

The Preservation and Transmission of Culture and Religion
Among Dietsche (Low German) Mennonite Returnees to Southern Manitoba

by

Tina Fehr Kehler

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Like many immigrants to Canada, the Dietsche (Low German) Mennonites face challenges of retaining and propagating their culture and religion to the next generations. This thesis explores the extent that Dietsche Mennonite mothers have been able to preserve and transmit their culture and religion to the next generation in southern Manitoba. I conducted thirteen interviews questioning respondents about their concerns with and strategies for preservation and transmission, as well as about their relationships with other Mennonites and Canadians. I used John Berry's acculturation typology to analyze the data and compared their experiences with other immigrant women. Despite preservation of some traditions, over time many support interactions and contacts with those outside Dietsche circles. While a few of the women used more separatist strategies than others, the majority used a variety of strategies, evidence the non-linear fashion of acculturation.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my children, Griffin and Emilia

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis explores how Dietsche¹ (Low German) Mennonite women from Latin America have been able to preserve their cultural and religious traditions upon their return to Canada through their use of various acculturation strategies. It is based on 13 interviews I conducted with immigrant Dietsche women living in southern Manitoba. These women are part of a return migration of conservative/separationist Mennonites who left Canada for Latin America in the 1920s and 1940s. This thesis contributes to the knowledge about Dietsche Mennonites, as well as contributing to the literature in Mennonite studies. It also provides insight into other areas including immigrant studies, particularly in regards to identity and acculturation, women, and return migration. To this end, I have tried to situate the lives of Dietsche women by comparing them with other immigrant women. In this way, I hope to highlight their similarities and differences from other migrant groups which will aid in contextualizing their lives in southern Manitoba. Furthermore, I situate the women within the history of Dietsche Mennonites. Without this context, it would be impossible to understand the high value placed on cultural, linguistic and religious preservation. Because this thesis is based on a relatively small number of participants, it is not meant to be generalizable to the whole population of Dietsche Mennonites living in Canada. It is meant to present a voice to members of this ethno-religious group and to promote greater understanding of this little researched population.

Readers of this thesis are encouraged to consider the following statements in order

¹My use of the term “Dietsche” applies to all Mennonites coming from Latin America who have an ancestral heritage in Canada regardless of their Church affiliation, (i.e., whether they originate from an Old Colony, Kleine Gemeinde or Sommerfelder origin.)

to fully contextualize the analysis of Dietsche Mennonite women. Firstly, the thesis tends to a celebratory nature rather than critical examination of Dietsche culture. The nature of language around preservation and transmission in immigration studies tends towards embracing cultural heritage while viewing the loss of culture as tragic (Davore and London, 1999). Thus the thesis examines the more positive aspects of the culture rather than the critical analysis seen in other academic research. Furthermore, it is not meant to respond to recent negative portrayals of the Dietsche in the media (see for example Wente, 2002).

Second, it must also be noted that this thesis largely does not analyze power relations nor does it provide an outsider's view of Dietsche culture and religion. Because of these limitations, it does not significantly explore struggles within the community nor those between Dietsche and non-Dietsche. While it looks at struggles between parents and children, an analysis of "power" in the family is largely absent. Questions about authority in the home arose occasionally during our conversations, however, the information provided by the women did not bring clarity to the gendered division of labour or marital/family relations. Since the question of cultural preservation tended to lend itself to more positive language, this thesis does not dwell on the negative aspects of cultural ethnocentrism. As a result, further research should investigate power on gender relations, religious, linguistic, and cultural preservation within the Dietsche Mennonite culture.

The rest of the introduction discusses some important concepts to familiarize the reader with the research and the Dietsche people, along with situating this research within

the context of my own life.

I. Personal Reflection

I am the daughter of Dietsche Mennonite immigrants from Latin America. My mother's goals were to raise me and my siblings to be good Christians and to get a good education. She preserved some aspects of her traditional religious and cultural heritage, while introducing aspects of the new host culture and religion, and assimilating into Canadian society over the years. As a sociologist, I can now reflect upon the different strategies she used to attain a balance between preservation of Dietsche heritage and our integration into a new culture. Early on, she used both separationist and integrationist strategies, increasing her integrationist but using more assimilationist strategies as we grew older.

Now I am an adult with children of my own and I am considering my own religious and cultural heritage. I am evaluating what has been passed onto me, and what I am transmitting to my children. I consider myself to be a religious and cultural Mennonite. I was baptized in a Mennonite church and am a practicing member of my religion. I also married a Mennonite, though one who has no roots in the Dietsche experience. I am fluent in Low German, have had training in High German, and observe some cultural traditions. I have integrated into the larger society and have assimilated with respect to clothing and head coverings. Like many other Dietsche Mennonites in my study, I grew up on a farm where my mother grew a large garden, kept animals and sewed most everything in the home. As a result, I too have an attachment to the land and try my own hand at gardening and canning. However, because of my university

education, this interest has led me to become concerned about issues of sustainable land use and environmental degradation. I live in a largely Mennonite populated rural community with many other Dietsche. My social networks revolve around family, church and the larger Mennonite society. I intend to raise my children as practicing Mennonites. I want them to be cognizant of their Dietsche heritage and their place in Mennonite history and society. I am attempting to teach them some Low German, but because my husband is not fluent, it is difficult to speak it consistently. Unfortunately, I believe that they will not be fluent when they grow up. Ultimately, I would like them to identify themselves as religiously and culturally Mennonite, observe the ideals of peace and social justice, and think critically of the culture in which they live.

II. Preservation and Transmission Of Culture

Since this thesis explores the extent to which women in a particular ethno-religious group *preserve* and *transmit* their culture and religion, it is necessary to define a few terms. First, “acculturation” is the term used to describe the process through and extent to which a newcomer establishes a relationship to the larger society. On the part of the newcomer, his/her relationship is determined by two factors, first whether an immigrant wishes to preserve their culture and religion and second their desire for contact with the larger society. “Preservation” includes the maintenance of culture and religion, including the aspects that endure, and the means used to perpetuate them. For immigrants, in the context of a majority host society, preservation may entail the continuation of heritage culture, language, and religion in relation to their new environment. Preservation does not necessarily suggest that culture or religion are

replicated; instead adjustments are often made *vis-a-vis* interactions with a new environment. As a result, religious and cultural preservation is not the exact duplication of a culture since historical, geographical and temporal realities in which culture is realized cannot be reproduced (Isajiw, 1999:193). Preservation of culture refers to those aspects of the previous culture and religion that continue to be observed though they may slightly differ from their original form. Those who preserve culture and religion use a variety of separationist and integrationist acculturation strategies while those who acculturate to the dominant society tend to utilize assimilationist and integrationist strategies.² However, none of these strategies is absolute. As the analysis of this thesis unfolds, it will be shown that the women tend to utilize different strategies depending on the context.

“Transmission” refers to the promulgation of aspects of culture and religion to the next generation. It refers to the passing on of ways of being, values, religious beliefs and practices, and forms of culture such as language and dress. The family is a key component in the propagation of culture. Mindel (1998:8) states that “the maintenance of ethnic identification and solidarity ultimately results in the ability of the family to socialize its members to the ethnic culture and thus to channel and control, perhaps program, future behaviour.” With respect to ethnic groups, transmission constitutes the “socialization” of their children into their heritage culture within context of a new society. Since women take on the primary task of child care and socialization of children in Dietsche society, they were the subjects of this study.

²These strategies will be defined in the following chapter.

III. Return Migrants

It is necessary to define other terms in order to understand the situation of Dietsche immigrants in southern Manitoba. They are undergoing what migration literature refers to as “return migration,” and are thus considered “return migrants.” Those who have emigrated to a new location with the intention of remaining permanently, but then decide to return to their original location, are said to undergo return migration (Falk and Hunt, 2004: 490). “Return migrant” refers to the initial migrants as well as their descendants (Takeyuki, 2004). The Dietsche Mennonites immigrated to Latin America in the 1920s and 1940s from Canada. They and their descendants have been returning ever since their departure. Returning to southern Manitoba, the ancestral home of many of the returnees, is part of their acculturation strategy. Throughout the paper, I refer to the Dietsche as either “immigrants” or “returnees.” Both terms are appropriate. The returning Dietsche encounter the same issues as other ethno-religious immigrants because of the lack of integration prior to their departure from Canada and their relative isolation from the larger Latin American society. However, the term “returnee” acknowledges their history in Canada which shapes their current acculturation.

IV. Notes on the use of “Latin America” and “Diesche”

Finding an appropriate term to describe the women in my study proved to be more difficult than I had expected. While many of the women interviewed came from Mexico, others had experiences in different Central and South American countries. Because it is factually incorrect and ignores those from Central and South American origins, I do not use the term “Mexican Mennonite” as is frequently used by those outside the Mennonite

community under study. When I discuss the geographic origins of the women in this thesis, I use the term “Latin America” to be inclusive of these various geographical areas. Furthermore, given the small number of women in these rural communities, the use of the generic “Latin America” term helped to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

I use the term “Dietsche” in this thesis since many of the women identified themselves as such, though the label is problematic for various reasons. First, they are generally referred to as “Mexican Mennonites” or “Kanadier” by the larger Mennonite population. There is a sense from a couple of the interviews that the term “Mexican Mennonite” is rejected since it aligns them with the Latin population of which they do not see themselves apart. Royden Loewen³ also suggests that their preference for the term “Dietsche” may be an unconscious indicator of xenophobia. In other words, some of the women may believe that the Latin culture is inferior and do not wish to be associated with it. I would add more positively, that the term “Dietsche” is used by these Mennonites in Latin American as a means of identifying themselves as different and apart not only from the Latin American population but also from other Mennonites and as a means of cultural preservation in southern Manitoba.

Utilizing the term “Dietsch” rather than “Kanadier” is also problematic since “Kandier” is used by many “outsiders” in reference to this population. The term “Kanadier” is the anglicized term for the Low German word *Kanädja*. *Kanädja* refers to Mennonites who immigrated to Canada from Russia between 1874 and 1878 and was used to differentiate them from Mennonites who immigrated to Canada from Russia in

3 Personal report.

the 1920s and 1940s (Thiessen, 2003:327; Epp, 1982:242). These latter Mennonites were known as the *Russländer* since they had no previous experience in Canada. “Kanadier” has subsequently been used to refer to the Low German speaking Mennonites who find their ancestry in the migration of Russian Mennonites to Canada in the 1870s and who migrated to Latin America in the 1920s and 1940s from Canada. The term “Kanadier” distinguished these migrants from the Mennonites who had remained in Canada. I began this project intending to use the term “Kanadier,” but soon discarded it given that it is a label given to them by outsiders to their community. Furthermore, when asked, only a few of the women I interviewed knew to what “Kanadier” referred; another reason for distancing myself from this label.

Thirdly, the term is also problematic since, typically, “Dietsch” means “being Mennonite” (Thiessen, 2003). Technically, most cultural Mennonites in Canada can be considered “Dietsche” because of their common German and Prussian heritage. It would then be peremptory to label only a segment of the Mennonite population as “Dietsche” if other Mennonites could also be named in this manner since many others continue to speak some Low German and maintain High German. The fact remains, however, that it is mainly those Mennonites from Latin America who use “Dietsch” to refer to themselves and it is a term with which most of the participants identified.

Throughout the paper the Low German speaking Mennonites from Latin America are alternately referred to as “Dietsch,” “Dietscha,” or “Dietsche.” “Dietsch” literally means “German” (Rempel, 1995) and can refer to either of the German languages (Low or High), or to “being German.” The “a” and “e” endings are descriptive grammatical

additions, “a” being singular (masculine) and “e” being plural. It is not the point of this thesis to debate the proper “label,” nevertheless the women’s understanding and use of the term “Dietsche” is discussed in chapter 5.

V. Women and Preservation and Transmission of Culture

Uprooted communities maintain their ethnic identities in part through women because they are the primary socialization agents of their culture. Dietsche immigrant women, as other immigrant women, work to create a sense of home, “through a constant process of adjustment, transformation, negotiation, redefinition — a never-ending, ongoing work to reproduce the appearance of stability and fixity that is part of the imagined community” (Gedalof, 2003:101). Some of women’s time is used to preserve and transmit their traditional culture and religion within the context of a new environment in southern Manitoba.

Being a woman and a member of an ethnic and religious community are intimately interconnected and cannot be analyzed separately (Bannerji, 1995). Gedalof (2003:95-96) states that “what needs to be added to the story is some consideration of the ways in which women’s identities are actually embedded in, and produced in the context of the reproductive work they do to constitute a sense of community belonging.” The means of preserving and transmitting Dietsche ethnic and religious culture arise from the women’s identity as purveyors of their culture and religion.

