment. Enhanced English Skills for Employment offers newcomers free classes to improve their writing, reading, listening and pronunciation in English. Classes are

also offered to hone their presentation skills and cross cultural skills (accessed via internet June 8, 2013 at <http://www.eese.ca/courses/writingcentre.html>). Amandeep described this time:

So I was working on them but I got pregnant and then I changed my mind because it was already changed...my actual line is mathematics. It is my choice, I can use in accounting or I can use in engineering so I find this one easier...power engineering. (Amandeep, December 10, 2012)

Amandeep explained that, unlike the Certified General Accountant program that required that she complete approximately twenty-four courses before she sought employment, power engineering only required that she complete her current level (class four) before she could look for a job. After 900 hours of apprenticeship training Amandeep would receive a 4th Class Power Engineer Certificate and could work as a chief engineer, shift engineer, assistance shift engineer or be in charge of a Refrigeration Class Plant. It was her choice if she wanted to pursue class three or class two (http://firecomm.gov.mb.ca/itsm_power_eng/html).

Mariam utilized settlement services offered for francophone newcomers through Accueil Francophone. This organization offers free assistance to new immigrants that speak French. Some of the services include housing information and support, tutoring and mentoring, translation and interpretation, notary signing and immigration information. Newcomer families can also be twinned with Canadian families for support and guidance for three months. Practical information guides regarding Winnipeg are also available as well as information about education in Manitoba and taxes (information accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.accueilfrancophonemb.com/>).

Mariam also attended the Entry Program, English Skills Centre and English as an Additional Language classes for two years. When asked how she learned about these resources Mariam stated:

Main way learned info from school...and friends too you know, like as immigrants we talk with other immigrants and we pass along information and...yeah at school and even in our building too. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Angela and her partner were fortunate that they were able to live with her sister-in-law and brother-in-law for six months and during this time they taught them “everything... they want us to be familiarized” (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012). Unlike her partner who did not feel the need to visit any of the settlement agencies, Angela utilized the services provided by *Manitoba Start*, *Tap in Program* and *Success Skills Centre*. *Success Skills* provides free assistance to internationally trained professionals or skilled workers. Newcomers can take courses that are related to their field such as *AutoCAD*, *Simply Accounting*, *ACCPAC* and *Quickbook*. Bridging programs are also available for newcomers that have an environmental background. Clients can participate in a six-week internship with an employer as well as receive support from a mentor (information accessed June 7, 2013, <http://www.successskills.mb.ca>).

Angela also accessed services available through *Employment Solutions for Immigrants/Manitoba Start* and *Nor'West Co-Op Community Health Centre*. *Manitoba Start* offers career development and employability skills training to newcomers 18 and older that have been in Winnipeg less than three years. *Manitoba Start* refers immigrants to the settlement worker in their area and various settlement services. Clients can also participate in employability skills training workshops that are appropriate based on their employment and educational background and English language proficiency. *Start Up* workshops are aimed at individuals that want to work in a regulated profession or trade, *Strong Start* is aimed at newcomers between 18 and 30 years of age and focuses on computer skills, workplace culture and communication and offers a two week workplace placement while *Job Start* provides

assistance with long-term career planning and is intended to prepare clients to work in entry-level positions (accessed June 10, 2013 via handouts available at Manitoba Start).

Through her brother and sister-in-law Angela heard about Nor'West Co-Op Community Health Centre. Nor'West Co-Op is part of an integrated health centre that is also comprised of *Family Services and Labour* and *Winnipeg Regional Health Authority*. Services that are available include social assistance, primary health care (physicians and nurse practitioners are on staff), counselling, nutrition and healthy eating support by dieticians, parenting support, foot care and support for new mothers with infants provided by primary health care nurses. Nor'West Co-Op also offers specific programs for newcomers such as counselling, a newcomer parent child program, a monthly group for immigrant women, childcare training, a parenting program, a diabetes group that is specific to the Filipino population, a catering project and a school readiness workshop that helps newcomer parents understand the school system in Manitoba (information accessed via phone call with settlement staff at Nor'West on May 23, 2013, <http://www.norwestcoop.ca/>).

Reflecting on her time as a client receiving settlement assistance through Nor'West Co-Op Community Health Centre Angela stated:

It is a big help. Also, there is a lot of programs they are offering like health care aide and childcare worker. Also, they providing some orientation for newcomers pertaining to how to get an apartment and also for health. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

Visiting these agencies made it possible for Angela to take free additional training related to her field and to receive guidance regarding how she could apply to get her credentials recognized. Once she received more information about the process Angela acted upon it “immediately” and secured a \$9000 grant towards her education from Service Canada

and is currently working towards becoming a Certified General Accountant (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012).

When asked what advice she would share with other women who might be considering moving to Manitoba, Mariam replied:

Being focused...and having goals. I think that helped me when I came I had my goals. Although I had other things we want but I was able to respect that...try to learn more resources to find more information about what is happening because like sometimes the government...for example, the money that I was getting from Employment Manitoba, like it was there but they don't know it is there. Like why? It is for people, like I don't know...it is politics sometimes. Just try to connect with other newcomers so that they will know what is going on. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Immigrant Women with Children

Four of the women in this study had children. Immigrating with children or giving birth to a child in a new country can present newcomer women with unique challenges. Through her research with newcomer mothers in Halifax Yax-Fraser (2011) identified:

Several mothers expressed that a number of the significant changes they had experienced were the adjustments in moving from an extended family to a nuclear family practice; from being working professional mothers to being stay-at-home moms; and from a higher level of economic well-being to a more restricted one.... (p. 313)

Vera, Rosa and Mariam all benefited previously from membership in extended families. Vera and her family lived with her in-laws and “when grandma and grandpa were at home in Kazakhstan, we did not worry about going out and leaving the children with them. They also helped to take care of the kids sometimes” (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013).

While living in Kazakhstan Vera also received governmental aid that equalled 80 percent of her monthly salary, was entitled to a year and half maternity leave and her position was held for her until she returned. Vera stated that she was only able to return to work full-

time because the government subsidized daycare by 50 percent and some extracurricular activities for children were also free. Vera was surprised by the differences in daycare in Manitoba. Back home she did not have to register her child's name on a wait list, daycares were open from 7 am until 6 pm, staff prepared and served the children several meals each day and the cost to parents was significantly less than it is in Manitoba.

For the year and half prior to her immigration, Rosa and her family lived close to her parents and visited them daily; Mariam lived with two of her brother-in-laws and visited her parents and her in-laws every weekend. Immigrating severed access to such familial ties for Vera and Mariam while Rosa created new connections with her spouse's brothers and their families who relocated to Manitoba.

The absence of extended family and supports presented a new challenge to both Vera and Mariam. Without her extended family close by Vera and her spouse had fit their "schedule to one of our children, which was something new that we had to get used to" (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013). Coordinating their schedules takes some work, as Vera and her husband both work full-time with her spouse working 12-hour days.

While living in Mali, additional familial support, paid staff and daycare made it possible for Mariam to continue working full-time as a physician following the birth of her two oldest children. Her parents, brother and sister-in-law provided support as well as two maids who worked in her home and whose responsibilities included grocery shopping, cooking, dishes, childcare and washing clothes. Her oldest child would also attend daycare while her youngest stayed at home.

Following her immigration, financially it was not possible for Mariam to hire paid staff to care for her children. Having discovered that she was pregnant three months after immigrating and feeling unwell, Mariam continued attending English classes but decided not to look for further employment once her evening position ended. Mariam described this time:

So I just stopped looking for a job and kept going to English classes and so my husband was also taking classes and working part-time so we didn't have enough money...it was hard at home, like no help, and I had to cook, and I was sick and had two kids and so that was really the biggest challenge. Thanks God I was able to manage it. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

After the birth of her twins, with two other small children to care for, Mariam chose to “alter the location” of her “support network” by having her mother come and stay with her for five months in Winnipeg and help with the children (Salaff & Greve, 2006, p. 160). As Mariam was receiving government subsidized daycare for her 5- and 2-year-old, she returned to English classes several weeks after giving birth to her twins.

Approximately two years later Mariam's spouse completed his training as a project manager and was offered a one year position in Nigeria. Faced with the possibility of parenting four children as a single parent, Mariam then decided to change “the proximity” of her children to childcare, thus making it possible for her to attend university and “reconstitute her career” by sending her 2-year-old twins to Mali to stay with her mother for a year (Salaff & Greve, 2006, p. 160). Mariam reflected on this time:

Yeah, it was hard for the kids. I didn't think it would be so hard for them—the two oldest here. The ones in Africa it was fine but my first ones here...it was hard for him to not have his dad here. That was challenging for me too. Studying and being able to help him with his homework too and doing my homework and handing in my assignments by the due date. It was a challenge...I have my diploma. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Through her research with immigrant women and factors that contribute towards their social inclusion Neumann (2011) identified:

...a need for more Early Learning or Childcare services that immigrant women could afford, which would allow them to obtain language training and to upgrade their credentials where required. Since relatively few immigrant women have access to extended family to assist with childcare, this is a particularly important need for immigrant women's labour force integration. (Neumann, as cited in Guruge, S. & Collins, E., 2011, p. 64)

Mariam was not alone in her struggle to secure adequate childcare. Many women in Canada find it very difficult to locate daycare for their children. Following the birth of her first child, Amandeep decided not to return to her previous job that was being held for her or pursue a career in education in Winnipeg because "...I couldn't find good daycare for my son, so that we decided to, I decided to stay home. So now I am here, I am studying while staying at home. I took online program...power engineering" (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012).

Amandeep explained that her new career choice would allow both her and her husband (who also switched careers since immigrating and became a power engineer) to create a work schedule in the future that would allow one of them to be with their child at all times, thus eliminating the need for childcare in the future. Her new career choice, however, required that Amandeep not only successfully complete course work and exams but also fulfill 900 hours of apprenticeship training within a short period of time. During the time of this research Amandeep was simultaneously raising her child full-time, completing her course work and doing apprenticeship training.

The importance of accessible childcare is not limited to immigrant women. In a study of 160 dual-career couples with at least one partner pursuing a career in academia, research conducted by Auspurg and Hinz (2011) revealed that the most significant gender differences

related to the valuation of child care opportunities. Regardless of the type of childcare that was offered, female movers “attach significantly more importance to child care availability” and:

This is a clear indication of the relevance of traditional gender roles but might also reflect the attempt of women to preserve their own working opportunities (therefore bargaining power) in case of responsibility for children. (Auspurg & Hinz, 2011, p. 14)

When asked to comment on the role that accessible childcare played in her family’s life Mariam stated:

It is very important and having access to it, like allowed me to study and you know they are learning, they are learning because I don’t have time here to even sometimes to read to them...sometimes it is so crazy and yeah they are enjoying it like going to daycare. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Subsidized childcare made it possible for Mariam to attend language training for several years and accept full-time employment during the day. Without access to subsidized childcare and extended familial supports, it would have been considerably more difficult (if not impossible) for Mariam to have improved her English language skills or accept her current employment position. For Vera, subsidized childcare in Kazakhstan with convenient hours made it possible for her to return to work and to resume her career. By changing her career and coordinating her schedule with her spouse’s, Amandeep was able to continue working and avoid some of the challenges that parents face regarding childcare. Accessible childcare or childcare arrangements made it possible for Mariam, Vera and Amandeep not only to continue their careers but to maintain their bargaining power within their relationships.

Immigrant women might also wrestle with how to raise their children in a new culture. In their study of South Asian women of Pakistani descent who immigrated to Toronto with their families it was noted that:

The women also experienced cultural shock after immigration. They were fearful and apprehensive about the differences between their values and Canadian culture and their children's exposure to this culture. The women mentioned their dislike of what they perceived to be a more open sexual environment, indecent behavior, and obliviousness towards older parents. They expressed distress at increased parental responsibilities as they attempted to shield their children from a new culture. (Khan & Watson, 2005, p. 312)

When asked to reflect on raising her children in Canada, Mariam said: "It is not easy to raise children in a new culture" (Interview Follow-Up, May 30, 2013). Mariam explained that how adults speak with children in Canada is different than in Mali and that in the Malian culture children do not look their parents in the eye while they are getting disciplined. They are also silent while they are eating and do not play with their food. Mariam had noticed, however, that in schools and daycares in Winnipeg children do crafts with cereals and eggs.

Vera commented that: "In my opinion, our parents are not as permissive as Canadian parents" (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013). Vera explained that in Kazakhstan children are not encouraged to be independent at a young age and are not able to do what they want without strict parental supervision. Punishing children when they are disobedient is considered normal and "in some rare cases even spank the kids" (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013).

Both Mariam and Vera have decided to alter their parental responsibilities in an attempt to share and maintain their culture with their children. Mariam made an effort to tell her children how things were done in Mali and to include people in her children's lives that were originally from the same country in Africa. Mariam's family visited Mali in 2011 and her goal was "to be able to visit often with the children so they know where they are from" (Mariam, Interview Follow-Up, May 30, 2013).

Vera had “great concerns that children may forget their native language” and would be unable to communicate with their grandparents in the future and, as a result, Russian was the preferred language in the home (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013). Language maintenance is “the only thing that we can possibly pass along to the kids, because the children are socialized very quickly and the environment in this case has a very big impact” (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013).

Employment

Residing in both rural and urban areas, all the women made choices regarding employment. For one woman, securing employment came relatively easy while for others the trajectory was more challenging, required more strategic planning and effort.

Of all the women interviewed Rosa was the only one who chose not to look for employment. Aware that she studied nursing in Paraguay, others had advised Rosa to look for work “right now” and apply at specific employers in the area. Rosa shared her thoughts on her decision: “I...prefer to stay at home and make my boys what I like...and see my boys every time, every step...So yeah, I make my own decision” (Rosa, Interview, November 23, 2012).

Rosa’s decision to stay home with her children full-time and not to pursue a career in nursing might speak to the gender-role ideology that she subscribes to. As outlined by Bielby and Bielby (1998), the gender-role ideology an individual follows will influence the options and resources they consider. Rosa believed that once she had children her job was to be at home with them full-time. Thus she chose to ignore the suggestions by others that she return to work and appeared very comfortable with her decision. Rosa’s husband worked outside the home and was the main breadwinner.

While living in Kazakhstan, Vera heard about a settlement organization in Canada that was giving presentations on the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program and how to immigrate. Vera attended several seminars, received all the necessary information, and started her family's immigration process through this organization. Approximately one week after she immigrated to rural Manitoba, Vera received a phone call from the organization inviting her for an interview. Vera was interviewed and offered the position. Vera would later identify that she considered securing employment one week after immigrating her greatest success. Vera stated that her spouse believed she was "not a typical immigrant" because:

...[a] lot of immigrants, especially women, usually sits at home or usually work in factory. It is very, very hard work. I know, for example, a lot of my friends, from Kazakhstan and Russia they had very good jobs in their home country. For example, they also work in the office but now they work with their hands, manual. (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012)

It is not uncommon for women to do manual labour following immigrating, despite having worked as a professional in their home country. Vera's statement echoes Tastsoglou and Preston's (2005) findings that newcomer women are "more often in manual occupations," and Amandeep and Angela's employment experience reaffirm this statement (as cited in Jay & Porter, 2011, p. 115).

Residing in a community that has a sizeable newcomer population and working in the settlement field provided Vera with opportunities to speak with other immigrants and learn about the challenges they faced since relocating to Manitoba. Vera shared this information:

I think the very big challenges, maybe not for my family but for many newcomers is finding suitable job for your profession. It is a very, very big challenge because I know a lot of immigrants have a high education, and they worked as an engineer or as a manager, or as a doctor, but here it is very difficult. (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012)

Vera's statement regarding the difficulty newcomers have securing a suitable job for their profession echoes findings outlined in *An Evaluation of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program*. Interviews with spouses of principal applicants revealed that many were not employed in their area of expertise and that integration into the workforce was not a positive experience for many spouses (Carter, 2009, p. 86). None of the women that I interviewed were employed in their field of expertise and with the exception of Vera, integration into the workforce was a negative experience. For Amandeep, Angela and Mariam, their first jobs in Winnipeg "represented a substantial move to lower paying sales and services" compared to their previous occupations or their intended occupations (Carter, 2009, p. 84). Vera, Amandeep and Angela, however, were able to secure employment in less than three months, substantially less time than the 18 month average cited in Carter's research (2009, p. 87). All of the women who were employed aspired to the same goal as the spouses in Carter's research—to be employed in a different occupation within five years: Angela as an accountant, Amandeep as a power engineer, Mariam managing a health project and Vera working in a governmental institution in a position that is related to her degree. In accordance with Carter's findings, almost half of the women were participating in training or enrolled in education in the same field they studied in their home country with the goal of securing employment that "meets their previous qualifications or skills level" (2009, p. 90). Angela took courses to become a certified general accountant and Mariam volunteered in a health clinic as a reproductive counsellor.

Unlike Vera, who paid a settlement organization to help her with the immigration process, Amandeep completed her immigration forms herself. Following her arrival in November 2008, Amandeep spent the first few weeks enjoying her time with her new husband. By December, realizing she "wasn't getting any job," Amandeep decided to approach a family

friend whose office is frequented by newcomers seeking settlement assistance and offered to assist with some of the forms required for immigrating to Manitoba (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012). Amandeep reflected on this time:

... I asked him if he wanted any help from me so I could volunteer there so I could get a Canadian reference and if I want to apply somewhere for job and I could put his reference, or you know something, I could communicate with people. (Amandeep, December 10, 2012)

Amandeep's decision to volunteer as a way to improve her employment options has been documented in research with other newcomer women following their immigration to Canada. During their research with immigrant women in Newfoundland and Labrador that were seeking employment Jaya and Porter (2011) stated:

...participants provided examples of ways in which they were using their skills and experiences in a voluntary capacity to make contacts and build the foundation for leading productive lives, even in the difficult economic conditions in which they found themselves. (p. 123)

After two months Amandeep was offered a part-time weekend position in the office she volunteered in. Determined to help her spouse repay some of the loans he had taken out that enabled him to purchase their house Amandeep "...wanted to go out as soon as possible and make our money and we can give money back," so she applied at "Tim Hortons and McDonalds, anywhere I could find" (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012). Amandeep's decision to accept a lower paying position to support her family is not unique:

Immigrant women are more likely to take on low status jobs (albeit paid employment outside the home) to meet the basic necessities for their families and gain satisfaction by being able to financially contribute to their family. (Guruge & Collins, 2008, p. 11)

In January, Amandeep started working at Tim Hortons while maintaining her weekend job. By the end of the year she accepted a full-time position as a clerk in a flour mill but did

not resign from her weekend job. When she was four months pregnant she resigned from the flour mill and began working for a large insurance company for five months until she went on maternity leave. Despite having not finished her probationary period, the company informed Amandeep that they were willing to hold her job for one year until her maternity leave was finished. Due to difficulty securing suitable daycare, Amandeep chose to resign from her position and begin studying power engineering. The course was done online but also required 900 hours of apprenticeship work for certification. Shahnasarian (1991) comments on the *trailing spouse* and the impact that relocating might have on their career: “Some choose to use this transition to assess their careers and to make career changes; others choose to continue developing their careers as they had prior to the move” (p. 181).

When asked what advice she might want to share with other women who are considering immigrating to Manitoba Amandeep stated:

...don't say no to any work. You know you are coming from other countries. And here, like I was teaching there...and I got a job at Tim Hortons and I was sweeping everywhere and I was cleaning men's washroom. So, but slowly, I came, I got my office job. I was sitting in front of a computer and doing lazy stuff. So, but if I want to get the same job at the very beginning of my arrival, like you know, I am here I am done this. I was teaching, and now I want a job in a school...then you won't get anything. Don't say no to anything. Yeah, to any job if you get...first of all you need to get your basic needs and slowly you can study part-time and then you can still earn money. Don't say no to anything. (Interview, December 10, 2012)

With four small children, Mariam dedicated her first couple of years in Winnipeg to caring for her children, improving her English and attending university. Eventually she worked at several call centres while continuing to apply for other forms of employment. Unsuccessful in her job search at the time, Mariam, like Amandeep, decided to apply for volunteer work and “this particular position was a good opportunity as it is a clinic” (Mariam, Interview Follow-Up, May 30, 2013). Mariam started training to become a reproductive health counsellor at a

women's health clinic. This position required several months of training and a one-year commitment. Mariam also worked in settlement offering assistance to Francophone newcomers. When asked if Manitoba is meeting the needs of female immigrant spouses Mariam commented:

I want to say yes, but as I am taking this training there are so many resources that women don't know, like even the health clinic. The friend that is here, almost, I don't know 10 years here, doesn't know that there is women's clinic so....make sure that women know the resources that is available to them...more information needs to be spread. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Angela emigrated from the Philippines to Winnipeg during the winter of 2012. After securing the necessary government documents Angela "began her job campaign in earnest" (Shahnasarian, 1991, p. 181) because:

...although I have money to support ourselves for the first few months my worry is how if I could not find a job then the money will run out. So I started, I started to look for a job, anything, any job but still I am not successful to find a job immediately. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

After one month of unemployment Angela attended training at Employment Solutions. She learned how to write a resume and answer interview questions. Two months after her arrival Angela was offered a job at Walmart as an overnight stocker. Angela reflected on this time:

...I had a hard time doing the job because it is all physical. I am not I am not used to doing that job before. I always cried every night, every time I left the house at 10 pm, and lonely, I always cried every night...I talk to myself that this not the right job for me. I...is this...is this the job that I go to Canada? (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

Angela continued working at Walmart while also searching for employment on job sites such as InDeed.ca and Job Bank. Soon after, Angela applied for and was chosen for a morning position at Walmart. Angela accepted the position and "was happy for that but still the

work is so hard, physical. There is a lot of lifting, climbing the stairs, so hard” (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012).