Cultural transmission is a multifaceted process. It is an activity performed in many institutions including the family, school, community, and the church. It was beyond the scope of this research project to examine the trajectories of cultural transmission

throughout all these institutions. I prioritized the family as a major site of cultural transmission and preservation since the family is the major institution involved in the socialization of children. Children's lives, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are shaped by the actions of the family. Learning the culture and adopting an ethnic identity are part of the socialization process that takes place within the family. Since women are generally the primary care givers in Dietsche Mennonite society, I concentrated on their role in this process within the family.

VI. Research Questions

A threat of cultural extinction exists for most ethnic groups, including the Dietsche Mennonites. One of the main concerns expressed by many in this regard is to ensure its successful transmission to the next generation. The Dietsche women's role in cultural preservation is the focus of my thesis. My question is: *to what extent have the Dietsche Mennonite women been able to preserve and transmit their culture and religion to the next generation?* The following three secondary questions aid in better understanding the role Dietsche women play in cultural transmission and preservation:

1. What concerns do women have in transmitting their culture to their children? In other words, do they fear the destruction of Dietsche Mennonite culture as their children become more inculturated into "Canadian" lifestyles?
2. What strategies do Dietsche Mennonite women employ in passing on cultural practices among their offspring?
3. What kind of relationships do the Dietsche have with other Mennonites and with the larger Canadian society? How does this influence cultural transmission

and preservation among the Dietsche?

By answering these three questions, I can shed light on my main research focus: how Dietsche women have been able to preserve and transmit their culture and religion. The first question will help identify the extent to which cultural retention and transmission is an issue of concern for the Dietsche. The process of preserving and transmitting culture and religion among their children will be clarified in the second question. The final question contextualizes the Dietsche women's lives in their immediate surroundings. It acknowledges that the preservation and transmission of their culture is mediated by the larger society and larger Mennonite community.

VII. A Thesis Overview

This thesis examines how Dietsche immigrant women have preserved and transmitted their culture and religion to the next generation. Chapter 2 outlines the history of the Dietsche Mennonites in their migration from Canada to Latin America and back again. This chapter also introduces the theoretical framework used to analyze the women's acculturation in Canadian society. Chapter 3 details the methodology, describing the participants, and how they were selected, how the data was gathered and analyzed, as well as ethical factors. Chapter 4 examines the push and pull factors of migration for the population, particularly in respect to their reasons for migrating to southern Manitoba. It then describes how Dietsche women preserve and transmit their culture and religion in their everyday lives *vis-a-vis* their work as mothers in the home, work for pay, and through the promulgation of daily religious practices. Chapter 5 addresses the women's identification in terms of their acculturation strategies. Section

one explores the use of dress and head coverings as a means of identification. Section two concerns their identification as Mennonite and as Dietsche. In the third section, I explore their identification with Low German and High German languages. In Chapter 6, I summarize the analysis, outline the contribution made to Mennonite and immigration studies, as well as theoretical contributions.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Background and Theoretical Framework

I. Introduction

The purpose of this project is to determine the extent to which Dietsche women are able to preserve and transmit their cultural and religious traditions to their children upon their return to Canada. To understand this process, it is imperative that their stories are contextualized within the history of the Mennonite people in Canada, and particularly their branch of Mennonitism. Their history provides the background necessary to understanding the culture and religion they wish to preserve and transmit to the next generation. The starting point of my research was immigrant studies because the Dietsche Mennonites experience what Ravenstein calls “push” and “pull” factors which partially influence their choices about immigration. Within this context, I was interested in determining individual women’s approaches to negotiating the preservation and transmission of their cultural and religious traditions. While Ravenstein's theory can help answer this question, it cannot provide a complete analysis. Thus, studies in culture, ethnicity and religion that apply several sociological perspectives also inform this research. The most relevant is a micro-sociological perspective influenced by symbolic interactionism which focuses on individual agents and their lived experiences and how they recreate the world around them. This perspective is particularly relevant for immigrants who negotiate their minority culture and religion in relation to the dominant host society.

This research seeks to determine Dietsche women's ability to maintain and

perpetuate their religion and culture to the next generation by asking a few other questions. I questioned the women about their concern over preservation as their children acculturated into the larger society. I also questioned them about various strategies they used to perpetuate various aspects of culture and religion and about their interactions with other Mennonites and other Canadians. In this way, I could discern Dietsche women's own acculturation process as well as how they engage in their children's acculturation process.

II. A History of the Dietsche

A. The Pre-Departure History of the Dietsche

In order to understand the context of cultural and religious preservation today, reviewing the history of the Mennonites in Canada is necessary (Mindel, 1998:8).⁴ The Dietsche Mennonites are a faction of the Russian Mennonite population that arrived in Canada in the 1870s. These first Mennonites migrated to Manitoba for many reasons including the threat of military conscription and their increased mistrust of the Russian government. Several Mennonites from the Bergthal, Fuerstenland,⁵ and Borosenko colonies immigrated to southern Manitoba in 1874 and 1875 (Epp, 1974:199). Each colony had slightly different religious and cultural practices that distinguished them from each other. Those from Fuerstenland, who became known as the Rheinlaender or Old Colony Mennonite Church, settled on the west side of the Red River (the West Reserve, present day Pembina Valley). Most of the Bergthaler Church initially settled on the East

⁴For a comprehensive history of Mennonites in Canada please refer to the *Mennonites in Canada* 3 volume series.

⁵The Bergthal and Fuerstenland colonies were linked to the older Chortitza colony in Russia, the one first settled by Mennonites from present day Poland.

Reserve, east of the Red River (present day Municipality of Hanover), while a smaller number homesteaded in the eastern part of the West Reserve (Epp, 1974:212).⁶ The Kleine Gemeinde (from the Borosenko colony), settled on the East Reserve, and at Scratching River, (present day Rosenort) (Epp, 1974:284).⁷

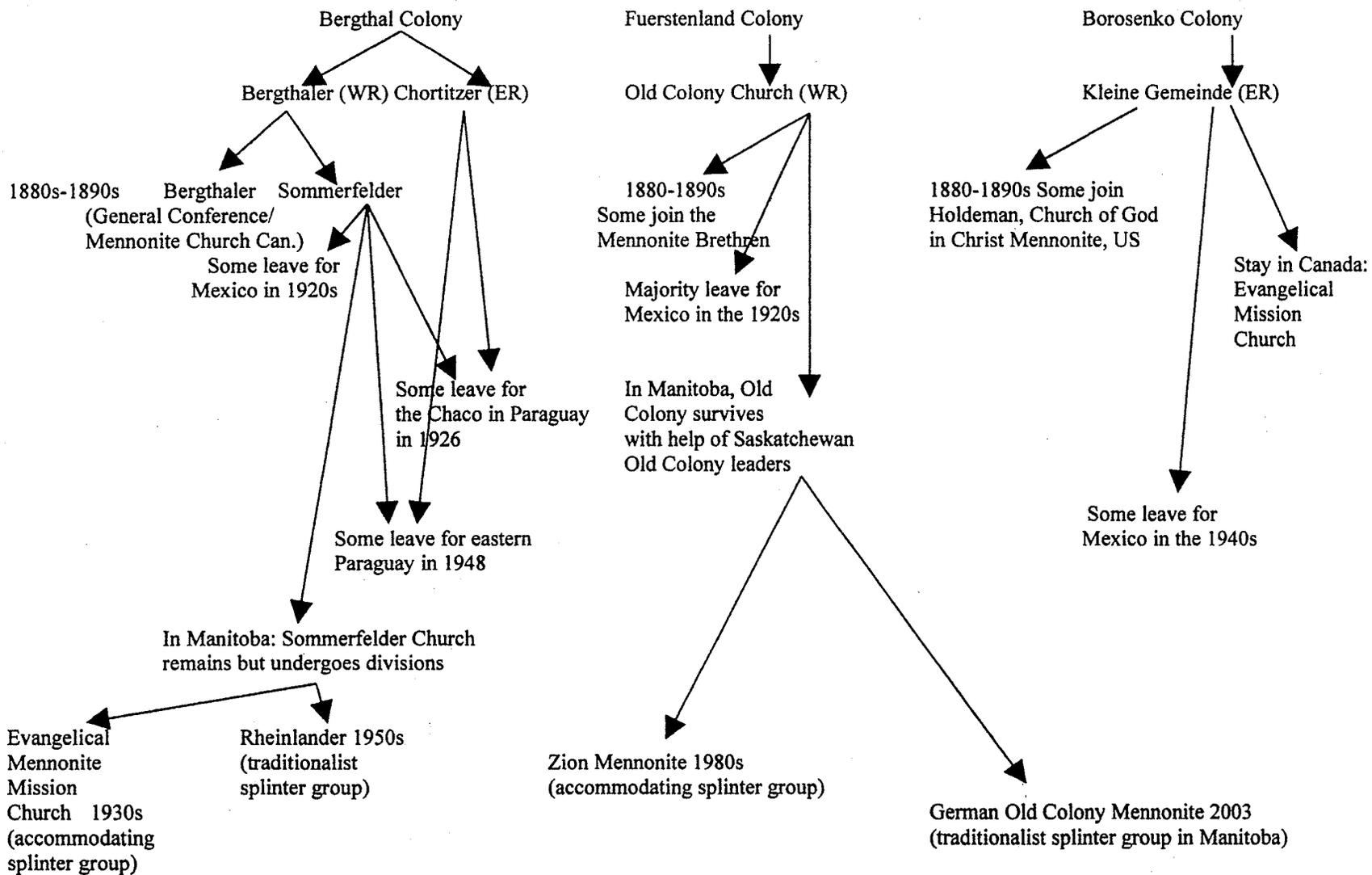
Differing experiences of acculturation to Canadian society, influences from other Mennonites in the United States, and differing opinions of religious practices, caused the three groups to divide once again in the last two decades of the 19th century (Epp, 1974:283). Some Canadian Mennonites followed various revivalist and progressive elements in the United States that divided the Mennonites over proposed religious revisions. A significant minority of Mennonites in Canada opposed the changes, preferring to preserve the religious and cultural traditions brought from Russia (Epp, 1974:289). These Mennonites premised these traditions on what Leo Driedger has termed the “sacred village” (2000:71-97).⁸ The sacred village encompasses a largely self-sufficient farming lifestyle, the operation of independent schools, living in bloc village settlements, and autonomous governance of village affairs all under the authority of their Church. The separation from the larger society and the organization of community affairs within the realm of the Church imbues these Mennonites with sacredness. Being sacred means being “set apart,” and necessitates the maintenance of boundaries between the sacred community and the outside world of the profane. However, differences over the extent of cultural expressions of the “sacred village” to the Mennonite religion led to

⁶Many of the Bergthaler eventually moved from the East to the West reserve.

⁷ Refer to Chart 1 on the next page for a diagram of southern Manitoban Mennonite Church divisions and migrations.

⁸Further discussion on the “sacred village” ensues in the section on religion.

Chart 1 Mennonite Churches in Southern Manitoba



additional divisions and caused factions within each of the three original settlement groups in Canada, with many relocating to Latin America.

These events had immense effects in all the Mennonite communities in Manitoba. The Old Colony Mennonite Church vehemently resisted the revision promoted by the accommodating Mennonites and Protestant revivalist forces (Epp, 1974). Most of the members of the Old Colony wanted to maintain their religious and cultural practices premised on the "sacred village." Instead of succumbing to what many saw as the inevitable dissolution of their cultural and religious way of life, many opted to leave Canada (Quiring, 2003:24). Old Colony Mennonites were, however, not the only group who divided and decided to emigrate once again.

The Bergthaler church, located in both the East and West Reserves, was divided not only by geographical distance but also by ideological differences. The majority of Bergthaler in either East and West Reserves were conservative but distance and leadership by separate individuals led the traditionalists in both reserves to form their own independent churches. Traditionalists within the East Reserve renamed themselves the Chortitzer Church, while the traditionalists in the West Reserve created the Sommerfelder Church.⁹ The remaining minority was more intent on integrating; they kept the Bergthaler name and allied with the General Conference in the United States (Epp, 1974:286-295). While a group of the Sommerfelder left with the Old Colony Church in the 1920s for Mexico, eventually others in these traditional factions would also leave Manitoba for Latin America.

⁹The Sommerfelders divided once again in the 1950s; a minority group formed the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church. This Church has had a considerable influence on the Dietsche Mennonites in Latin America, the United States, and Canada.