At this time Angela began to realize that if she wanted to work as an accountant in Manitoba she would have to upgrade her education and learn more about resources that were available to her. During her days off from work Angela studied Accpac and Simply Accounting at Success Skills Centre and was in contact with the Tap In Program. She also attended the one week express program at Manitoba Start and had her English level assessed at Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre. While she was getting her language level assessed Angela was informed about the Certified General Accountant Association of Manitoba and was encouraged to seek recognition of her credentials from the Philippines. After she received her Benchmark Level in English she visited the Certified General Accountant Association of Manitoba, where her credentials were assessed. Through her facilitator at Employment Solutions Angela was informed about additional resources she could access. Determined to enrol in the CGA courses but unsure how she would afford the tuition costs, Angela took her resume, credentials and official letter from CGA to two different Government of Canada Employment Services locations. While visiting the second location, she met with an accounting facilitator who examined her documents and awarded her a \$9000 two year grant that would enable her to enrol in CGA courses. Angela stated that she considered securing this grant her greatest success since she immigrated to Manitoba.

When asked to identify the greatest challenge that she has faced since immigrating to Manitoba, Angela shared:

The biggest challenges...with my family when we moved...for me, for myself, it is the job of how to get a job here. Not only the job because I am applying for any kind of

job but still a challenge of how to get with my related profession a job. So that is why I have worked hard on it. I planned on this day, on this month I should be in my accounting job...

Because I work hard on it, some of the Filipinos came here they just get job. That is enough, once they get job that is enough. Even though they are professionals back home. They are not they are not...they don't care if they will not practise their profession in this country but what is in their minds is just to get a job but I am different from those many Filipinos because.....I go here not to do a factory work. My dream is to go to Canada to practise my profession. So, in order for me to make things happen I should study and studying is so hard at my age. At my age but still it has been a challenge. I need to upgrade my knowledge more, my study so that I can get a better job, I can practise my profession. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

In his work with married mothers who relocated for their spouse Shidadeh (1991) noted that the strongest determinant of employment returns among wives was whether or not they played a subsidiary role in the family migration. Shidadeh (1991) stated that women who deferred to their husband had considerably less chance of securing employment following their migration. In Mariam's situation, her spouse initiated the idea of immigrating to Canada, with the goals of improving their English so that they might be able to secure a better job, provide more opportunities for their children's future and allow them to secure Canadian citizenship. Mariam did not have a long discussion with her spouse about the idea of immigrating and her only request was that the family eventually return to Mali. Mariam's role in the decision making process might have been a subsidiary one. However, this did not impact her ability to secure employment. Mariam obtained part-time employment within months of arriving and worked at several jobs. Most recently she worked full-time and helped support her family.

Language and Racism

When asked to describe how comfortable she felt with the English language prior to immigrating Mariam answered, "not at all" (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012). This did not deter her however. Following her arrival, Mariam spent over two years studying English

full-time and increased her benchmark level from 4 to 8 (the highest given in Manitoba). She worked on all levels of her language development (reading, writing, listening, speaking, pronunciation and idioms) studying at Red River College Language Training Centre and English Skills Centre.

Having improved her ability and comfort level in English Mariam obtained employment at several call centres. At one centre the customer asked Mariam if they could speak with someone who spoke English and when Mariam indicated that she could speak English the customer said, “No, I don’t like your accent. I want to speak to someone who doesn’t have an accent. Can I speak with your supervisor?” (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012).

Mariam’s experience with discrimination was not unique. In a study of the labour market experiences of immigrant women from Sub-Saharan Africa in Halifax it was noted: “...as far as accents go, racism is the real problem, because sound in itself does not present a functional problem; the treatment of a different sound as inferior is the issue (Tastsoglou & Miedema, as cited in Topen, 2011, p. 159).

Mariam eventually secured employment in a government call centre. One day, however, the manager who hired her informed her that she was no longer wanted in the program. She was told that it was because her “English was not good,” but her manager acknowledged this was not true and put her in another program. Mariam believed that the real reason for moving her was “because of her accent” and when she “learned about discrimination and the right to do a lawsuit it was too late...” (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012).

Mariam's experience with racism is in accordance with the findings reached in *An Evaluation of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program*. In this study, spouses identified a range of adjustment problems including language problems and discrimination. Of the spouses interviewed, nineteen or 38 percent stated that they experienced discrimination and 15 out of 19 stated that the discrimination occurred in the workplace or their place of employment (Carter, 2009, p. 101). Mariam's challenges around language and discrimination in the workplace were not unique and have been experienced by other newcomers in Manitoba.

When asked to comment on whatever has been most important to her about her move Mariam said:

The most important...I learned English and I was able to study. Going through everything that I went through and I am more strong as I talked to you, now I can stand out for myself more because I was just everything and now I can sometimes say *no* or *why*.... I changed and kind of more an extravert. (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012)

Spousal Relationship Following Immigration

Most of the women reported that they experienced some changes within their relationship following their immigration to Manitoba. For Vera, immigrating to Manitoba meant living with only her immediate family for the first time in their own home. Prior to immigrating Vera and her family lived with her mother and father-in-law in their home because of the high cost of home ownership. In Kazakhstan Vera worked six days a week and in Canada worked only five, thus allowing her more time to bond with her family. The absence of extended family was underscored as Vera reflected on her immigration experience: "We are family, unfortunately without grandparents, no proper way of life. We have become one and together overcome all the nuances of immigration" (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012).

There was also a shift in some of the dynamics between Vera and her spouse. As her husband was still learning English he depended on her to translate and help him navigate his new environment. Vera explained that her husband feels “uncomfortable...that is why we are always together” and that living in Manitoba is “very, very difficult for him because he tries to compare living in Kazakhstan and living here” (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012). Vera’s husband was employed and spoke Russian with many of his coworkers but was not working in his field of expertise. His work days were long—12 hours and combined work with English classes. Vera’s husband wanted to leave Manitoba and move, perhaps to Russia, where the culture and language would be more familiar. Vera described this situation as difficult but added that it is not only her family that struggled with comparisons between one’s home country and Manitoba, that she knew “a lot of family, somebody, or spouse, he or she, they always...how do you say... cry... Kazakhstan or Russia was better than here” (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012).

Dynamics might have shifted between Vera and her spouse. However, some of the expectations regarding gender roles remain entrenched. When asked to describe her relationship with her husband in their home country, Vera explained that in Kazakhstan “it is a man and then it is a woman” and as a result traditional gender roles ensued with women responsible for domestic duties and childcare while men were responsible for work outside the home (Vera, Interview, November 17, 2012). Some of these expectations followed Vera and her husband to Canada and renegotiating them is not a simple process. Similar to their life in Kazakhstan, Vera and her spouse both work full-time outside the home and Vera has commented to her husband, “Uh, I am so tired, I also work and I am exhausted. Why only I? What did you do?” and his response was, “If you don’t want, go and fix car” (Vera, Interview,

November 17, 2012). Following their immigration Vera's husband relied on her to translate for him and help him navigate his new milieu while simultaneously expecting that they maintain traditional gender roles that were established in their home country.

Both Rosa and Mariam discussed communication and the role it plays in their relationship following their immigration. Rosa's relationship had not changed. She continued to live with her husband as a couple and they talked and made decisions together. Mariam and her spouse no longer have easy access to their larger kin networks and as result their relationship is "different" and "more intimate" because, unlike in Mali where "everyone do whatever they want to do," they now must spend more time together talking and reaching a consensus regarding their children's education, items to purchase and discuss everything (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012).

It is not surprising that Mariam's relationship with her spouse has become more intimate and they discuss everything. In a study of immigrant Indian and Pakistani families in Saskatoon it was noted that the act of migration often results in a separation from families of orientation. Following their move to Canada, with no access to extended kin networks new immigrants become a nuclear family. The absence of relatives "ha[s] put all familial responsibilities on the couple, which of necessity may have contributed to a high degree of sharing" (Siddique, 1977, p. 29). Both Mariam and Vera reported that they were closer to their spouses perhaps as a result of having less access to family and friends back home and no prearranged support network in place following their immigration to Manitoba.

Mariam's spouse faced his own challenges after immigrating. Despite having improved his English, returning to school to study project management and moving back to Africa for a

year to work as a project manager and gain experience he was unsuccessful in his attempt to secure full-time employment in Winnipeg. As a result, Mariam was responsible for supporting her family. Mariam did not comment on the gender roles between them and if they changed following their immigration.

For Angela immigrating to Manitoba meant changes in financial expenditures, her routine and household responsibilities. Unlike in the Philippines, where Angela and her partner lived with her elderly mother in her home, they now rent an apartment together. Angela continued to help her mother and family back home financially by paying for the utilities in the Philippines. However she now had to budget her salary “because we are paying rent, we are paying everything and...luckily we are working together and sharing some expenses” (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012). Following their move to Manitoba, Angela’s partner secured employment and as a result they were “sharing everything” and Angela now helped with cooking and doing laundry. Reflecting on these changes Angela said, “It is okay yeah because we want to live here so...I have to accept that” (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012).

Isolation and Social Interaction

With the purpose of exploring Guruge and Collins (2009) statement that social isolation is “a significant reality for immigrant women,” all the women were asked if they or other newcomer women they know had felt isolated following their immigration to Manitoba (p. 9).

Working in settlement and having met many newcomers in her rural community Vera commented:

Maybe not isolated...they feel uncomfortable because they left a lot of friends in their home country you know and they try to get used to living here...maybe...they faced a lot of challenges. ...First of all, one of the challenges is language, yeah, it is language barrier. Not only women I know, family felt isolated because they can’t... how to

say...conversations...They don't have a friend maybe and it is very difficult to communicate with people. (Interview, November 17, 2012)

During her interview Vera indicated that she believed that her family had become “more close-knit” because, unlike in Kazakhstan where they could communicate in Russian with friends and family, “now there is less communication outside the home and there is also a language barrier that sometimes prevents us from going out and communicating more with Canadians” (Vera, Interview Follow-Up, June 13, 2013). Even though Vera can converse in Russian with many of her neighbours and co-workers, she has decided to make a concerted effort to look for opportunities to practise her English with other English speaking Canadians. Vera decided to attend church because she believed that there might be Canadians that she could communicate in English with at the service.

The correlation between language and the ability to engage in one's community is echoed by Tirone and Sweatman (2011): “Language barriers prevent many immigrants and especially women from accessing social groups and from even socializing on a superficial level with people they encounter during routine outings such as shopping, using public transportation, or when meeting their children's teachers” (p. 335).

Even for women who speak the language, socializing on a superficial level and navigating daily life in a new country could be a challenge. Prior to emigrating, Amandeep studied English for many years and was able to read, write and speak the language before moving to Manitoba. The school she taught math in also used English as its medium in math, science and social studies. It was not difficult for her to speak English in India but she struggled when she immigrated to Winnipeg because “...here people have different

accents...than me. I have, like maybe a different accent” (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012).

Amandeep described the first time that she visited the mall in Winnipeg with her spouse. When the Canadian cashier thanked her for her purchase, Amandeep struggled to understand what the woman said to her. It was difficult for Amandeep to understand “very common words” and as a result she was “very scared” and wondered, “Will I be able to communicate with anybody from Canada?” (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012). She did not have this fear back home in India because she could speak Punjabi, if she was not being understood, to clarify what she was saying but in Manitoba she has to “speak in English and I have to find my way to make myself clear to other...” (Amandeep, Interview, December 10, 2012).

Vera and Amandeep’s comments about the challenges spouses face regarding establishing friendships and language barriers and the implication they have on successfully integrating into society have been identified in previous research. Spouses in Carter’s (2009) research were asked if they had experienced any problems following their immigration to Manitoba and 28, or 56 percent, said “yes.” When the interviewees were asked to state the most difficult problem they faced seven identified language problems and three said “it was homesickness and missing their family, friends, and home country” (Carter, 2009, p. 101).

Some of the women were concerned about missing their family, friends and home country even prior to their immigration and utilized this concern to guide the discussion they had with their partner about immigrating to Canada. Mariam had one request for her husband, to promise that her family would eventually return to Mali. When asked the reason for her

request Mariam stated: “I knew that I would miss the social life and I know that is kind of our culture too” (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012).

Mariam faced a myriad of problems in her first year in Winnipeg and during this time felt the most isolated. With two small children, no paid or familial help, pregnant with twins, mounting financial concerns and her husband taking classes to improve his English while working part-time; Mariam struggled to adjust to her new reality. Compounding the domestic challenges she faced Mariam attended English classes full-time since she was unable to work and secure employment because of her limited English and pronunciation issues. Mariam also was not living in close proximity to any other people from the Malian community or to the French speaking Canadian woman that she had been partnered with through a settlement organization. Mariam reflected on this time: “We weren’t closer enough for them to come to visit me or for me to call them so I was all by myself” (Mariam, Interview, December 4, 2012). By her second year in Winnipeg, Mariam began to establish her own social networks and this helped temper her sense of isolation.

Angela spoke of the importance of being connected with her relatives back home in the Philippines, the role that technology played in making this possible and the strategies she employed to stave off isolation. Angela acknowledged that since she is “alone here” and, aside from her partner, her only other relatives are her brother and sister-in-law and their family, she relies on Skype to stay connected to her mother and her family. Skype allowed her to feel as if she was speaking with them personally. Angela also maintained contact with friends from the Philippines that immigrated to Manitoba. Utilizing Skype to maintain contact with her relatives back home helped her to:

...conquer my loneliness here because you see, I am alone here, when my partner is not around I am alone here just watching TV and sometimes there are times that I cry because I am so lonely. ...So but once I talk with them it is a relief. Last night I talked with them until 11 in the evening. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

Accessibility of Services

Asked to reflect on the settlement assistance they received following immigration, the majority of the women spoke very positively about the settlement services they accessed—both rural and urban. Vera said, “It was very friendly people... the people works in those services. I can’t complain” (Interview, November 17, 2012). All of the women however stated that family, friends, relatives and people in the community “...played the lead role in providing assistance in translation/interpretation, finding a job, finding housing, addressing health problems and shopping. Half the assistance with personal problems and legal matters also came from this source (Carter, 2009, p. 95). Even though all of the women accessed services, ranging anywhere from one to seven organizations, the majority of information came from relatives, friends or community members that provided them with their settlement information. Rosa and Angela both received information from their spouse or partner’s relatives; Vera from other immigrants that resided in her city and spoke the same language. Both Amandeep and Mariam, however, decided that their spouse, already living in Winnipeg, would provide their initial settlement information and act as an ambassador to their new community. The decision to make their spouse their primary source of information influenced how they accessed other settlement services and the timeliness of supports they would eventually receive. Reflecting on her experience Mariam commented: “...when I came my husband had already went to it (the settlement services) so I didn’t take the time to go to all of those but I kind of learned all of the resources one by one but we already had those information but as...like when we came...maybe Acceuill Francophone they gave...lots of papers” (Interview, December 4, 2012). Amandeep

and Mariam's decision to make their spouse their initial source of settlement information resulted in them accessing settlement services later on in their integration process and relying on other sources to supply information that might have already been available to them had they utilized settlement supports earlier. Mariam stated that she learned the majority of information from school; her classmates, teachers, presentations in class; and other newcomers within her social networks.

Angela reflected on the settlement assistance she received and services she accessed and offered this advice to other women who might be considering immigrating to Manitoba:

Well, just an advice for the newcomers, I think they should...especially those professional ones they...they should attend a government program upon arrival it is important they attend Manitoba Start, Employment Solutions, Success Skills training because it helps them to find a better job and it also help them how to market themselves because the resume here is not the same as the resume in our country. ...That is the thing that I learned...attending a government program before you find a job because a government program might help you. They might not give you a job but they might help you find a job. (Angela, Interview, December 23, 2012)

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS THE LIGHT

In this study I have explored the issues, challenges and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba with their partner or spouse. As I indicated at the outset of this study, the goals of this research were threefold: 1) To identify the main considerations affecting women's decisions to move; 2) to acknowledge and explore their issues, challenges and successes during and after relocating; 3) to identify the types of services that relocating women might benefit from.

In this concluding chapter, I present the implications this study offers, incorporating the key themes of this study such as discussion/decision making and choice; isolation/social interaction; employment; immigrant women with children; language; and racism. Contributing to the research was additional exploration in the following areas: spousal relationship in their home country, resources utilized during initial settlement period, relationship following immigration and accessibility of services. Before identifying the next steps, it is necessary to return to the questions which guide this study.

What are the Main Considerations Affecting Women's Decision to Move?

Through individual interviews and follow-up questions with five women who immigrated to Manitoba with their partner or spouse, I was able to identify and explore the main considerations that affected their decision to move. For some of the women it was their spouse who initiated the idea of immigrating to Manitoba and the reasons varied: to provide their spouse with the opportunity to learn English with the ultimate goal of securing a better job for him or to fulfill a long-term dream to live in another country. Agreeing to immigrate

might also benefit the women in a variety of ways: they too could improve their English, their children would receive a desired education abroad, they could reconnect with family and friends who were already residing in Manitoba and the family could obtain Canadian citizenship. Before agreeing to immigrate, however, the women had their own demands: not to leave any family members behind during the immigration process and to eventually return to their home country. Their spouses agreed to these requests.

The majority of women, however, not only initiated but sustained the idea of immigrating to Canada. Some of the women nurtured the idea for decades, others, several years. These women believed that immigrating would allow them to leave behind the corruption, racism and employment challenges that they struggled with in their home countries. Immigrating to Canada would provide them with an opportunity to reside in a First World country that they believed offered unlimited opportunities for newcomers. By moving to Manitoba they hoped to have more financial stability for their nuclear family and be better positioned to offer financial support to their kin networks in their country of origin.

What were their Issues, Challenges and Successes During and After Relocation?

Following their immigration to Manitoba the women were confronted with a number of challenges. With the exception of one woman whose husband had already purchased a home for them, the remaining women had to find housing for their families. Locating affordable and safe housing was a challenge in both urban and rural areas. This problem was compounded in Winnipeg due to the shortage in rental accommodations. For some of the women it took months to locate suitable accommodations while for others years.

Even though the majority of women had either a bachelor or masters degree credential, recognition was a problem because “[i]n the case of immigrant women, their credentials acquired in non-Western universities are systematically devalued and socially constructed as inadequate or non-existing” (Tastsoglou & Miedema, 2000, p. 56). Faced with the reality that their foreign credentials might not be recognized, women might make a “choice” to pursue another avenue: raising children, re-training or a combination of both (Tastsoglou & Miedema, 2000). Several of the women opted for a new career path as a result of their credentials not being recognized and childcare issues. One woman who worked as a physician in her home country applied to work as a sonographer and after being unsuccessful in her application decided instead to attend school full-time for a year to become a project manager. Another woman who had her masters in mathematics and had teaching experience pursued a new career path that she believed took less time to get recognized and eliminated her need to secure childcare. Her new career required course work and 900 hours of apprenticeship training. Two of the women attempted to get their credentials recognized and one is in the process of upgrading her education.

None of the women were able to secure employment in their field of expertise upon immigrating and half did manual labour for their first job. This is not uncommon considering the economic difficulties that women face following immigrating. Women often “end up in unsatisfying jobs with dangerous working conditions, low wages and few opportunities for advancement while still being responsible for most of the unpaid household labor” (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005, p. 48). After working in manual labour jobs for several months and acquiring Canadian work experience some of the women were able to secure positions that paid slightly better. All of these positions, however, were entry level. One of the women, who had an

undergraduate degree, was a professional in her home country and supervised over thirty staff members continued to work in a manual labour position because it offered her the same work schedule as her partner and made it possible for her to continue her studies part-time.