The Kleine Gemeinde (Borosenko) group also divided because of these contentious religious forces. Approximately one-third of this group initially relocated to the United States under the leadership of Johannes Holdeman, who insisted on a more evangelistic and conservative form of Mennonitism, including a particular style of dress, and personal grooming (Epp, 1974:290). With the exit of this conservative element to the U.S., the Kleine Gemeinde became more accommodating in their style of worship and wished to adopt many new American Mennonite practices (Epp, 1974:291). This caused a second division among the Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba and led the traditionalists within the Church, who had not followed Holdeman, to migrate to Latin America in the 1940s (Sawatzky, 1971:28). The Kleine Gemeinde Church in Canada adopted the name Evangelical Mennonite Church, a sign of accommodating to the dominant English culture and the prevalent evangelical and pietistic religious forces.

Most of the women interviewed had their origins in the Fuerstenland or Old Colony, the Mennonites who migrated to Mexico in the 1920s. One woman was part of the Sommerfelder Church in Manitoba prior to her immigration to Latin America in the 1940s. A few were part of the Kleine Gemeinde Church that had left for Latin America.

B. Relocation to Latin America

Several factors including religious ideology, the Canadian government, and the attitudes of Mennonites themselves, led members of the most conservative churches, including the Old Colony, Sommerfelder, Chortitzer, and factions of the Kleine Gemeinde to emigrate from Canada. While preservation of religious ideologies was the main reason for relocating, for many, maintaining kinship ties and an agrarian lifestyle

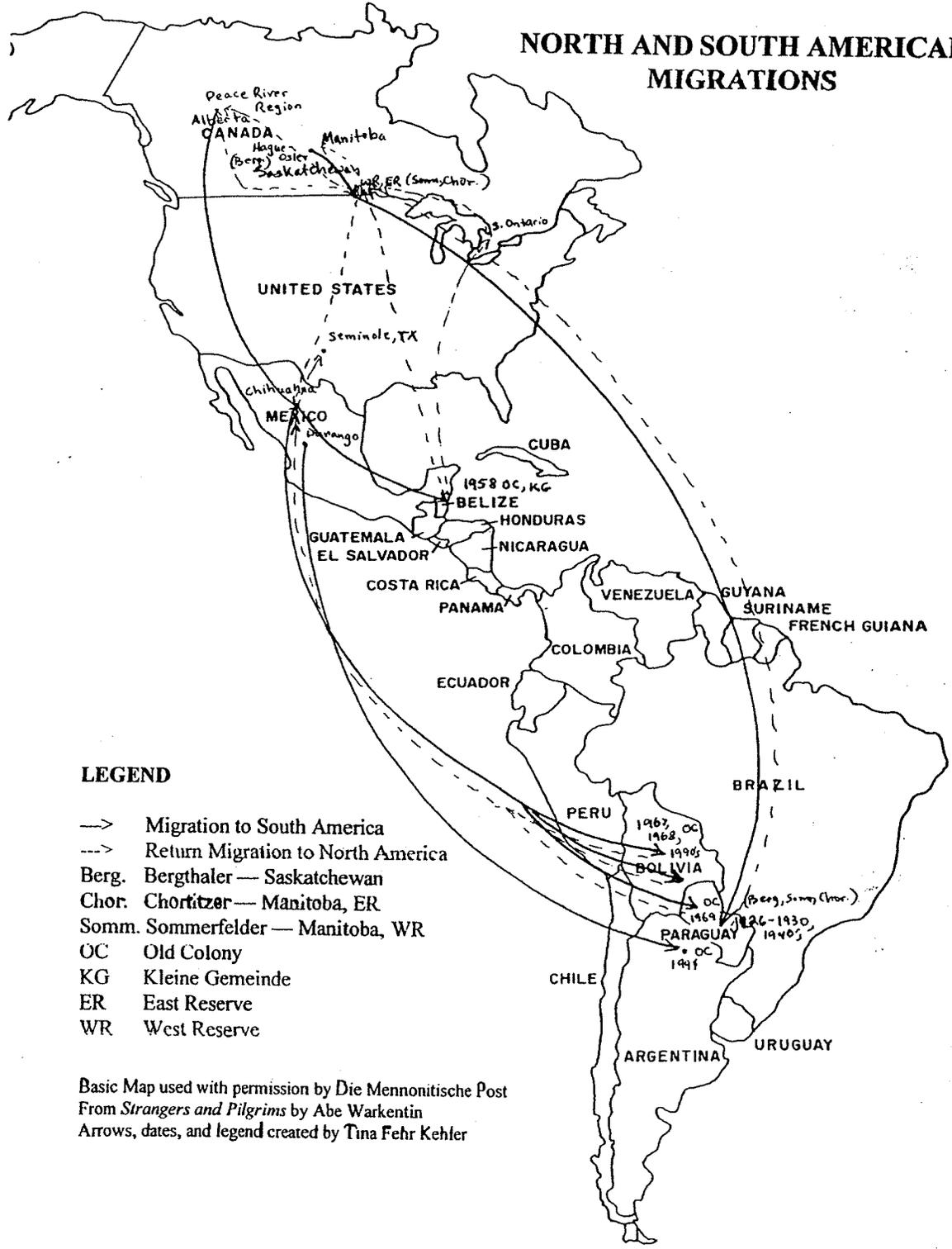
were just as fundamental.¹⁰ The Canadian government also played a role in encouraging the emigration of some Mennonites. In the late 19th century, the Canadian government was concerned about all European settlement in the west due to the continuing threat of an invasion from the United States. As a result, they began to pressure the Mennonites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to adapt to the “Canadian” lifestyle by advocating a policy of assimilation. Part of the Anglicization program meant that the Mennonites would no longer manage their own separate schools (Epp, 1982:97). The government further imposed assimilation on the Mennonites by threatening to conscript all young adult males. This ignored the Mennonite’s right to military exemption, which the Canadian government granted them upon their arrival (Sawatzky, 1971:24).

Assimilationist forces within the Mennonite community itself also influenced the decision to relocate to Latin America. Progressive Mennonite groups encouraged teacher training, and involvement in affairs of the secular society (Quiring, 2003:10). Disgruntled farmers, no longer satisfied with traditional farming practices such as sharing land with their fellow villagers, pressured the religious leaders to grant them full possession of their titled land (Francis, 2001:102-103).¹¹ This initiated a breakdown of common fields and the self-contained bloc settlements to the dismay of those wanting to maintain traditional

¹⁰High birth rates and a shortage of land also influenced the relocation of some of the families from the Old Colony, Sommerfelder and Chortitzer churches in southern Manitoba with a resulting move to the Hague-Osler area of Saskatchewan in 1895 (Sawatzky, 1971:17). Later some Sommerfelder and Chortitzer also settled near Herbert, Saskatchewan, while the Old Colony later settled more of its members in Swift Current, Saskatchewan (Epp, 1974:313-315; Sawatzky, 1971:17).

¹¹The Mennonites were subject to the same homesteading regulations as other immigrants and had to claim land under individual household titles. Villagers initially ignored the titles, pooling and dividing their land between homesteads to ensure equal distribution of poor and better land.

NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICAN MIGRATIONS



LEGEND

- Migration to South America
- > Return Migration to North America
- Berg. Berghthaler — Saskatchewan
- Chor. Chortitzer — Manitoba, ER
- Somm. Sommerfelder — Manitoba, WR
- OC Old Colony
- KG Kleine Gemeinde
- ER East Reserve
- WR West Reserve

Basic Map used with permission by Die Mennonitische Post
 From *Strangers and Pilgrims* by Abe Warkentin
 Arrows, dates, and legend created by Tina Fehr Kehler

cultural practices.

The separationist mind-set of the conservative Mennonites was a central factor influencing their emigration. Those who emigrated asserted that a community of believers needed to be physically separate from the larger society in order to preserve traditional beliefs and practices. These conservative groups placed a great importance on control over community affairs and schools, and were particularly concerned with “transmitting their values to their young” (Quiring, 2003:22). New rules passed by the Canadian government threatened this separation. Since isolation was becoming impossible in Canada, conservative Mennonites attempted to separate themselves from progressive elements within and outside the community by immigrating to remote locations in Latin America. The leaders could then enforce the ban on noncomplying members since these members had no alternatives should they wish to disobey (Quiring, 2003:23).¹² The migrants to Latin America felt their migration proved they were the “true believers,” and viewed those who remained as having waned in their religious convictions and as having become “seduced by the world” (Epp, 1982:117).

As a result of a desire to isolate themselves, one-half to two-thirds of Mennonites from the Old Colony and a few Sommerfelder immigrated to Mexico in the early 1920s (Redekop 1969:13; Francis, 2001:192; Bergen, 2001; Quiring, 2003:24). The government of Mexico welcomed the Old Colony and Sommerfelder from Manitoba and Saskatchewan and granted them autonomous settlements near Cuauthemoc in the state of Chihuahua and in the state of Durango near Nuevo Ideal (Regehr, 1996:134; Epp,

¹²Under a ban, a dissident member was not allowed participation in the community either socially, religiously, or economically until they repented.

1982:122). Mostly Chortitzer and some Sommerfelder Mennonites immigrated to the Chaco in Paraguay in 1926 (Redekop, 1980:95). In 1948, more members of the Sommerfelder Church and Chortitzer Church from Manitoba and Bergthaler from Saskatchewan relocated to eastern Paraguay (Sawatzky, 1971:52, 87; Harms, 2004:46). Members of the Kleine Gemeinde also emigrated at this time and formed the Quellenkolonie in the Cuauhtemoc area near the Old Colonists in Mexico (Sawatzky, 1971:92).

This move, however, did not prevent cultural and religious change as the new settlers had hoped. As most migrant ethnic groups can attest, culture, ethnic identity, and religion change over time and with exposure to other cultures and other peoples. As a result, new and unique forms of Mennonitism, different from those practiced in Canada, were created in Latin America. Those who remained in Canada slowly adapted to some cultural and economic expectations of mainstream society, while expressing a more symbolic rather than traditional form of their ethnic and religious identity (Driedger, 2000). In Latin America, while the Mennonites did not integrate into the native populations, at least not to the extent of those who remained in Canada, a host of factors led to religious and cultural change and the eventual return of many Mennonites from Latin America (Redekop, 1969:149-150; Quiring, 2003).

C. Life in Latin America and Factors Influencing their Return to Canada

We can better understand the factors influencing the return of the Dietsche using the push/pull theory of migration by Ravenstein (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003). In short, this theory bases migration on economic differentials, that is, people migrate when the

possibilities for economic enhancement are better in a different location than in one's present situation. Thus they are pushed by a poor economic situation and pulled by economic opportunities.¹³ Quiring (2003), however, goes beyond an economic explanation to include various other social factors pushing and pulling the Dietsche out of Latin America and pulling them towards Canada. My research confirms these other factors but also adds a few more.

The history of the Mennonites in Latin America is varied as the different groups migrated and interacted with each other and the host society. Continued familial connections to Canada and influences by various Canadian and American Mennonite churches and organizations in Latin America also altered the migrant's religion and culture. In an attempt to preserve their traditional religion and culture within the "sacred village," the Mennonites, for the most part, socially isolated themselves from Latin American society. Families lived in semi-extended family units on farmyards that bordered either side of a long street making up a village, continuing an age-old tradition (Redekop, 1969:70). In each colony, a bishop and several lay preachers headed the Church while a mayor, a fire insurance manager, and an administrative group for the widow and orphan's fund led the village under the authority of the Church (Redekop, 1969:66, 81, 82). All landholding men, forming the *Bruderschaft*, also partook in decision making in the Church and community. At a community level, the women were involved in the informal activities such as hog and beef butchering, preparations for funerals and weddings, and a few were midwives and *Trajchtmoake* (lay chiropractors). On a daily basis, they were responsible for raising children and caring for the household,

¹³ I will discuss Ravenstein's push/pull theory later in this chapter.

which included tending a garden, and conducting farm work (Fehr Kehler, 1999).

Women's lack of participation at a formal level of Church and community organization is rarely, if ever, questioned within the community. This arrangement underscores the deeply held beliefs in a division of labour that is a significant part of their religion and culture. This gendered division of labour arrangement would prove to be an important factor in understanding the circumstances around their reintegration into the Mennonite communities in southern Manitoba.

In Latin America, members of the colonies, and the leaders in particular, worked to maintain the boundaries between their communities and the outside world by placing restrictions on language, education, dress and technology. High German continued to be their written language. They used High German in worship services, daily prayers, and as the language in which they read the Bible. As a result, it was the language of instruction in schools. The colonies solely operated the schools that concentrated on religious instruction. Low German, in contrast, was the language of the everyday, used exclusively in the home and wider community for oral communication. The exclusive use of this dual dialect has shaped the Dietsche identity as separate from other Mennonites who accommodated or were forced to assimilate in Canada. Since only men dealt with Latin Americans (for business purposes), they learned some of the local language. It meant that few women learned Spanish.

Other cultural traits also separated the Dietsche from others. Dress for males and females also served as boundary markers for the community. The leaders also managed the introduction of technological innovations such as the use of electricity and rubber

tires on tractors so as not to disrupt the community's separation from the larger society. Though they attempted to maintain these barriers and retain their members, many factors worked against them, introducing change and disruption within the colonies.

Many of the descendants, particularly those in Mexico, the country in which the majority of the women interviewed originated, were unable to acquire land. Upon their arrival to Mexico, traditional land acquisition and distribution practices continued as they had in Canada. Bilateral partible inheritance practices ensured that land and material goods were divided equally among all children regardless of sex or age. However, poor economic situations caused by drought and devaluation of the peso meant that many parents did not have enough resources to maintain their own large families and purchase enough land for newly married children. As well, the burgeoning population's continued need for more land soon depleted the original land resources purchased from the Mexican government.¹⁴ As a result, the original settlements in Mexico soon became fully occupied (Redekop, 1969:84). To alleviate the land shortage, leaders in the original Mexican settlements started new colonies in Mexico, British Honduras (Belize), and Bolivia in the late 1950s and 1960s (Redekop, 1969:21, 24).

Some landless Mennonites who were unable to farm due to poor health, lack of resources, or unwillingness were encouraged to relocate to Canada and the United States. This migration was not without precedent. Due to the shortage of agricultural labour in Canada and the United States, some migrated seasonally to provide labour during the harvest season (Regehr, 1996:137). Others migrated to Canada permanently to work as

¹⁴Their population growth is largely due to their beliefs against the use of birth control and the value they place on having numerous children (Quiring, 2003:55).

farm labourers, some hoping one day to acquire farms of their own. Some Dietsche women in a previous study have suggested that Canada had welcoming features including safer, better governed political and judicial systems, more comprehensive education and health care systems, the possibility of employment in rural factories, and family reunification (Fehr Kehler, 1999).

The Dietsche women in the present study gave similar answers, but also provided reasons for choosing southern Manitoba specifically. Canada was additionally attractive because of the Dietsche's ancestral ties to the country. Many also had claims to Canadian citizenship; thus the Mennonite Central Committee created an office in Ottawa to address the numerous claims (Quiring, 2003). The existence of the office subsequently precipitated further immigration.

Quiring (2003) argues that the continued connection with progressive Canadian Mennonites was the greatest force for change in and emigration from the Latin American colonies. As just mentioned, some migrated back and forth between Latin America and Canada for work, bringing new ideas, technologies and ways of doing things back to Latin America. Migration was possible because some could maintain their Canadian citizenship, which further reduced the cultural and social distance between the Dietsche and Canadian communities. Opportunities to aid the Dietsche during economic hardships gave Canadian Mennonites a foothold in the colonies. Several institutions and programs through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and various Mennonite Churches over the years caused dissent within the Latin American colonies and subsequently attracted dissident members back to Canada. The ability to leave the traditional colony threatened

the authority of the Church and community leaders who disciplined dissident members by using a ban. The new colonies began not only because of land shortages in the original colonies, but also to escape from the continual attack to their barriers. Thus, the original Dietsche colonies had already undergone changes that altered their religion and culture even before their return to Canada. The Dietsche Mennonite's history of dislocation, encroachment by other groups, and return migration is an important element in understanding their divergent interests in cultural preservation and transmission of culture and religion to their children which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Thus, despite their original intentions to maintain and preserve the "traditional" Mennonite culture, many settlers and their descendants eventually left Latin America and subsequently returned to Canada. Redekop states that in Mexico, "as many as 18 percent of each [subsequent] generation returned to Canada" (1969:20). Regehr (1996:134) concurs that nearly 20 percent of the Dietsche Mennonites returned to Canada, some less than twenty years after their initial migration. The Second World War halted their return migration, but it commenced again in the 1950s and has continued into the present (Regehr, 1996:135). All of the women interviewed in this study arrived after this time, between 1964 and 1998.

D. Changes to Mennonite Society in Manitoba

To understand the Canadian Mennonite society into which the Dietsche Mennonites immigrate, it is necessary to review briefly a few events in Canada during their absence. While the Mennonites struggled to establish their communities in Latin America, the factions of the Mennonite community remaining in Canada underwent

changes of their own. With the departure of the most conservative and traditional elements within their society, the majority modernized and became more receptive to mainstream Canadian society (Driedger, 2000:98). Not only were Mennonites persuaded to acculturate to the larger Canadian society, but many continued to be heavily influenced by various branches of evangelicalism causing changes in practices and beliefs and also dissensions (Regehr, 1996:12-13).

Two subsequent arrivals of Mennonites to Canada from Russia through the late 1920s and 1940s also caused change. The appearance of Russlaender Mennonites influenced Mennonite culture in southern Manitoba in many ways. While the Russlaender were comprised of various factions themselves, overall, they catalyzed the progression of many Mennonites who remained. They were proponents of higher education and more European and cosmopolitan culture than the earlier arrivals to Canada (Epp, 1982:243-244). These Mennonites promoted the Germanic culture; thus, they were more likely to speak High German than Low German (Epp, 1982:247). In contrast, many were much more accepting of integration into non-Mennonite society than their predecessors, often preferring to live in the city. Some earlier immigrant Mennonites balked at some of the changes and influences introduced by these Russlaender (Epp, 1982:417). Nevertheless, an integration between the two groups of Mennonites slowly occurred in the ensuing decades. By the arrival of most of the women I interviewed, any differences within Mennonites remaining in Canada were not readily apparent.

Mennonites in Canada were also facing economic changes. As technological advances altered agricultural practices and fewer labourers were needed for farming,

fewer agricultural jobs and other economic opportunities were available in Mennonite communities. From the 1930s onwards, many younger Mennonites, relocated to larger cities to seek paid employment (Regehr, 1996:102, 168). Burgeoning small business enterprises also developed in the Mennonite communities as a result of economic and agricultural changes. While this allowed many of those unable to farm to remain in the area, it also altered the Mennonite way of life in southern Manitoba. Some of these businesses provided employment to the returning migrants from Latin America who desired to live in the rural environment to which they were accustomed. Southern Manitoba also provided a familiar religious home with its traditional Mennonite Churches, a major attraction for the returnees.

Changes to religious practices and beliefs also awaited the returnees from Latin America. Evangelicalism that focused on, for example, an emotional conversion experience and eschatology, continued to form Mennonite religion (Regehr, 1996:13). The movement caused further divisions between Mennonite groups in Canada as some followed the revivalist campaign, while the traditionalists worked to hold onto their historical beliefs and cultural practices. The movement also influenced the use of English in worship services and the formation of Sunday schools. Throughout the decades following the emigration of conservative Mennonites from Canada, Mennonite churches have witnessed numerous divisions over maintenance of traditional forms of worship. The Old Colony Church in southern Manitoba could survive with help from leaders who remained in Saskatchewan and became a place where the returning Mennonites could retain some of their traditional religious practices (Epp, 1982; Plett, 2001). After my

research was completed, a group of Old Colony Mennonites formed a new church, the German Old Colony Church, which seeks to maintain traditional elements such as the High German language.¹⁵

As in most ethnic groups, the family forms the crux of any Mennonite community. Given the topic of cultural preservation and transmission, the family is the primary interest of this research. Because of the centrality of religion to the Mennonite community, it too plays an important role in this study. Consequently, it is necessary to understand the family's interconnection with the community and religious institutions to understand the process of cultural transmission and preservation better. The remainder of the chapter discusses the academic literature on integration, ethnicity, and religion which will be used to guide the interpretation and analysis of the results.

III. Theoretical Framework

To understand cultural and religious preservation among the women I interviewed, I utilize various theoretical paradigms. As mentioned earlier, I borrow from Ravenstein, one of the earliest researchers on migration studies, who examined the influence of various “‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors in the context of rural-to-urban migration flows” (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003:7). This framework helps situate the Dietsche in the context of their various migrations. A micro-sociological approach also informs the project concerning the concentration on actors' own interpretations of their actions in the temporal contexts of their lived realities. I also utilize John Berry's (1990) acculturation typology to understand women's experiences. Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theoretical

¹⁵This is a much smaller group which has built their own church building. The split was also the result of power struggles within the leadership.

framework on agency is also helpful in understanding the nature of the Dietsche women's agency, that is, their ability to make choices in the present based on their orientation to the past and future. While the concepts of transmission and preservation have already been addressed in Chapter 1, and there has been some attention to the "sacred village" a further discussion of culture, ethnicity and religious concepts is required before reviewing theory.

A. Definitions: Culture, Ethnicity, and Religion

Key concepts of culture, ethnicity, and religion are central to this project. Fleras and Elliot define culture (1999:432-433) as

a complex and socially constructed system of rules, meaning, knowledge, artifacts and symbols that (a) guide human behaviour, (b) account for pattern regularities of thought and action, (c) provide a standard for right or wrong, good or bad, and (d) contribute to human social and physical survival.

In other words, it represents an integrated way of life for a group of people who find affinity with each other by sharing similar values, beliefs, ways of thinking, and ways of accomplishing daily tasks. McCall and Wittner (1990:58) refer to culture as "a system of patterns that make the existence of larger groups possible." In this way, culture provides a blueprint or structure for living. Culturally determined beliefs and norms constrain individuals, however, they also have the agency to resist or modify them. As a result, culture is a tool of social organization that is both independent of and influenced by people. As a result of this duality, culture is a resource from which individuals draw meaning, but is able to change as they engage with each other and collectively negotiate problems and new situations (McCall and Wittner, 1990:64). Thus, culture is not static

but is transformed and recreated through interaction with others and the environment within the context of established patterns (Patterson, 2000:208-209).

Another important element to consider is ethnicity, “consist(ing) of a shared awareness of ancestral differences as a basis for engagement or entitlement” (Fleras and Elliot, 1999:108). Isajiw’s (1999:19) definition is complementary, stating that ethnicity is “an involuntary, community-type group of persons who share the same distinct culture or who are descendants of those who have shared a distinct culture and who identify with their ancestors, or their culture or group.” Some of these distinct cultural attributes may include all or some of the following: common language, foods and folkways, history, dress, religion, norms, values and beliefs. Thus, ethnicity as a concept is relevant in a culturally pluralist society where various ethnic groups negotiate their specific cultures in relation to other ethnic groups and the dominant (largely Anglo-Saxon) society in Canada. On the one hand, ethnicity may be “lived-in,” also referred to as “traditional” or “bahavioural.” On the other hand, ethnicity may be more symbolic (Driedger, 2003; Berry and Kalin, 1994:306-307). Individuals who display a lived-in ethnicity “admit that their identification with the cultural past makes a difference in how they think and behave. Involvement at this level presupposes a canopy of constraints, demands, and responsibilities” (Fleras and Elliot, 2003:98). This type of ethnicity is often associated with first generation immigrants, “those who arrived in the country of immigration as adults or, more specifically, those whose basic process of socialization took place before immigration tend to retain the traditional form of identity” (Isajiw, 1999:193). It is also indicative of ethnic/religious groups, such as the Hutterites, that live in closed

communities. It is a style of ethnicity that best describes many returning Dietsche. By the second generation, however, their expression of ethnicity becomes more symbolic; they engage in certain aspects of culture because they are representative and “stand for something other than themselves” (Isajiw, 1999:193). For example, while someone may not consider their ethnic language to be their mother tongue, the use of some words evokes a connection to one’s ethnic group.

A study of Dietsche Mennonites must also appreciate the fundamental place of religion since it is inextricably linked with culture. When interviewing the Dietsche women, I understood that religion was a significant orienting force that was, at times, indistinguishable from culture. Upon entry into Canada, Dietsche women negotiate aspects of their culture within a context of their religion with respect to a larger Mennonite society. These factors influence the extent to which the Dietsche can maintain their unique religious outlook.