Despite their belief that immigrating to Canada would provide them with a life free from racism one of the women experienced otherwise. While working in call centres she was told by clients that they did not like her accent and would like to speak with someone who spoke English. The woman had completed Benchmark 8 (the highest level assigned in Manitoba) for English language learners and reassured the client that she could indeed speak English. While working at another call centre she was informed by the manager that they did not want her anymore but they failed to give her a clear reason for their decision. The woman suspected it was her accent. Tastsoglou and Miedema (2005) commented on the connection between language, accent and immigrant women's employment: "Although the relationship of language and especially accent barriers to employment is difficult to assess directly, language or accent problems still continue to plague most immigrant women and affect in multiple, sometimes subtle and indirect way, the quality of their lives in Canada" (p. 54). The woman was placed in a new program by her employer where she continued to speak in English.

Prior to immigrating, many of the women had extended family or paid help that assisted with childcare and domestic responsibilities. Such support networks made it possible for the women to balance their careers while ensuring that their children were cared for and household duties were fulfilled. Relatives and paid staff also helped to promote culture, language and traditional values to the children. Following their immigration to Canada, many of the women lost their access to their extended kin networks leaving them feeling isolated. They also could no longer afford paid help. Despite all of these challenges they did secure full-time

employment. For these women their workloads increased exponentially following immigration. Aside from working full-time they were now responsible for childcare, domestic duties, contributing to or financially supporting their families, ensuring their children understand their culture and maintain their mother tongue and assisting their spouse with immigration issues while simultaneously fulfilling expected gender roles. The act of migration “often disrupts gender roles and power relations within immigrant households, but the changes are not necessarily emancipatory” (Giles as cited in Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005, p. 48). Immigration for these women did not decrease their workload or the expectations on them, it increased them.

Some of the women had to grapple with spouses that were not satisfied with their new life in Manitoba. One spouse remained unemployed and his wife was supporting the family while the second, while working full-time, talked of returning to their country of origin or a neighbouring nation which shared the same language, values and culture.

Despite the challenges they faced following immigrating to Manitoba the women also experienced a variety of successes. All of the women who wanted to work were able to secure an entry level job within their first few months in the province and these positions made it possible for the women to contribute to the basic necessities of their family (Guruge & Collins, 2008). One woman was offered a “good job” in her first week in a rural community. She felt fortunate that unlike other immigrant women that she knew that were professionals in their home country, her first job did not involve working in a factory or doing manual labour. It did, however, place her in a work environment that many immigrant women either volunteer in or obtain employment in following their arrival in Canada—this being an “immigrant and multicultural company which provided a safe space and excellent opportunity for Canadian

work experience” (Tastsoglou & Miedema, 2000, p. 69). Aside from providing a safe space and opportunity for Canadian work experience this company has also made it possible for the woman to expand her social networks within her community, travel nationally to attend further training and represent her company, and contributed to the renewal of their corporate website through the creation of a video that profiled the company.

Two of the women attempted to get their credentials recognized. One woman was still waiting for feedback from an independent evaluation company while the second woman had successfully navigated the process through the public system and was able to secure \$9000 in funding towards upgrading her education. The woman is currently working full-time in an unrelated field while studying part-time for her new career in Canada.

The women with school aged children acknowledged how happy their children were following immigration. They praised the care their children received while in daycare and in school. For some women, it was the first time that their children did not cry when they woke them up to go to school. They celebrated their children’s happiness.

Many of the women spoke of their increased confidence in speaking English and how navigating the immigration and settlement process encouraged them to become more resourceful and assertive. They acknowledged their own strength and the strength of all women.

Several of the women commented that they had become closer to their partner or spouse following immigration. It is possible that this was a result of having reduced access to other kin networks and social supports that existed in their home country and had provided them with various forms of support and guidance.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Based on my findings I want to make recommendations for key stake holders such as: immigrant serving agencies, language educators, immigration authorities and dual-career consultants. Overall, the women were happy with the settlement services but that does not mean areas for improvement are not needed. These compelling findings should be used as a tool for awareness building and skill development for service providers as well as providing concrete suggestions that will inform policy development.

Prior to immigrating, all newcomers should be given an accurate summary of the current labour market and an honest assessment of their opportunity to work in their current profession following their immigration to Manitoba. Newcomers should also receive career maps that outline entry-to-practice requirements for professions and trades. Career maps should explain the assessment process, exams required and the costs incurred to write the exams. It is paramount that immigrant women and their spouses understand the obstacles they might face before they decide to immigrate because “What you want...often do not match expectations with reality then feel frustration and disappointing” (Vera, November 17, 2012). By providing immigrants with accurate information they can assess their expectations and their chances of experiencing success in Canada. Newcomers considering immigrating to Canada should identify the field they wish to work in before they immigrate and should start the process of credential recognition while still in their home country. Individuals considering immigrating to Manitoba should be advised that the lifestyle they enjoyed in their home country might not be replicated in their first few months or even years in Canada. Angela shared the following advice with colleagues from the Philippines who will be immigrating to Manitoba:

I usually advise them to be prepared. Work here is different from the Philippines. What we have in the Philippines we cannot get in here. If we have in the Philippines a good job, a good salary, stable life, during your first months stay in Canada there is a big difference and there is no turning back. (Interview, December 23, 2012)

Immediately following their relocation to Manitoba, immigrant women and their families need access to affordable and safe housing for their families. The majority of women in this study found housing through family or other newcomers and reside in areas largely populated by immigrants. Newcomers require information about housing availability early on and should be made aware of the range of options available: co-op housing, subsidized housing, rent to own. They should be informed about their rights and responsibilities regarding renting and home ownership. For some newcomers the concept of owning their own home might be new to them so information about mortgages and mortgage brokers should be introduced by a trusted source.

Until Manitoba follows the lead of Ontario and denounces the requirement for Canadian work experience when hiring immigrants or accrediting newcomer professionals, immigrants who relocate to Manitoba might still be expected to acquire Canadian work experience. To facilitate this process, newcomers should have increased access to internship and mentorship programs that allow them to utilize their talents and provide them with the opportunity to be matched with a professional from the same field. This would provide the newcomer with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Canadian workplace and industry trends, build a professional network and gain Canadian work experience. Employers who participate in mentorship programs would have an opportunity to demonstrate corporate leadership, increase their awareness of the skills and experiences offered by internationally trained professionals and build their capacity concerning how to work with and enhance services to people from different cultures. Mentors would have an opportunity to strengthen

their leadership and coaching skills, improve their inter-cultural awareness, spot talent for potential recruitment and gain an international perspective on their field or occupation.

Immigrant women are vanguards for the well-being of their families and when their English language proficiency is limited their ability to advocate on behalf of their loved ones and participate in their new environment is greatly diminished. Limited language proficiency can isolate women from the world around them and affect their mental health. Immigrant women face a variety of obstacles that might preclude them from accessing language classes such as lack of childcare and transportation issues and these issues should be considered when funding classes. Transportation and childcare should be provided for immigrant women so they can attend classes, improve their language ability and hopefully expand their social networks. Classes should be offered at a variety of times allowing women to create a schedule that complements their childcare, employment and familial demands. Classes should be offered during school hours in the same schools their children attend, on the weekends and in the work environment. Internationally-educated professionals should be encouraged to attend Enhanced Language Training for their occupations as many workplaces use jargon that is specific to the industry, as well as acronyms, idioms and professional slang. These programs provide a work placement while developing their language skills. Newcomers should also be made aware of linguistic or accent reduction classes.

It is vital that highly skilled and skilled newcomers are introduced and guided through the process of credential recognition. Service providers should notify immigrants as soon as possible if their credentials are time sensitive so they may plan their lives accordingly. Newcomers should be notified of the credential service agencies they can access. Information regarding credential recognition should be shared with all newcomers, not only immigrants that

possess a Benchmark 5 or higher. Distributing this information only to those newcomers who possess a Benchmark 5 or higher in English is discriminatory and reduces the amount of time these individuals have to pursue credential recognition.

Childcare that is accessible and affordable is paramount because it is women who are usually responsible for childminding and the absence of reliable childcare impacts women's ability to pursue employment opportunities. Information regarding resources should be disseminated to women so they can be aware of the services available and share this information with their family and within their social networks.

Basing hiring and accreditation decisions on whether a person has *Canadian experience* is not a reliable way to assess a person's skills or abilities. Employers and regulatory bodies should ask about the newcomer's relevant trade, professional or other qualifications and prior experience regardless of where they obtained it from. Job advertisements should clearly state the specific skills required and only ask for a level of proficiency that is necessary to do the job. Newcomers should be asked to demonstrate how their skills meet the requirements.

Employers should have language assessments that are specific to the occupations within their organization. Assessments would focus on the competencies required in the role and the level of English that would be needed to complete the task. Introducing employees and clients to a greater variety of languages would create a more diverse workforce and hopefully encourage employers to support their diverse staff rather than send them away when confronted with racism.

Newcomers should have access to workshops or individual information sessions that would address tensions that might arise due to changes in gender roles, children and adults

rights and provide legal information regarding parental rights if the couple should separate following immigration. Immigrants should be able to decide if they would like to receive this information in a workshop environment or in person.

To assist in the settlement process, newcomers should have access to emotional support. This could be in the form of counselling, a mentor or peer support. The individual should be of the same gender, speak the same language and have also immigrated. For the first several months meetings should occur on a weekly basis and gradually decrease in frequency.

Limitations of the Study

This study had a small sample size and, as a result, represented the views of only five women who immigrated to Manitoba with their partner or spouse. The experiences and stories included in this thesis are unique to these women and do not reflect the experiences of all women who immigrate to Manitoba. The immigration process can be very different for different women. Some women are Principal Applicants and are the ones with the most significant skills. Based on this research, it is impossible to determine if their experiences would be similar to those that are *tied movers*.

During the research it became clear that most of the women were unable to provide further data for a variety of reasons such as: travel to their home country, issues with childcare and work demands that prevented the development of long term data collection. One or more of the participants were reluctant to acknowledge certain sensitive questions about their relationship and how equitable it was. Often if the women made a comment about their immigration experience that could be perceived as negative they would immediately follow it up with a positive statement.

To enhance the organizational research as I developed this I presented the findings to frontline settlement service agencies. The initial presentation was for a service provider that deals with professional immigrants, the second for a large umbrella organization that serves as the first point of contact for newcomers. The feedback I received was that the data *did not reflect the stories of isolation they hear* and that the *most isolated women would have never heard about this research or had the opportunity to participate*. These statements were true. Women that were not connected to settlement supports would not have had the opportunity to participate in this research as all the women who participated were referred by settlement agencies that they had accessed in the past.

Towards the Light

For generations Canada's success as a nation has been connected with our country's ability to attract immigrants and provide them with opportunities to share their skills, knowledge and experiences with their new country. Partly as a result of our immigration policy that emphasizes education and occupational qualifications when evaluating newcomers many of the women who immigrate to Canada are more likely to have completed university than Canadian born women and are global professionals. All of the women that I interviewed had post-secondary education, worked in their professional field and had chosen or played a part in the decision to immigrate to Canada.

Following their arrival the women shared their skills, knowledge and experiences with their new country. Some of the women contributed to community development by volunteering in political office with newcomers, in public health regarding reproductive issues or informally

through dissemination of resources and supports within their own ethnic community and beyond.

The majority of women became wage earners within months of their arrival despite being unable to enter the labour market at a level commensurate with their education and skill level. They willingly worked in manual labour jobs or entry level positions that made it possible for them to contribute to their family's income or even become the sole supporter. All of the women understood that such positions also provided them with Canadian work experience and acted as a stepping stone to the greater labour market. When presented with opportunities for further professional development the women embraced them, attending further training in other provinces, initiating the renewal of their company's corporate website or participating in a radio interview to promote the services offered through their employer. Some of the women utilized government subsidized programs. However, none of them received social assistance.

Despite being employed outside the home, many of the women bore most if not all of the childrearing and domestic responsibilities. This was especially challenging considering the reduced access to kin networks or social supports they previously had in their home country. Rising above these challenges, the women also attempted to ensure that their children would be fluent in their mother tongue and would be familiar with their culture and language while being raised in a new country.

In response to the challenges that immigrant women faced regarding ensuring that their children stay connected with their language and culture, one woman had a creative solution. She became an entrepreneur. In her rural community, the woman started a business where

immigrant children would be able to continue to study the Russian language and culture alongside improving their knowledge of other subject areas. Children would also receive support regarding how to better integrate into Canadian society.

Faced with the challenging process of attempting to get their credentials recognized, some of the women elected to pursue additional education, often in a new subject area. The course work was demanding and the tuition was costly. Two of the women pursued credential recognition and one of the women successfully secured funding for an additional two years of schooling.

Several women faced difficult times regarding their spouse's adaptation and integration process following their immigration to Canada. Unable to secure employment in Manitoba, one spouse accepted a position overseas for a year which resulted in the family having to be separated and some of the children sent back home to be cared for by relatives. Following his return to Canada the spouse remained unemployed and the woman became the sole supporter for her family. Another spouse expressed the desire to immigrate to a country closer to their country of origin that shared the same language and culture. The women, however, did not succumb to the pressures placed on them by the stressors faced by their spouse and remained steadfast in their commitment to building a new life in Canada.

Five immigrant women who relocated to Manitoba with their partner or spouse were the focus of this research. The women had many stories to share: of their contributions to health, the economy, education and community development; of their commitment to multiculturalism in Canada by ensuring their children retain their culture and language while integrating in their new society; of their entrepreneurial spirit; and of their unwavering

determination to make a life for their family in Canada. The building of a nation is accomplished by families settling down and raising children, by communities coming together and contributing to health, education and social infrastructure. Immigrant women have many gifts to share and by investing in them Canada will be a more inclusive, vibrant and prosperous nation.

What I Will Tell My Daughter

In September, 2004, while sitting in my farmhouse in rural Vermont waiting for my divorce proceedings to begin, I was talking on the phone with my good friend from Winnipeg. As we reflected on my experiences as a woman who immigrated for her spouse I said, “One day I should write about it.” We both agreed. For several years I ruminated over the statement that I made. I wondered if I would be able to separate my story from the stories of others. Did I have the stamina, both physically and emotionally, to share not only my story but to give power to other women’s voices? Would the findings merely echo my experience or would they introduce new perspectives and plant the seed for social change?

Now five years later I have some of the answers and a greater understanding of what I would tell my daughter and any woman who is considering immigrating with their spouse or partner to a new country. Prior to making the decision whether to immigrate the couple should research the community they are planning on living in, they should find out if their occupations are regulated and, if so, the steps they will need to take to obtain credential recognition. If their occupation is not recognized will they be able to secure employment that is based on their training and work experience? The process of credential recognition should be started before immigrating.

They need to prepare financially, physically and mentally for the changes they will experience and understand that stress and depression might be part of their journey. They might be separated from their family members and social supports and will have to create new support systems. They should recognize that their familial roles might change or become more entrenched following their immigration.

Once they have collected the results of their research the couple should give themselves time to reflect on what they have learned before making the decision to immigrate because:

To be honest, I want to say that it is a very big decision to move to another country. It doesn't matter what kind of country...you need to know, you need to say to yourself why you decided to do this, why you decided to move to another country. (Vera, November 17, 2012)

Having reflected on their findings, it is paramount that the couple make the decision together—not one person making the choice for both of them. By both people being involved in the decision making process responsibility for the outcome is shared and relocating can become an empowering experience. Once they have decided to immigrate, the couple should research and make contact with settlement organizations prior to their arrival. Having access to and support from settlement agencies and ethno-cultural organizations following immigration can aid significantly in the settlement process.

To my daughter I would say that honesty, communication and flexibility are the keys to success. If the couple are honest in their communications with each other in regards to their motivations for immigrating, their short and long-term goals and the challenges they are wrestling with, and remain committed to each other and their life in their new country, they are more likely to successfully navigate the immigration process.

She should be aware that sometimes it is not possible to sustain one's initial plan. If it appears that there is a divergence between her settlement plans and those of her partner that despite their best efforts remain insurmountable, she should have the courage to move on and know that she is worthy of having her needs met—with or without her partner or spouse.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

First Interview

- 1) Tell me about your life back home-describe your education, employment, family and social supports.
- 2) What experience did you have with moving before immigrating to Manitoba?
- 3) What languages did you speak, read and write prior to your move?
- 4) How comfortable were you with the English language before immigrating to Manitoba?
- 5) How did the conversation about immigrating to Manitoba start? Describe your discussion with your partner.
- 6) What were some of the reasons you thought about immigrating to Manitoba?
- 7) What did you know about Manitoba prior to moving here?
- 8) How long did you wait to come to Canada and what did you do during this time to prepare for the move?
- 9) Describe your first year in Manitoba-how did you learn about housing, employment, credential recognition, government services, social supports etc.
- 10) How did your spouse learn about housing, employment, credential recognition, government services, social supports etc?
- 11) Talk about your relationship with your partner prior to moving.
- 12) Describe your relationship with your partner following your immigration to Manitoba. Has it stayed the same or changed? If it has changed, please explain how.
- 13) Was there an impact on your language during the first 6 months or first year in Manitoba?
- 14) What were some of the impacts that immigrating to Manitoba had on your family?
- 15) Tell me whatever has been most important to you about your move.
- 16) What do you feel were some of the biggest challenges that you face(d) when you moved in reference to family, career, relationship, government services etc?
- 17) Describe obstacles you have overcome. What have been your greatest successes?

- 18) What type of government funded or social services were or were not available to you when you first arrived?
- 19) What type of government funded or social services were or were not available to your spouse when he arrived?
- 20) Did your needs change from the first year you moved to Manitoba to now? If yes, please explain how.
- 21) Is Manitoba meeting the needs of female immigrant spouses? Please discuss.
- 22) What advice would you give other female spouses before immigrating to Manitoba?
- 23) Have you looked for employment since you immigrated? Why or why not? If yes, please describe your experience (s).

Second Interview

- 1) Have you or other immigrant women that you know felt isolated following immigrating to Manitoba? How do you feel now? Did this change?
- 2) Discuss the role that childcare plays in your life.
- 3) Have you experienced racism since you immigrated to Manitoba? Explain.
- 4) Tell me whatever has been most important to you about your move.
- 5) What should other people in Manitoba (who have never immigrated) know about newcomer women who relocate to Manitoba.

Questions Adapted for Language with Sample Answers

Vera

10) Can you talk about your relationship with your partner prior to moving? Talk about what your relationship was like with your husband before you moved.

V-Before you moved.

R-Yeah. Before you guys immigrated to Manitoba what was your relationship like with your spouse?

V-Ahhh, different

R- Okay, why would you say different?

V- I, I don't know. Maybe, ahh, now he feel that , ahh, how to say...can I say that he depends on..me... because I can speak in English and he can't speak in English, and if he needs to go something, for out of park, out of service, ahhh...he needs to go with me because I am the translator.

R-What do you mean out of park or out of service?

V- Out of service, for example, if you need to fix car, you need to go to the body shop...and he can't explain in English and he need to go to with me. Of course, in Kazakhstan he can do it without me.

R-Yes.

V-Yes. Maybe we felt..just a little bit separate and now, we are, how to say, our relationship is more stronger.

R-Would you say that relationship is stronger?

V-Yeah, yeah, not stronger. More...ahhh... we need always be together with each other (laughing). Even we go to the shopping , my husband..maybe it is only my husband. He never goes shopping alone..he doesn't know how to use this....

R-Interact? Bank machine? The bank card.

V-Yeah. He feels uncomfortable. This is why we are always together.

R-How is that?

V-I don't think that it is good, it is better on that hand...maybe it is better because we alone. We only speak with each other. For example when we lived in Kazakhstan of course we had a lot of friends and he had parents with whom he lives, of course it was convenient for him to live in Kazakhstan and here it is very, very difficult for him because he tries to compare living in Kazakhstan and living here. He says he wants to move, not to Kazakhstan maybe to Russia because they have Russian culture and Russian languages. I think of course it is convenient for you but it doesn't matter that it will be life better. Yeah... very difficult. Not only our family has such problems when compare. A lot of immigrants... compare...life in home country... and here.

R-They compare back home to their country...

V-Yeah..but I know a family who said "oh, everything, I like it, where I live, I like Canada.. I like everything" but I know a lot of family, somebody, or spouse, he or she, they always... how do you say..cry. Kazakhstan or Russia was better than here.