Religion consists of beliefs and practices that give meaning to ultimate questions about life and forms the basis of conceptions about the nature of reality (Gross, 1996:9). Religion finds its expression in formal religious settings such as the Church and its structures, but is also expressed in the every day. It is the individual, every day, level of religion that is of greatest concern in this research since the Dietsche family is the locus of intergenerational transmission of culture in which religion plays a pivotal role. The every day expression of religion is particularly important for women in this subculture because of their lack of agency in formal structures.

The “sacred village” is another helpful concept in understanding the Dietsche

women's religious background and their daily religious lives. The "sacred village" is used by Leo Driedger to describe the Old Colony Mennonite settlements in Saskatchewan (2000:71-97). He chronicles how they separated themselves from the larger society and lived within self-contained villages that were organized to protect their religious beliefs, language, and way of life. According to Durkheim (1912[1945]), that which is "sacred" is marked by prohibitions which serve to separate it from something else thereby making that from which it is separate "profane."

The Mennonite Gemeinde (Church community) maintained its sacredness by creating and enforcing communal boundaries, which was maintained by many of the Mennonites who left for Latin America, as well as among many of those who remained in Canada. That which was outside the boundaries, physical and metaphorical, was designated "of the world" or profane. Boundaries are maintained because the threat to religious and cultural preservation is continual. Within such a framework, theoretically, all that goes on within the village takes on religious significance. Outside of this sacred space, a bifurcation between religion and the mundane occurs.¹⁶ This overarching paradigm has particular meaning for women who originate from these "sacred villages" in Latin America. It is within a "sacred village" that the family produces and socializes the next generation into the Gemeinde. In this way, the family is a direct extension of the

¹⁶Mennonite colonies in Latin America vary in their ability to maintain boundaries. Some colonies have been influenced by Canadian and American Mennonites as well as the surrounding Latin American cultures, while others attempt to physically distance themselves from as many influences from the outside world as possible (Quiring, 2003). Some may dispute the application of the concept of the "sacred village" based on a difference of interpretation of the nature of religious experience of those in the colonies, that is, it is perfunctory, rather than personally meaningful. However, the concept still applies since many of the Dietsche in Latin America do hold family, religion, economy, and community together and attempt to maintain boundaries around themselves.

Church. The tasks performed within the home had religious implications since they were conducted in order to preserve the Gemeinde *vis-a-vis* the family. So, a “good” understanding of the sacred village is essential to understanding the role of mothers in cultivating culture and religion among their children. It is crucial since they move from a traditional sphere to one that is largely secular in Canada.

Living a religious life in a secular society becomes problematic. It must be negotiated in order to be successful. In pre-industrialized society, communities were oriented around the sacred, with connections between all aspects of life such as community, religion, work, and family. In industrial society's these aspects may become disjointed, often resulting in anomie (Driedger, 2003:141). Dietsche women come from a largely non-industrial community where most of their culture was oriented around religion. When they relocate to Canada, religion is separated from the rest of public society. In this context, many attempt to preserve their “sacred village” in effort to maintain the centrality of religion and to minimize the bifurcation that is created by a secular industrialized society. As a result, the Dietsche chose their relocation strategically. They migrate to southern Manitoba where Mennonite religion is maintained to a high degree in the public space, and where there is a large Mennonite population that offers some familiarity.

Religion does not merely consist of an institutional and structural framework that delineates “a *system of symbols*” around which people orient themselves to the divine (Klassen, 1994:126). It also involves a process in which individuals are engaged with the formal structures and ritual and a personal daily engagement with one's beliefs. People

“do the (conscious and unconscious) work of negotiating and interpreting what religion will mean in their lives” (Klassen, 1994:127). In this way, expressions of religion, just like culture and ethnicity, are never homogeneous or static. Though theoretical frameworks from studies in religion are not the central focus of this research, the role it plays in cultural transmission is integral in understanding Dietsche women. Life stories have been used to reveal the intricate relationship between religion, culture, ethnicity and immigrant status in people’s lives (Bains and Johnston, 1995; Johnson, 1998; Klassen, 1994). Research into the analysis of daily religious life through telling one’s life story has informed my thesis. At a theoretical level, this type of analysis gives primacy to people’s experiences and perspectives.

B. Ravenstein’s Push/Pull Theory of Migration

The Dietsche Mennonite’s reasons for returning to Canada, particularly to southern Manitoba, is contextualized by their migration experience, and subsequently their preservation of culture and religion. Ravenstein proposed a dual mechanism whereby “the process of dispersion is the inverse of that of absorption and exhibits similar features” (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003:7). In other words, people feel the need to migrate or are “pushed” out of one location because of a lack of economic opportunities and inversely are “pulled” to a migratory location because it holds better opportunities (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003). Isajiw (1999:65) divides the two forces into two types of migrants. The first type are “push” immigrants, “those who leave their country because its economic conditions are such that their very subsistence is threatened or there is no gainful work for them available” (Isajiw, 1999:65). As with other immigrant groups,

many of the Dietsche experienced economic difficulties in their countries of origin contributing to their return to Canada (Quiring, 2003:102). Push factors affecting the Dietsche include: lack of land and employment, low wages, drought, famine and population increase. For “pull” immigrants, possibilities for a better life in another country, have historically been the major motivational factors for migration (Isajiw, 1999:65; Greenwood and Hunt, 2003:9). Typically, those who are pulled can make a living in their own country, but immigrate in order to achieve greater economic gains. Pull factors may include: better standard of living, better and more employment opportunities, relatives, and large urban centres. While the two factors may be analyzed separately, as Isajiw has demonstrated, they do overlap within individual immigrant experiences. Furthermore, Ravenstein’s model emphasizes the “behavioural” nature of push/pull migration in that, “free individuals choose to migrate,” and do so with a hope that it will “pay off” in the future (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003:26). Migration is itself costly and on its own does not bring utility. Moreover, I model Quiring’s (2003) use of the push/pull theory. He does not limit this theory to economic considerations, but expands it to include other factors that precipitate migration as well as inversely draw Dietsche Mennonites to return to Canada. Some are pushed because of disillusionment with the colony's religion and pulled by Canadian social programs, the potential to acquire Canadian citizenship, help with documentation work by Mennonite Central Committee, and the presence of other Mennonites (Quiring, 2003). My work, tangentially, evaluates his findings on what pulls and pushes Dietsche Mennonites.

C. Micro-Sociological Orientations

Several theoretical approaches, including structural functionalist, social conflict, pluralist and interactionist paradigms, can aid in the study of ethnic and religious preservation and transmission (Isajiw, 1999:30; Fleras and Elliott, 1999:23).

Nevertheless, my research mainly utilizes a micro-sociological approach. A micro-social approach enables the understanding of the issues around ethnic identity retention better than a macro-social approach. A micro-social approach stresses the symbolic nature of ethnic identity and begins with individuals' lives and the meanings they use to explain their actions. In this approach, uncovering attitudes, perceptions and self-conceptions are essential in determining ethnic identification. A macro-social approach is more concerned with social structures, grand theorizing and large scale social phenomena (Plummer, 1996). The micro-social approach best suits my research in determining individual women's strategies, abilities and desire to preserve and transmit their cultural and religious traditions. Here I utilize Berry's acculturation typology and Emirbayer and Mische's theory of agency.

1. Berry's Acculturation Typology

To illuminate the process of acculturation, it is helpful to further situate the Dietsche women within broader immigration studies that concentrate on acculturation. Several models have been created to discern the processes whereby immigrants become part of the larger society. Berry's (1990) model focuses on individual responses to the acculturation process which is best suited to this research.

John Berry's (1990) typology of individual attitudes of acculturation is useful to

help contextualize the participant's varied responses to their ability to maintain their culture and religion in the face of pressures to assimilate into a "Canadian" mainstream (Li, 2003). Berry (et. al.1992:278) asserts that "acculturation can be viewed as a multilinear phenomenon; there is assumed to be a set of alternative outcomes rather than a single dimension ending in assimilation or absorption into the dominant society." Berry has proposed four attitudes individuals adopt in order to acculturate (See Table 1). They are based on individuals'

orientation to two issues: cultural maintenance (to what extent maintaining one's cultural heritage and identity is important); and contact and participation (to what extent is it important to seek out and participate with other groups in the larger society) (Ataca, 2002:15).

Assimilation occurs when one has little desire for cultural maintenance and one seeks contact with other cultures. *Separation* develops when one has high cultural maintenance and low contact with other cultures. When an individual maintains their culture *and* seeks contact with other groups, *integration* follows. Finally, *marginalization* results from little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance and contact with other groups. While these are ideal types and several of these attitudes may exist in one person, nevertheless, this typology aids in the understanding of how immigrants become part of or acculturate into a new plural society.

Table 1

Berry's Acculturation Typology		
	Seek contact and participate with other cultures	Little contact and participation with other cultures is desired or possible
Maintenance of culture	Integration	Separation
No desire or ability to maintain culture	Assimilation	Marginalization

By using this typology I emphasize the women's agency in the acculturation process. While the social context partly influences the acculturation process, the individual also manages it. In other words, while Berry classifies the four orientations in terms of "attitudes," I have applied them in terms of "strategies" employed by the women thereby emphasizing their agency. The term "strategy" infers more of a sense of intentionality and action by the individual rather than "attitude" which simply infers a "standpoint" or "viewpoint." The fact that these strategies are not mutually exclusive also highlights the women's individuality, that is, one person may exhibit different strategies depending on the context of the situation (Berry et. al. 1992:279).¹⁷ For example, a Dietsche woman may utilize a separationist strategy in terms of religion by attending a traditional Mennonite Church with a majority of other Dietsche people, but she may use an integrationist strategy with respect to dress allowing her children to wear non-traditional clothing when appropriate. I use Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theory on agency to further augment the individual agency aspect of Berry's typology.

2. Emirbayer and Mische: Agency

While many theories regarding agency exist and debates continue about the role of agency with respect to structure (Turner, 1996), I chose to concentrate on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theoretical framework because of their comprehensive analysis of agency's dimensions which they conceptualize in reference to structure, as well as historical and temporal contexts. They define agency as

¹⁷ See Appendices A and B, Participant Grids 1, 2, 3 and 4, for individual participant's strategies.

the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments — the temporal relational contexts of action — which through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:970).

In other words, agency occurs when actors, living within a specific space and time, make choices about how to act in changing circumstances. These choices depend on three factors: their orientation to their past (habit), their ability to act in their present situation (judgment), and their orientation towards the future (imagination) which, in the process of making choices, reproduces and changes their structural environment. Thus, there are three dimensions of agency which include “iterational” (habitual), “projective” (imaginative), and “practical-evaluative” (judgmental) elements (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:971). The *iterational* element involves

the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions and institutions over time (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:971).

This element refers to an orientation to the past or habit, which is essential for cultural preservation. Those who employ separationist strategies are most likely to emphasize their past repertoire, while those using an integrationist strategy also highlight their past more so than those using an assimilationist strategy.

However, agency is also oriented to the future. *Projectivity*

encompasses the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors hopes, fears and desires for the future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:971).

For the Dietsche, this would involve how they perceive cultural change and contacts with

other cultures with respect to what they want to achieve in the future, either for themselves or their children. Immigrants using an assimilationist strategy are most likely to emphasize this element of agency, while those using an integrationist strategy also accentuate this element more so than those using a separationist strategy. The *practical-evaluative* dimension involves the ability to make decisions within a social context that requires the judgment of the individual (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 994). Thus, within the context of a new society, particular situations arise that require the Dietsche people to make decisions with which they were not previously presented. The actor orients these decisions either to the past or the future. What Emirbayer and Mische fail to consider, however, is that some actors have greater or lesser ability to make decisions which is based on their position within the power structure of the community. Nevertheless, their theory is compatible to Berry's typology in that acculturation, just like agency, is "always a dialogical process by and through which actors immersed in temporal passage engage with others within collectively organized contexts of action" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 994). That is, both frameworks depend on an orientation towards others.

3. Women, the Family and Cultural Preservation and Transmission

The family is the Dietsche women's primary sphere of existence. Cultural preservation and transmission occurs largely in the context of the family, as it does for most ethnic groups, so its role cannot be under estimated (Tsolidis, 2001). As Mindel states, "the maintenance of ethnic identification and solidarity ultimately rests on the ability of the family to socialize its members to the ethnic culture and thus to channel and control, perhaps program, future behaviour" (Mindel et. al., 1998:8). Historically, women

have been the kin-keepers, those who kept the family together and maintained ethnic group affinity (Habenstein, 1998:24; Tsolidis, 2001:194; Sherif, 1999:207; Del Negro, 1997). For example, within Jewish households women maintain many of the religious practices and contribute to the welfare of the next generation, while men are typically more concerned with community and other public issues.