R-Who is crying the wife or the husband or both?

V-I think that, husband, yeah man. Man, yeah, man. They are maybe, how do you say, weak than women. Not..

R-Yes, weak.

V- Not hard. Women are more stronger than man (laughing).

Mariam

R-12) Describe your relationship with your partner following your immigration to Manitoba. Has it stayed the same or changed? If it has changed, please explain how. Tell me about your relationship after you have immigrated to Manitoba. Is it the same, is it different?

M-It is different.

R-Why is it different?

M-Because now we spend more time together

R-Okay, why do you spend more time together?

M-Because, we, I don't go, I don't have my parents here to go spend the day with them and he doesn't have his parents here, so it is different....and I think that when we came here, how to say....

R-Team?

M-Yeah, team andmore, like.....because... more close

R-Okay, more close, okay

M- So

R-Why, why were you more close?

M-Because we have to share everything... and we have to talk about everything that we are doing, like in Mali like, everyone do whatever they want but here

R-So in Mali, everyone can do what they want

M-Yeah basically, but there were some decisions that we were taking together but it is not here, here it is almost everything. We have to have concensus (sp?), both. Education of the children, when buying things, we ask each other and yeah, yeah. More intimate

R-More intimate? Why, why would you say that?

M- Because basically at night, like in my country, he was working at night, and he would come sometimes at midnight or sometimes the clinic would call us in case of emergency they would call but here we don't .One time he was working at night shift but from 3-11, but then from after that he would go home and spend more time alone together...

R-Have these changes been positive or negative?

M-Positive.

R-Okay and you would say they are positive because?

M-Because we are more close. Like one time, it was... we had kind of...(inaudible) of communication as like we were all busy

R- One time you had what of communication? Sorry

M-Yeah, communication problems

R-Okay

M-As we like to share everything but then one time, like, when I had the twins, you know, and he would go work at 11, he was doing IEPUS (sp?) so one time I felt like we weren't communicating enough. I found it difficult, but I don't think that he found it difficult... but now...

R-Was there a change in that?

M-Now?

R-You said that there was a time where you felt when you weren't communicating as well, and you were busy with the twins, and he was doing IEPUS (sp?) and then it changed .Why did it change?

M-Yeah, when he was done. Even after that, after IEPUS ,he went to university, and even that I found that difficult because he was always doing homeworks and assignments....

R-Here to the University of Manitoba?

M-Winnipeg

R-University of Winnipeg-what was he taking?

M-Project Management

APPENDIX B

Communication with Participants

Participant	Interview	Written Communication	Email Communication
Vera	1 x 120 min	23 pages	3 page Follow-Up email- June 13, 2013
Mariam	1 x 120 min	27 pages	1 page Follow-Up email:May 30, 2013
Amandeep	1 x 120 min	20 pages	
Rosa	1 x 120 min	17 pages	1 page Follow-up email: May 21, 2013
Angela	1 x 120 min	23 pages	1 page Follow-Up email: May 27, 2013
Additional Data Sources	Nor'West Co-Op Community Health Centre Eastman Immigrant Services Success Skills Employment Solutions for Immigrants/Manitoba Start	-phone call with the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Worker Nor'West Annual Publication -website	

Table 2: Communication with Participants

The chart above provides the name of the participant, the length of their interview, the number of pages transcribed and details regarding follow-up communication that might have taken place via email. Additional data sources are also provided.

APPENDIX C

Protocol Submission Form



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards

CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road

Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2

Protocol # _____

(Assigned by HES Admin.)

FORT GARRY CAMPUS RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM

Psychology/Sociology REB []

Education/Nursing REB [X] []

Joint-Faculty REB []

Check the appropriate REB for the Faculty or Department of the Principal Researcher. This form, attached research protocol, and all supporting documents, must be submitted in quadruplicate (original plus 3 copies), to the Office of Research Services, Human Ethics Coordinator, CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road, 474-7122.

Principal Researcher(s) _Randeon Kopytko_____

Status of Principal Researcher(s): (please check): Faculty [] Post-Doc [] Student:

Graduate [X] [] Undergraduate [] WRHA Affiliate [] Other []

Specify: _____

Address (to receive Approval Certificate): _***** _____

Phone: _***** _ Fax: _____ Email: _***** _____

Project Title: _Immigrant Women Who Relocate For Their Spouse: Issues and Challenges_____

Start date _October 1, 2012_____ Planned period of research (if less than one year):
_December 20, 2012

Type of research (Please check):

Faculty Research

Self-funded Sponsored

(Agency) _____

Administrative Research

Central

Unit-based

Student Research

Thesis Class Project

Course Number: ____

Signature(s) of Principal Researcher(s): _____

For student research: This project is approved by department/thesis committee. The advisor has reviewed and approved the protocol.

Name of Thesis Advisor _Clea Schmidt_____

Signature _____

(Required if thesis research)

Name of Course Instructor: _____

Signature _____

(Required if class project)

Persons signing assure responsibility that all procedures performed under the protocol will be conducted by individuals responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the protocol will be submitted to the REB for its approval prior to implementation. Signature of the thesis advisor/course instructor indicates that student researchers have been instructed on the principles of ethics policy, on the importance of adherence to the ethical conduct of the research according to the submitted protocol (and of the necessity to report any deviations from the protocol to their advisor/instructor).

Ethics Protocol Submission Form
(Basic Questions about the Project)

The questions on this form are of a general nature, designed to collect pertinent information about potential problems of an ethical nature that could arise with the proposed research project. In addition to answering the questions below, the researcher is expected to append pages (and any other necessary documents) to a submission detailing the required information about the research protocol (see page 4).

1. Will the subjects in your study be
UNAWARE that they are subjects?
No _____ Yes X

2. Will information about the subjects be
obtained from sources other than the
subjects themselves? _____ Yes X No

3. Are you and/or members of your research team in a
position of power vis-a-vis the subjects? If yes,
clarify the position of power and how it will be
addressed. _____ Yes X No

4. Is any inducement or coercion used to obtain
the subject's participation?
No _____ Yes X

5. Do subjects identify themselves by name
directly, or by other means that allows you or

anyone else to identify data with specific subjects?

If yes, indicate how confidentiality will be maintained. What precautions are to be undertaken in storing data and in its eventual destruction/disposition.

Yes No

6. If subjects are identifiable by name, do you intend to recruit them for future studies? If yes, indicate why this is necessary and how you plan to recruit these subjects for future studies.

Yes No

7. Could dissemination of findings compromise confidentiality?

Yes No

8. Does the study involve physical or emotional stress, or the subject's expectation thereof, such as might result from conditions in the study design?

Yes No

9. Is there any threat to the personal safety of subjects?

Yes No

10. Does the study involve subjects who are not legally or practically able to give

their valid consent to participate

(e.g., children, or persons with mental health problems
and/or cognitive impairment)?

If yes, indicate how informed consent will be obtained
from subjects and those authorized to speak for subjects.

_____ Yes X
No

11. Is deception involved (i.e., will subjects be
intentionally misled about the purpose
of the study, their own performance, or other
features of the study)?

_____ Yes X No

12. Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons
in care might be discovered in the course of the study?
If yes, current laws require that certain offenses against
children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities.
Indicate the provisions that have been made for complying
with the law.

_____ Yes X No

13. Does the study include the use of personal health information?
The Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) outlines
responsibilities of researchers to ensure safeguards that
will protect personal health information. If yes, indicate
provisions that will be made to comply with this Act
(see document for guidance -
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html>).

_____ Yes X No

Ethics Protocol Submission Form

(Required Information about the Research Protocol)

Each application for ethics approval should include the following information and be presented in the following order, using these headings:

- 1. Summary of Project:** Attach a detailed but concise (one typed page) outline of the **purpose** and **methodology** of the study describing **precisely** the procedures in which subjects will be asked to participate.

To satisfy the requirements for my master program, I will be conducting a study to explore the struggles and successes that immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba primarily for their partner's work opportunities. The inspiration for this research is based on my own personal experience as an immigrant woman who relocated for her spouse. Over the past fifteen years, Manitoba's aggressive immigration strategy has brought thousands of newcomers to the province, many of whom relocated with spouses and families. While the experiences of principal applicants have been comprehensively documented (Carter, Pandey, and Townsend, 2010), the experiences of women who relocated for their partners has garnered less consideration in the research.

Through my literature review I learned of a research study titled, *An Evaluation of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program*. The research stated that spouses struggled with a range of adjustment problems such as adapting to the climate in Manitoba (25 %), language problems (22 %), cultural adjustment (17 %) and missing their country, family and friends. Out of 50 spouses that were interviewed, 12 (or 24 percent) claimed to have experienced difficulties when they tried to access education or training in Manitoba and explained that, "these difficulties were related mainly to poor language skills or financial costs"(Carter, 2009, p. 90) Language skills also had an impact when spouses (despite being highly educated) were seeking recognition for their credentials and found that, "language skills play a key role in credential recognition and successful integration, particularly labour force integration"(Carter, 2009, p. 89)

Perhaps the most telling feedback from the spouses was revealed when they were asked to rate their satisfaction with their community and the kind of job opportunities it provided for them. Carter discovered that:

Forty percent strongly disagreed with the statement "There are good opportunities here for me" and another twenty percent disagreed. Over fifty percent believed that it would be easier for them to find a job in some other community (Carter, 2009, p. 99).

Such results lead me to question how successfully these communities are meeting the employment needs of newcomer spouses. If they are not able to secure satisfactory employment soon after arriving, frequently struggle to have their previous credentials recognized and report that other communities might offer them more opportunities perhaps it is time to delve a little further and provide more opportunities to hear the voices of newcomer spouses.

My study is guided by the following questions:

- 1) What are the main considerations affecting women's decisions to move? 2) What were their successes and challenges during and after relocating? 3) What types of services might relocating women benefit from?

2. Research Instruments:

The overarching paradigm that I will draw on involves a qualitative inquiry focusing on multiple case studies. As a researcher who works in the field of immigrant education and settlement I will be drawing on this community to recruit participants. The participants will be chosen through purposeful sampling and will focus on recruiting four women who have been settled in Canada for different amounts of time and are from various racial and linguistic backgrounds. One of the participants will be from the Philippines as this is currently the top language group in Manitoba. The other women will be from India, Eastern Europe and Africa. The women will reside in both urban and rural communities in Manitoba. The recruitment will not happen under the situation of coercion, conflict of interests, or power-over. The participants will voluntarily participate in the study without any material compensation.

I will be collecting data from semi-structured in-depth interviews. There will be two sessions of interviews: each one lasting about 60-120 minutes in length. The interviews will be audiotaped to facilitate composing the transcripts and making modifications. The first interview will include approximately 20 questions and will take about 1-2 hours. Participants will have an opportunity to engage in “member-checking” to review the transcript and to modify, edit, or delete any information in the transcript. The second interview will include 6 questions and will take about 1 hour. Participants will have an opportunity again to review the transcripts from the second interview, modify, edit or delete any information in the transcript. Moreover, for the purpose of triangulating data and allowing participants to identify issues and insights they might want to raise at the next interview the researcher will keep a reflective journal and data will be added right after each interview session. In some occasions, when the interviewees feel comfortable, I will take notes during the interview session.

All transcribed interview material will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office and no one else will have access to it.

Upon the approval of ethic review, I will post signs in public areas such as ethno-cultural centres and settlement organizations and English as an Additional Language classes. Recruitment letters will also be posted in EAL journals. I will also distribute information through phone calls and internet communications.

First Interview

- 1) Tell me about your life back home-describe your education, employment, family and social supports.
- 2) What experience did you have with moving before immigrating to Manitoba?
- 3) What languages did you speak, read and write prior to your move?
- 4) How comfortable were you with the English language before immigrating to Manitoba?
- 5) How did the conversation about immigrating to Manitoba start? Describe your discussion with your partner.
- 6) What were some of the reasons you thought about immigrating to Manitoba?
- 7) What did you know about Manitoba prior to moving here?
- 8) How long did you wait to come to Canada and what did you do during this time to prepare for the move?
- 9) Describe your first year in Manitoba-how did you learn about housing, employment, credential recognition, government services, social supports etc.
- 10) How did your spouse learn about housing, employment, credential recognition, government services, social supports etc?

- 10) Talk about your relationship with your partner prior to moving.
- 11) Describe your relationship with your partner following your immigration to Manitoba. Has it stayed the same or changed? If it has changed, please explain how.
- 12) Was there an impact on your language during the first 6 months or first year in Manitoba?
- 13) What were some of the impacts that immigrating to Manitoba had on your family?
- 14) Tell me whatever has been most important to you about your move.
- 15) What do you feel were some of the biggest challenges that you face(d) when you moved in reference to family, career, relationship, government services etc?
- 16) Describe obstacles you have overcome. What have been your greatest successes?
- 17) What type of government funded or social services were or were not available to you when you first arrived?
- 18) What type of government funded or social services were or were not available to your spouse when he arrived?
- 19) Did your needs change from the first year you moved to Manitoba to now? If yes, please explain how.
- 20) Is Manitoba meeting the needs of female immigrant spouses? Please discuss.
- 21) What advice would you give other female spouses before immigrating to Manitoba?

Second Interview

- 6) Have you looked for employment since you immigrated? Why or why not? If yes, please describe your experience (s).
- 7) Have you or other immigrant women that you know felt isolated following immigrating to Manitoba? How do you feel now? Did this change?
- 8) Discuss the role that childcare plays in your life.
- 9) Have you experienced racism since you immigrated to Manitoba? Explain.
- 10) Tell me whatever has been most important to you about your move.
- 11) What should other people in Manitoba (who have never immigrated) know about newcomer women who relocate to Manitoba.

3. Participants:

As a researcher who works in the field of immigrant education and settlement I will be drawing on this community to recruit participants. The participants will be chosen through purposeful sampling and will focus on recruiting four women who have been settled in Canada for different amounts of time and are from various racial and linguistic backgrounds. One of the participants will be from the Philippines as this is currently the top language group in Manitoba. The other women will be from India, Eastern Europe and South America. The women will reside in both urban and rural communities in Manitoba. The recruitment will not happen under the situation of coercion, conflict of interests, or power-ver. The participants will voluntarily participate in the study without any material compensation.

4. Informed Consent:

Besides distributing the recruitment letter to each participant, the nature of the study will be orally explained to the participants. Consent in writing will be obtained from each participant when she agrees to participate and before I start the interview. The consent letters will be prepared on official University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education letterhead. Since my population is a vulnerable one, I will have information for a counselling service (e.g., Mount Carmel, Immigrant Women's Counselling, Nor'West Co-Op Community Health Centre etc.) available to pass along to participants in the event that they experience difficulties during the research. Participants will also be provided with names of several counselors such as Emmi-Bacani-Tipan at Nor'West Co-Op Community Health Centre, Fatima Siyawareva at Immigrant Women's Counselling Service and Vaska Karamanova at the Family Centre.

5. Deception:

There is no deception.

6. Feedback/Debriefing:

Interview transcripts will be provided to participants for review and member- checking. The participants will have the opportunity to add, delete, and clarify their answers in the transcripts. The participants can choose to receive the transcripts in hard copy or in electronic format. A copy of the final report will be sending to the participants in hard copy or electronic form.

7. Risks and Benefits:

There is no risk or benefit of the proposed study.

8. Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Interview participants will choose a pseudonym. I will use pseudonyms in all reports generated from the research to protect confidentiality. All research data and the transcripts will be stored in the researcher's password-protected laptop and will be destroyed two years after the completion of the study.

9. Compensation:

No compensation will be provided.

10. Dissemination:

Findings will be shared on MSpace and through presentations for service providers.

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Letter (for the public)



Randean Kopytko

Winnipeg, Manitoba *****

Date:

Dear participant:

My name is Randean Kopytko. I am a graduate student from the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting research for my thesis to complete the requirement of my master program in Teaching English as Second/Additional Language. This study is to learn about the issues and challenges that immigrant women face who relocate to Manitoba for their spouse. All participants should have benchmark level 5 or higher in English.

I am asking for your voluntary participation in my study, which I hope will lead to a better understanding on these questions: 1) What are the main considerations affecting women's decisions to move? 2) What were their successes and challenges during and after relocating? 3) What types of services might relocating women benefit from? What I am asking from you is to voluntarily participate in two interview sessions. The two interview sessions will be tape recorded. The first interview will include about 15 to 20 questions related to issues and challenges immigrant face when they relocate to Manitoba. Participants are then invited either in person or electronically to review the transcripts and to make any modifications. The second interview will include 6 questions related to issues and challenges immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba. Participants are then invited either in person or electronically to review the transcripts and to make any modifications. Each session will last 60~120 minutes. The appointments and locations for the interview will be chosen at your convenience.

For the purpose of documenting insights and allowing participants to identify issues they might want to raise between interviews the researcher will keep a reflective journal. This journal will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office and no one will have access to it.

You will be choosing a pseudonym at the beginning of the first interview and your name will remain anonymous throughout the study. All the data will be well kept to protect your identity and personal information. If you are interested, the summary of the final report will be provided to you. You are under no obligation to agree to participate in this research. However, if you choose to do so, you will be free to raise questions or concerns with me at any time throughout the study. You may withdraw without penalty at any time. All the data obtained from the interview will not be used without your permission. All the data will be kept in my password protected laptop and will be destroyed two years after the completion of research.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at *****or ***** or the

Project supervisor: Dr. Clea Schmidt Phone number: 204-474-9314 E-mail: schmidtc@cc.umanitoba.ca

Sincerely,

Randean Kopytko

APPENDIX E

Consent Letter



Research Project Title: Immigrant Women Who Relocate For Their Spouse: Issues and Challenges

Researcher(s): Randeon Kopytko

Project supervisor: Dr. Clea Schmidt, Professor of Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

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

I, _____, agree to take part in Randeon Kopytko's research project on issues and challenges that immigrant women might face when they relocate to Manitoba for their spouse.

I understand that my participation will involve

- Two 60-120 minutes audio taped interviews about experiences and thoughts about immigrating to Manitoba for my spouse
- Two 60-120 minute meetings to review and provide feedback on my interview transcripts
- Some of our conversations related to immigrating to Manitoba will be recorded and included in the study
- I'm also invited to help with the member-checking when the composition of my section is complete.

I understand that to help protect my anonymity, I will be asked to read and review my interview transcripts. This process will allow me the opportunity to correct any mistakes, as well as to edit any information that I feel is too sensitive or that I feel would serve to identify me. I understand that my specific answers and comments will be kept confidential. I understand that my name will not be identified in any report or presentation that may arise from the study. I understand that only the principal researcher, the project supervisor Dr. Clea Schmidt, and two other thesis committee members: Dr. Thomas Carter and Dr. Krystyna Baranowski will have the access to the information collected during the study. I understand that direct quotes from the data I provide maybe used in the research and that there is no anticipated benefit for participation. I understand that the taped-recorded data as well as the transcribed information will be stored in the researcher's password protected laptop plus back-up hard drive and will be destroyed two years after the completion of this study.

The research will provide participants with an opportunity to assist in the advancement of knowledge that will contribute information regarding how Manitoba can better serve immigrant women. The risk is minimal given the number of women that have immigrated to Manitoba over the past 15 years and participation is voluntary. The researcher will make every effort to maintain confidentiality. Should participants identify that they have or might experience stressful situations I will provide several

Researcher's Signature

Date

After the first interview, the research will send me the interview transcript for me to review.

____ I prefer to receive my interview transcript via e-mail:
address _____

____ I prefer to receive my interview transcript in hard copy:
address _____

I would like to receive a copy of the final report.

____ I prefer to receive the summary of the final report via e-mail:
address _____

____ I prefer to receive the summary of the final report in hard copy:
address _____

APPENDIX F

INVITATION FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

IMMIGRANT WOMEN WHO RELOCATED FOR THEIR SPOUSE TO MANITOBA

My name is Randeon Kopytko. I am a graduate student from the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting research for my thesis to learn about the issues and challenges immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba for their spouse. I am asking for your voluntary participation in my study. I hope it will lead to a better understanding of these questions:

- 1) What are the main considerations affecting women's decisions to move?
- 2) What were their successes and challenges during and after relocating?
- 3) What types of services might relocating women benefit from?

You will be asked to voluntarily participate in two tape-recorded interview sessions to talk about questions related to the issues and challenges immigrant women face when they relocate to Manitoba for their spouse. Each interview session will last 60-120 minutes. The appointment and location for the interview will be chosen at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact:

Researcher: Randeon Kopytko

Phone number: *****

E-mail: *****