Several other studies indicate that women are predominantly responsible for ethnic identity preservation within a household. Within heterogeneous marriages (where one spouse is Jewish while the other is of another faith tradition), 52 percent of Jewish born women raised their children in the Jewish faith while only 25 percent of unions where the male spouse was of Jewish origin do the same (Farber et. al., 1998:442). In Greek communities, interviews with women about their parents

confirmed the centrality of the family and within it, the mother, in processes of identification and cultural reproduction. [They] described their mother's role in making this culture a lived experience (Tsolidis, 2001:201).

These are two examples where women are central to cultural and religious preservation. For this reason, differentiating the roles of men and women in any study particularly those on cultural preservation is necessary. What differentiates these studies of cultural and religious maintenance from others is the fact that women are not considered as products of the family and male domination, but rather actors with agency to control the quantity and quality of cultural transmission to their children. It responds to Cheal's (1991) critique of family studies that:

The origins of the private family have been of considerable interest to sociologists. However, in practice they have usually been rather more concerned with its consequences, and especially its consequences for

women . . . those consequences include the invisibility of disadvantages that women may experience in their domestic roles (Cheal, 1991:88).

As a result, these studies tend to ignore the processes related to family functioning focusing instead on the outcomes, which leads to an ignorance around individual agency. The purpose of this thesis is not necessarily to present a critique of the family as an institution that perpetuates unequal power relations, nor is it my intention to further entrench women's roles within the home. Instead, I explore Dietsche women's preservation and transmission of their sacred village culture within the context of the family since it is their primary domain. I emphasize individual agency and choice-making that empowers women.

Because of Dietsche women's roles in Canada are situated in the family rather than in church and community, the focus of this research is on women's parenting role in transmission of culture. There has been a paucity of research into intergenerational transmission of culture for ethnic minorities. Research that has been conducted is often concerned with the effective acculturation of the next generation into the host society rather than ethnic identity retention (Schönflug, 2001; Nauck, 2001). As well, it is often interested in measures of ethnicity for general populations instead of the process of transmission employed by parents. Nevertheless, studies do confirm the importance of parents' roles in influencing the identity of their children.

According to Schönflug (2001:174), intergenerational cultural transmission occurs when "adults intentionally teach the younger generation or when the younger generation imitates adults." The parent's role, particularly in the formative years of children's lives, has been well documented to be of significant importance in the

intergenerational transmission of culture (Dosanjh and Ghuman, 1996; Small, 2001). Recent research also indicates that the role of parents in cultural transmission is an important topic of concern with respect to all families and for migrant families in particular (Schönflug, 2001; Nauck, 2001). Tsolidis' work with Greek mothers and daughters shows the mother's importance in reproducing culture in the affective realm, the realm of feeling, and the daughters' struggle with this importance in society's that do not value this work (Tsolidis, 2001:203). Different values among various cultures reflect the importance of beginning analysis from the perspective of the immigrants rather than imposing an analytical perspective outside the cultural realm of those with whom the study is being conducted.

As do many immigrants in diaspora, Dietsche women face the dilemma of relocating and preserving the culture from which they emigrated within a dominant culture (Yon, 2000:75). It is in this diaspora that they negotiate the preservation and transmission of *certain* aspects of their "sacred village" culture vis-a-vis acculturation to the host society (Yon, 2000:17). Cultural preservation and transmission to the next generation are central to any study of immigrant groups. Studying the strategies Dietsche mothers use to raise their children has aided in understanding this process of cultural preservation and transmission, and the results could be used to inform studies of other ethno-religious groups.

Although the micro-sociological approach is not without problems, it provides the best framework for my thesis. The major criticism of this approach is its tendency to ignore the influence of large-scale structures in favour of micro-level social analysis

(Ritzer, 1996:225). The focus on qualitative research and analysis can cause the researcher to minimize the impact of larger social structures of which everyday phenomena are apart. It may also focus on daily actions by free-thinking agents, but may not question the motives or reasons behind the actions. Lastly, a concern with socialization and the daily work of transmission of ethnic culture can lead to de-emphasizing conflict between the ethnic group and larger society or to minimize the influence of intra-ethnic conflict. However, to understand the preservation and transmission of culture one must work at the level of the individual, examine the everyday, without losing sight of the influences of the larger social structures.

IV. Summary

In the pre-departure history of the Dietsche immigrants to Latin America, several divisions occurred between Mennonite groups accommodating to the larger society and non-traditional religious forces and Mennonite groups desiring to remain separated from the larger society and retain traditional practices and beliefs. Emigration out of southern Manitoba, whatever the type of Mennonite Church, was largely by those in the latter category. They saw not only Canadian government, but acculturated Mennonites as threats to their way of life. Separation from these accommodating forces and reestablishment of the "sacred village" based in a largely subsistence agricultural economy, led many to immigrate to Latin America.

While the Dietsche Mennonites strived to recreate their agricultural way of life and preserve their religious traditions in their colonies in Latin America, many have returned to Canada. Various forces, some not under their control, such as economic

downturns and droughts, and other factors such as continued connections with Mennonites in Canada, led many to return. Generally, they immigrate to seek a means of making a livelihood that is otherwise not available to them. The Dietsche who immigrated to Canada after the 1950s are typically descendants of the early settlers in Latin America. The Mennonite society in southern Manitoba, into which the Dietsche Mennonites acculturate, has dramatically changed since their departure. They have modernized and accommodated to the changing world around them. Nevertheless, some Mennonite groups continue to maintain traditional religious beliefs and practices. As well, the area endures as a distinctly Mennonite enclave with a dense Mennonite population. The endurance of Mennonite culture and religion in the area is what draws many of the Dietsche interviewed to the area.

To analyze the nature of this transformation, particularly among the Dietsche Mennonites in southern Manitoba, I utilize different theories. Ravenstein's push/pull theory helps identify some of the circumstances that led to the immigration of the Dietsche women that I interviewed. He proposed that migration occurred as a result of two oppositional forces, namely factors that "push" individuals to leave their original residence and "pull" factors that draw them to a new destination. These dual forces seem to be evident among many of the Dietsche immigrants. However, a few are distinctly pulled to Canada for better opportunities as opposed to the majority who are pushed out of their original country because of economic difficulties.

The bulk of my analysis is organized using Berry's (1990) acculturation typology. Berry proposes four types of acculturation attitudes, or as I have termed them

“strategies,” based on an individual’s orientation to their own culture and towards other cultures in their new society. When an immigrant desires to maintain their culture yet does not desire to have contact with other cultures, they assume a *separationist* strategy. If an immigrant desires to preserve their culture and also desires and makes contacts with other cultures, they use an *integrationist* strategy. On the other hand, when an immigrant does not preserve their culture and makes contacts with other cultures, they utilize an *assimilationist* strategy. If an immigrant does not maintain their culture and does not make contacts with the larger society, they employ a strategy of *marginalization*. Overall, the women interviewed for this project used separationist and integrationist strategies and Chapters four and five are often divided according to these strategies.

Along with Berry’s typology, Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) theory of agency aids in further understanding motivations behind acculturation strategies. According to Emirbayer and Mische (1998:963), agency is the capacity of an individual to act within changing circumstances and whose actions maintain and transform the individual’s structural environment. Agency is a process that is embedded in the social world and thus incorporates three elements or dimensions. It is informed by one’s past, that is, the “iterational” element of agency, the ability to imagine alternative possibilities, i.e., the “projective” element of agency, and the “practical-evaluative” element of agency which refers to an individual’s ability to relate the past and future in their present situation. Thus, within the context of the Dietsche women’s migration to a new society, that is, their changing environment, we see how they exercise their agency in relation to their past and future in the preservation of and transmission of their culture to the next

generation.

A final element in this study is the role of women, as mothers, in the process of cultural and religious preservation and transmission. Several studies highlight the importance and position of women in this role and furthermore, Dietsche women's position in this role is paramount within their own culture and religion. Instead of focusing on second generation acculturation, often described in terms of "assimilation" into the dominant culture (Schönpflug, 2001; Nauck, 2001), this thesis is concerned with ethno-religious retention by first generation mothers. Future research into the second generation Dietsche acculturation within Canadian society is, however, required.

In short, a micro-sociological perspective is best suited to comprehend the process of cultural preservation and transmission within ethnic groups, particularly for the Dietsche Mennonites. It understands that active agents, who are constrained by social structures immediate to them, socially construct ethnicity and culture. Ethnic culture is continuously reconstructed in the next generation and is either constrained or enabled by mainstream society. This approach allows individuals' daily lived experiences to take precedence within the context of macro-social forces. It permits various responses by members of ethnic groups towards the dominant society and *vice-versa*. It allows for these individual and divergent voices to be heard and aids in unraveling the daily process of preserving and transmitting ethnic culture.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

I. Introduction

Several factors uniquely position me to study women's preservation and transmission of culture within the Dietsche community of southern Manitoba. Being the daughter of Dietsche parents, I have familial and social ties in the Dietsche community and am conversant in Low German. As a woman, I can more easily access other women in the Dietsche community. I also live in the area, which lends personal credibility.

Realizing that complete objectivity is difficult and not always desirable, this is an attempt to state my position. Being an active member of the Mennonite community and a daughter of Dietsche parents created opportunities for me to enter the domain of these women, but it also created an internal struggle. My education has influenced my understanding of Mennonitism and the larger world. Thus, I have moved away from the conservative Mennonite tradition and do not associate myself with the evangelical fundamentalist ideology that permeates the religious community of southern Manitoba. Though I call myself a Mennonite and the women that participated also call themselves Mennonites, how we think and live out this faith and culture varies. This tension, I am sure, affected the questions I asked, how I asked them, and my interpretation of their answers. With this in mind, I tried not to persuade my research subjects of my ideas, nor did I feel they intended to change mine.

A goal of this thesis is to give a voice to a particular group of marginalized women which will add to our knowledge about immigrant women's experiences in

Canadian society. Women's roles in the preservation and transmission of culture are unique. It would have been of interest to interview men to study differences and similarities between men and women in these roles. This would have allowed me to gauge a real or perceived difference between the genders in degree of participation in maintenance of culture to answer the question, do women really do more of the cultural maintenance than men? However, on a practical level, obtaining interviews with the men in the chosen community would have taken a great deal of time and may have been difficult because of my gender. Instead I decided to concern myself with the women in this community and their perceptions of their abilities to preserve and transmit their cultural and religious traditions.

A. Why Study Dietsche Mennonite Immigrants?

Several unique characteristics make the Dietsche Mennonite immigrant population in southern Manitoba an excellent study of intergenerational transmission and cultural preservation. First, the Dietsche Mennonites are relatively isolated from mainstream Canadian society, mostly living in rural settings near other non-Dietsche Mennonite groups in Manitoba. This is not to infer that Dietsche Mennonites do not face assimilatory forces. In fact, to various degrees, other Mennonites in their communities, who do not share their Latin American heritage, attempt to assimilate the Dietsche return migrants. However, not all the Dietsche succumb to these forces. Because of their geographic position, there remains a unique opportunity to examine cultural transmission and preservation among ethnic groups with strong ties to religion but with different ethnic identities.

Second, the Dietsche Mennonites are a relatively recent immigrant group and there are a sizable proportion of first and second generation Dietsche Mennonites. Furthermore, because of their relatively recent return, few third and fourth generation Dietsche Mennonites exist. This means that cultural transmission and preservation may be easier to observe. Since a sizable portion of second generation Dietsche Mennonites exists, the population is large enough to examine first to second generation cultural transmission.

B. Characteristics of Participants

The Dietsche Mennonites selected for this study live in the Pembina Valley region of Manitoba including the towns of Winkler, Morden and Altona, and surrounding rural territories. This location was chosen since it is a main destination of the re-migrating Dietsche Mennonites. The area formerly known as the West Reserve, was the home of many of Mennonites who migrated to Mexico in the 1920s. Given the large population of non-Dietsche Mennonites in this area, I could examine the Dietsche Mennonite's perceptions of integration as they settle into the Mennonite communities their forebears had previously left behind.

The study's participants are women who have been raised in Latin America and who have raised or are raising children in Canada. Their length of time in Latin America varies, as I allowed women to designate for themselves whether their time in Latin America was significant enough to influence the way they raise their children. I also wanted to gather information from women who entered Canada at various times, thus I did not want to limit myself in terms of their length of stay in Canada. All participants,

save one widow, are currently married. As well, it was not necessary that their children resided in the Pembina Valley region.

C. Advantages and Limitations of the Study

A qualitative study has benefits and limitations. On the positive side, I am intimately familiar with the Dietsche community, being the child of Dietsche immigrants. I also have a personal interest in this group because of my socialization into the Dietsche subculture. As well, I have an insider's knowledge and contacts with members of the community, all of which enhance my ability to locate respondents and to obtain their participation. My knowledge of Low German and my residence in Winkler, Manitoba, a predominately Dietsche Mennonite community, is of additional value. Not only does this practically facilitate the research process by allowing for easier access, but again builds a sense of solidarity and rapport with those in the community.

These and several other issues made this research with Dietsche immigrants problematic. First, close identification with the study group and my own personal perspective influences my interpretation of events presented by participants (Singleton and Straits, 1999:330). As well, past research and knowledge of the population may have predisposed me to expecting certain answers from participants and asking question to obtain certain answers. I attempted to prioritize the voices of each participant to reduce any bias that may exist because of my connection with the community. As well, I kept a research journal wherein I wrote personal reflections that allowed me to reflect on any predispositions. Additionally, I relied on my committee as outsiders to detect any bias.

II. Gathering Participants

A. Participant Selection

Initially, I, Abe Peters, former director of Kanadier Concerns at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Winnipeg, and Marlene Enns, an English as a Second Language instructor created a list of suitable participants from the Dietsche Mennonite community in southern Manitoba. I asked those initial respondents to provide names of other potential participants fitting the characteristics required for my study. This expanded the initial list. We know this procedure as “referral” sampling. In this procedure as one interview is completed, the participant is asked to identify other suitable candidates (Jackson, 1999:387).

As with other techniques, referral sampling has positive and negative attributes. This method is ideal for “sampling target populations that comprise small subgroups of the larger population” (Singleton and Straits, 1999:162). Referral sampling is also a good method of identifying hard to reach members of obscure and small ethnic groups. Furthermore, it is often the only method available when a comprehensive list of possible respondents is unavailable. The group under study is likely to have very common familial and social networks and thus I run the risk of having readers think that the study is generalizable to all Dietsche when it is not. As a result there are a several limitations to this study. It took place within a specific geographical location. Moreover, it does not include those who continue to migrate between provinces within Canada and between Latin America and Canada as migrant-worker families. The Dietsche who do not participate in organized religion were also not included since all the women interviewed

were involved in a church in Canada. As well, women who were prevented by their husbands were not interviewed. Nevertheless, others have used referral sampling successfully in researching Scottish ethnic identity formation (Crane, 2000) and undocumented Mexican and Indochinese immigrant workers (Rumbaut et. al., 1988).

I attempted to select my participants as broadly as possible. They also represented a range of ages from 32 to 70, different stages of motherhood and number of children, various Mennonite churches, and a range of dates of entry into Canada -- 1964 to 1998. I conducted thirteen interviews until the data were "saturated." Saturation refers to a level at which no new pieces of information arise and when patterns that emerge through initial interviews are confirmed and reinforced (Kirby and McKenna, 1989).

B. Method of Contacting Participants

I contacted potential respondents from my initial list by phone and introduced myself. I asked each participant whether I should conduct the interview in English or Low German. I explained the study and its purpose and the implications of participating in the study.¹⁸ If the contact was willing to participate, a time and place were set for the interview. When I gave them a choice of location, all of them felt most comfortable conducting the interviews in their own home. All the participants were asked to sign a consent form given to them in English or High German which I verbally translated into Low German as needed.¹⁹ I asked respondents permission to tape record the interview.

¹⁸Later in the paper I will discuss the implications of conducting this research in different languages.

¹⁹ See Appendix C. Consent Form: English and Appendix D. Consent Form: High German. Since High German is the written language of Dietsche Mennonites, I had the consent form translated into High German. However, fluency varies among the women and thus I translated the consent form into Low German when something was unclear.

All of the participants agreed to be tape recorded. I assured them that these tape recordings were kept in a secure place and would be restricted to me and my thesis committee. The tapes will be destroyed upon completion of this project.

After the initial contact, I created index cards for each participant. The cards included the date, time and place of the interview, contact information, whether they wanted a summary of the thesis and comments to help me remember the participant. I numbered each one to maintain confidentiality. I created a secure file²⁰ on my computer that connects the number to the participant's name and pseudonym.

III. Data Gathering and Analysis

A. Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is a good method for gathering information on an abstract topic such as ethnic identity preservation and cultural transmission. The semi-structured interview is superior for several reasons. First, because the population has been little researched, this type of data gathering uncovers unknown elements of religion and culture. Furthermore, these women are generally unfamiliar with the interview process, so this type of interview appeals to their cultural affinity for conversation. It enables the revelation of nuances of preservation and transmission through conversations. According to DeVault (1991:6), discovering the fault lines in what is otherwise hidden is integral to understanding the everyday lives of people. The only way to discover these hidden fault lines is to converse with people. Therefore, the research most benefits from face-to-face interviews utilizing a semi-structured interview schedule.

Second, the semi-structured interview is optimal as it combines the advantages of

²⁰This file, along with all interview transcripts, is protected by a password.

both structured and unstructured interviews. From structured interviews, the semi-structured interview uses a list of themes or topics of discussion to approach the subject area. This not only acted as a reminder of the subjects, but it also aided in the continuity of the conversation between the interviewer and the participant. From the unstructured interview, semi-structured interviews take advantage of their conversational nature. This allows the interview to emerge “naturally” without the formality of a set of ordered questions. Furthermore, new topics and ideas emerge during these “conversations” which the researcher may have not considered in a structured survey.

Another beneficial aspect of semi-structured interviews is their capacity to facilitate equality between the researcher and the participant. This method tends to emphasize that participants are experts in their own lives. Respondents were considered full participants in this research in a collaborative atmosphere. I encouraged the participants to ask questions and share or not share personal experiences (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:68). This empowered the respondents and made them more comfortable in participating in this research. As well, I was open to sharing my own experiences when requested, making it a truly collaborative endeavor.

The qualitative method is a preferred method for gathering information on abstract concepts such as cultural preservation. It allows the recording of people’s descriptions of their lives which are embedded in culture. When little prior knowledge exists about a cultural group’s practices, this method enables one to discern individual’s cultural practices, how these practices are enacted in a new environment and the reasons why they are continued. In other words, it allows the exploration of the meanings that

people attach to cultural aspects.

Unfortunately, this method is not without its faults. It is time consuming and laborious due to the length of time needed to complete each interview, to transcribe and code them. As well, fewer participants limits the study due to the time constraints involved with interviewing individuals in-depth. Relying on oral history, that is, relying on the memory of participants is always precarious. Memory is selective and sometimes inaccurate. Participants tend to project their present ideas, beliefs and circumstances on their past. As well, interviewees sometimes present more positive than negative pictures of themselves, thereby selecting out unflattering images that they do not wish to convey. I was, however, moved by many women's willingness to share personal details of their life. Some participants may also be predisposed to exaggeration, for example, they may inflate numbers. Therefore, regardless of the careful preparation of research questions, the research is subject to the potentially fallible evaluations and answers given by the participants. While these problems are generally unavoidable, I will try to maintain the truth as much as possible. Nevertheless, this approach is necessary to elucidate solid answers to the research question.

This research also presented other difficulties that I needed to address. Following the first few interviews, I reorganized and changed some of my questions. I felt we were discussing some areas more, to the detriment of other areas, and thus I attempted to focus on the latter in other interviews. I also added some questions that arose out of areas I did not foresee and deleted some questions that were unproductive. Furthermore, as I conducted more interviews, I became more confident in my questioning

and relied less and less on the interview schedule to guide the conversation.

A final reason why this approach was appropriate is that for the most part, most of the Dietsche Mennonite population is unfamiliar with surveys or questionnaires. In short, the semi-structured interview was highly useful for examining this very personal subject matter and yielded richer results than a more structured survey format.

B. Operationalizing Preservation and Transmission

This research focuses on the extent that Dietsche women have preserved and transmitted their cultural and religious traditions upon their return to Canada. My purpose is to explore culture from the perspective of individual women's experiences, how culture is retained and made meaningful in women's everyday lives. To determine what is preserved and transmitted I questioned the women about their cultural and religious practices and beliefs that they have perpetuated and promulgated during their return to Canada and asked them to reflect on their practices and beliefs in their country of origin. First, I gathered information on their migration experiences in order to understand how it may influence their ability or desire to maintain their culture. Motivations behind immigration are important to learn whether the women wanted to leave their country to abandon their cultural and religious way of life or were more economically motivated. As well, I questioned the reasons behind choosing southern Manitoba, an area heavily populated by Mennonites. I asked questions regarding ties to the country of origin to find whether a continued cultural exchange existed.

Other questions dealt with raising children, since this is the means of preserving and transmitting culture and religion that are at the women's disposal. The questions were

asked in three parts:

1. Parents' concerns over cultural transmission
2. Roles of mothers in cultural transmission/preservation
3. Mothers' roles in religious adherence

Women were asked what values, beliefs and traditions were important to transmit to their children and whether they made a conscious effort to transmit and retain those from their Dietsche Mennonite culture. The second part focused on how they raised their children to determine the processes and methods employed in instilling the values. I asked them to discuss the daily tasks of parenting. For those women with adult children, I asked them to reflect about those issues during all the developmental stages of their children. Some of the women found it difficult to accurately recall those issues and were only able to give general impressions during the interview. However, their insights were valuable to detect changes throughout the generations. Thirdly, I queried the participants about what it meant for them and their children to be Dietsche and Mennonite, and how they lived their religious lives including daily religious practices and church participation.

Other questions requested the participants to recount their observations on the influence of Canadian and Canadian Mennonite culture. I asked these questions to learn how well they felt they had integrated or were accepted into Canadian and Mennonite society. I included questions regarding exposure to different types of media as means to encouraging either Dietsche or Canadian culture. The interviews also included demographic questions.²¹

²¹Please refer to Appendix E: Interview Schedule in Low German and Appendix F: Interview Schedule in English.

C. Interview Analysis

To facilitate analysis of the data and ensure ethical treatment of participants, all research materials are kept in three separate files following a procedure outlined by Kirby and McKenna (1989). The “*document file*” contains all original data including notes on readings, reflections, field notes and transcripts (on my computer) (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:133). This is considered the “raw” and unanalyzed data and is maintained for analysis purposes. It also includes a tape file, consisting of the tape recordings of the interviews. An “*analysis file*” contains copies of information in the document file which I have coded. It is a document that groups all the interview comments by theme and is the product of the first data analysis (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:138). A “*process file*” contains a record of the steps taken in the research process and my reflections to provide documentation of the research and analysis process. It aided in the analysis of the data and in the writing of the methodology chapter of this thesis (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Kirby and McKenna, 1989:133).

Knowledge is created in relationship between active individuals, that is, it is not created in an abstract realm outside of human history and relations (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:16). Conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews is a dynamic process between the participants and the researcher. An interview provides the space for participants to tell their stories in direct relation to the research question; it is a “productive site of reportable knowledge itself” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:3). The researcher must be aware of her position in relation to the participants as actively constructing the space for the creation of knowledge (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:18). I

analyzed the interviews using a “comparative method” which allows for intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity means that we give the responses of the participants and the analysis of the researcher equal value. It also includes a “critical reflection of the social context” of the life events and social situations of all respondents (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:129). To ensure this occurred in my data analysis, the statements made by participants formed the basis for theoretical analysis. The voices of the participants provided the frame for analysis by initially looking for patterns that present themselves in the transcripts. Then I examined these patterns in light of their life circumstances and in context of other immigrant women.

As I transcribed the interviews, several themes emerged. I began by reviewing each interview on the computer, copying and pasting each relevant information (transcript passage) into a file for a particular category and creating subcategories as they arose. While each piece of information has several “properties” or central ideas, “categories are groups of [pieces of] information that have common properties” (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:137). A category’s strength is measured by the inability of new pieces of information to add any new dimension to the concept. At one point during this initial phase of analysis, I noted the following about creating the analysis file:

I’m finding it hard to categorize women’s statements. I feel constricted by the categories I created from the first interview though I’ve changed them and I’ve added new ones. It’s very hard to categorize without making lots of categories. Perhaps more general themes will arise (at a later time).

At first I examined all the interviews concentrating on one category. Later, I selected single interviews and combed through it pasting passages into various categories. I continued to create more subcategories and some of these developed into categories of

their own. The theories mentioned earlier in the proposal, my notes taken during the interviews and the experience of other immigrant women are also used to interpret or “frame” the data to answer the research questions.

I was pregnant with my second child at this time and it may have influenced the interview, analysis and writing stages. In my last few interviews, I was showing definite signs of being pregnant. I do not think this had an impact on the information disclosed by the women since I did not see any differences between these and my initial interviews. After my daughter’s birth, I did not work on my thesis for several months. The break gave me a chance to step back from my thesis for awhile. As a result, I approached analysis differently. I stopped keying in words to search for themes since I felt comfortable enough with the categories and subcategories I had already produced. Instead, I reviewed each interview, copying and pasting relevant information into appropriate categories and subcategories. I also realized that I had failed to initially cross-reference the information, and had to create a cross-referencing system and apply it to all the data I had categorized. Cross-referencing the coded pieces of information helps link categories together. Though having a baby has understandably slowed my progress, it has allowed me to be more reflective about raising children as members of a Mennonite community.

Being relatively new to the process of interviewing and analyzing data, I tended to make many assumptions and over-analyze in the initial stages of data analysis. Members of my thesis committee helped point out these errors. They also suggested to organize the analysis based on the women’s acculturation strategies rather than strictly by research

themes. Thus, the analysis went through a subsequent stage of restructuring as I revisited the analysis and transcripts further organizing the data according to the women's acculturation strategies.

Part of the analysis process included comparing entire interviews for each respondent with each other in order to portray individual opinions and views accurately. The first part of the analysis has the potential of losing social context of individual participants, that is, by taking comments out of context and constructing themes, we lose the ability to contextualize the comments of individual participants. Comparing entire interviews addresses the danger of losing the contextuality of the interviews when the statements of participants are compared and themed. This is difficult to accomplish as one gets absorbed in the details during the analysis process. Reviewing entire interviews on a more regular basis would have been beneficial, though I often did return to transcripts of complete interviews to contextualize the women's statements throughout the analysis and writing process.

D. Language and Translation

Language and translation are issues that also affected the research process. Having completed interviews in this community prior to this project and with my personal knowledge of the community, I knew I would be conducting many interviews in Low German. Translation in any language is deeply influenced by individual interpretation. Because I conducted the interviews myself, I minimized the interpretation issue because other interviewers were not involved. Nevertheless, there were other challenges in the area of language and translation.

First was my proficiency in the Low German language. This research was largely based on my ability to communicate in this language. In the beginning, I thought my proficiency was much better than it was. In actuality, my linguistic abilities increased as an unintended part of this research. At times, however, I noticed that I asked the participants the Low German word for an English one I was using. As well, I also asked them to explain Low German words that were not part of my vocabulary. I sensed they appreciated the fact that I was learning as much from them as they were from me. I attempted to carry this attitude of learning from them throughout the entire interview. Sustaining this part of my cultural heritage has been rewarding for me.

Second is the issue of the nature of the Low German language itself. It is an oral language, while High German is the main written and religious language of the Dietsche community, school and Church. Consequently, I had the consent form translated into High German. However, most of the participants stated that their knowledge of High German was very rudimentary and preferred the English consent form. In order to write or read Low German words and phrases, I had to teach myself using Herman Rempel's Low German/English dictionary. This dictionary is not exhaustive and at times the participant's pronunciations were different from Rempel's, making it difficult to translate certain words. Despite Thiessen's (2003) improved dictionary, at times there is no comparable Low German word or phrase for an English one. As with other languages, the Low German typical to southern Manitoba is filled with many English words, some of which are "Low Germanized." That is, "je" is added to the beginning or "en" is added to the end of English words and are then pronounced with a Low German inflection. As

well, more recent immigrants have incorporated different words into their vocabulary than older immigrants as their culture has changed in Latin America.

A third issue was the translation of the interview schedule from English to Low German. Once I had developed the interview schedule, I had to translate the questions to make them culturally relevant to the participants. Translating the questions into Low German was an organic process. I started by discussing this with my parents and other members of the community, and also consulting Rempel's dictionary. Then as I began interviewing women, I learned new ways of phrasing questions and words to define English concepts. During the interviews I asked the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases. At times this led to fruitful discussions about culture. After several interviews I decided to translate the interview schedule in Low German.²² Since I conducted most of the interviews in Low German, it seemed more practical than continually translating my interview schedule from English "on the fly." By that time, I had written several key Low German words in the margins of my English interview schedule.

Translation was a continual struggle because establishing comparable concepts between Low German and English was difficult. For example, translating the idea of culture, which was central to my project, was challenging. "Culture" includes beliefs, ideas and values important to a society. Yet when one talks about "beliefs" with Dietsche people, they understand this as talking about religious beliefs or *Gloowe*. For this reason, and because of the "practical" emphasis of their culture, they understand "ideas" to be concrete plans of action instead of abstract opinions. As a result, I questioned them about practical cultural elements such as dress and languages. In this way, I determined the

²² Please see Appendix E, Interview Schedule: Low German .

elements that these women considered important to their culture. Translating from Low German to English was, in a way, a crucible for the discernment process.

A fourth feature of the project related to language was transcribing the Low German interviews into English. I had to be diligent about proper translation and back-translation to convey meanings accurately. This process took much more time than simply transcribing English interviews. I attempted to transcribe the interviews soon after I had conducted them so they would be fresh in my mind. As I transcribed at home, I consulted Rempel's dictionary and other members of the community for meanings of words with which I was unfamiliar. The way in which I translated changed as the interviews progressed. Initially I tried to translate everything word for word which resulted in very awkward sentences. As I continued translating more interviews, I attempted to convey more of the meaning instead, resulting in much more coherent sounding comments. Being consistent was important since categories for analysis would be based on these translated words and ideas. If I used different English words for the same Low German ones, I may have omitted categorizing pieces of interviews.

IV. Ethical Considerations

A. Anonymity and Confidentiality of Participants

I followed the ethical guidelines for conducting research involving human subjects set out by the Research Ethics Review Board, and the University of Manitoba. No deception was involved in this research as participants had full disclosure of the research questions and purpose of the study. They were also aware that they were participating in a research project. Of utmost concern was respect for human dignity

which meant that respect for individual anonymity and confidentiality was paramount. This was of particular concern since I am a member of this community. As well, many knew each another. To protect confidentiality, I used several precautions. I have not discussed names, contact information, and personal information disclosed during interviews with anyone other than my adviser. Files, tape recordings, and other identifying information are kept secure in my home. I have changed the names of participants and their relatives, places of residence, occupation, and other identifying characteristics.

To further ensure anonymity and confidentiality, I used several additional measures. I created an "identity file" which "contains the information that identifies research participants" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:131). This file consists of the consent form and individual index cards that contain the respondent's contact information. Both the consent form and the index cards are identified with a code. I have kept this file separate and secure from the written transcriptions and other information files. I coded the tapes of the interviews with a number and stored the coding sheet listing the participant and tape number in the identity file. I will erase the tapes upon completion of my thesis. I have stored all transcripts from the interviews on a secure file in my computer and on a disk which is secure in my home.

B. Informed Consent

At the beginning of the interview, I gave each participant a consent form that described the research project, its scientific and community importance, the participant's role and the measures I will take to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. I prepared both

an English and High German consent form. Upon giving them the consent form, I translated it in Low German to ensure complete understanding when required. I gave one copy of the form to the respondent, while the other is kept in a locked filing cabinet with the researcher, according to guidelines specified by the Office of Research. Before beginning the interview, I restated that they did not have to answer any questions with which they were uncomfortable, could stop the interview anytime, and could ask questions to the researcher.

Participation in this research was strictly voluntary. I did not use any inducement or coercion. I explained, as part of the consent form and before the commencement of each interview, that if they revealed any abuse of minors, the law obliges me to report it to the appropriate authorities. Prior to beginning the project, I contacted the local Child and Family Services office to discuss their definitions of abuse and understanding of discipline used in the area. If the participant disclosed abuse regarding her/himself, or any social problem with which they are struggling, I was prepared to refer them to local organizations such as MCC Family Services, Eden Healthcare Services, Genesis House (family violence shelter), and the Kanadier Concerns Desk at MCC Canada. However, no abuse was evident in any of the interviews I conducted that had not been previously disclosed to authorities.

Following the interview, I thanked the participant for her contribution and reminded her that she should feel free to contact me, my thesis supervisor, or the Head of the Department of Sociology if she had any questions regarding the study or how I conducted the interview. Since one committee member, Dr. Royden Loewen (University

of Winnipeg), speaks Low German, participants may have felt more comfortable discussing concerns with him rather than my thesis supervisor, Dr. Lori Wilkinson, who does not speak Low German. I included all the contact information on the consent form.

V. Summary

As with many research projects, this one was borne out of a personal connection as the daughter of Dietsche immigrants. This gave me a unique opportunity to conduct research with members of this population. Since little research has been conducted in this group, I was compelled to conduct first-hand research. My residence in southern Manitoba enabled me to conduct the research in this specific geographical location where a number of Dietsche Mennonites have settled. However, my connection to the group also posed some challenges. Identification and prior knowledge of the group caused my personal perspective to influence interpretation, nevertheless, my thesis committee was instrumental in minimizing bias.

There are a number of methodological considerations in preparing, conducting and analyzing first-hand research with human subjects. The first was the research method. I chose a semi-structured interview since it was the best for garnering answers to questions about cultural and religious preservation and transmission. It was the most appropriate for the population which is unfamiliar with the research process and allowed for a conversational tone more in keeping with the Dietsche culture. It allowed for a flexibility needed to explore the nuances of culture which are embedded in people's lives. Nevertheless, it was time consuming and is subject to individual's memories which tend to be selective and not entirely accurate. However, the lack of knowledge about this

group and a desire to allow women's to speak for themselves made this the most appropriate method.

Secondly, there was concern about recruiting participants. I selected participants for the interviews from a variety of sources attempting to represent a range of cultural and religious characteristics for their population. As a student at the University of Manitoba, I abided by the institutions rules and regulations involving human subjects. Therefore, confidentiality, anonymity and treating participants with respect were high priorities. In accordance with the university's guidelines, I did not use deception and the women gave their informed consent as voluntary participants.

Third, this research method required determining the extent of the Dietsche women's preservation and transmission of culture and religion. As a result, I created an interview schedule with questions for the women about these practices in Canada and asking them to reflect about their practices in their country of origin. I queried them about their migration experiences and their roles as mothers in maintaining and promulgating said practices. As well, I also asked them about their experiences with and exposure to the larger Canadian and Mennonite society.

Fourth, I analyzed the data using a comparative method that had as the basis the statements made by the women interviewed which were categorically organized and analytically framed by the women's orientation to acculturation, i.e., their utilization of separationist or integrationist, strategies. Analysis also required contextualization of women's statements within their own transcripts, within their immediate circumstances and history as well as with respect to the lives of other migrant women.

A final factor in this research was language and translation. Many of the interviews were conducted in Low German and thus translation of concepts between Low German and English was a continual struggle as I sought to convey meanings accurately. Since Low German is largely an oral language, it made the task more challenging. Considerations made in regards to all these areas were done in an attempt to generate dependable data in order to best assess the extent of Dietsche women's preservation and transmission of culture and religion in southern Manitoba. In the following two chapters I will present the analyzed data in as organized and readable a way as possible, holding the women's voices at the fore. Chapter 4 explores the women's preservation and transmission of culture and religion in their migratory experiences as well as in their roles as mothers in a new society. Chapter 5 reviews the women's identification as Dietsche and Mennonites particularly through their use of attire and languages.

CHAPTER 4

Acculturation Strategies used in Immigration and through Mothering

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first explores the acculturation strategies Dietsche Mennonite women use in returning to southern Manitoba. It examines the reasons for leaving Latin America and returning to Canada and how the women in this immigrant group acculturate. The second section continues to discern the women's acculturation strategies in terms of their roles as mothers at different stages of their children's lives. It considers how they negotiate this role in relation to their role in the workforce, and how they transmit their culture and religion on a daily basis.

I. Return to Southern Manitoba: Push and Pull Factors

To determine the extent to which Dietsche women have been able to preserve and transmit their culture and religion, we must explore their motivations and the circumstances that influence their return to Canada. Berry et. al. (1992:271) state that the acculturation process begins with contact with a new culture and the decision to immigrate. For the Dietsche Mennonites living in southern Manitoba, continued contact with Canada while in Latin America partially led to their return. Ravenstein's Push/Pull theory illuminates the women's motivations since those interviewed spoke of several common push factors that compelled their departure and pull factors that directed their settlement in southern Manitoba's rural Mennonite community (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003:7). Their reasons for returning sometimes speak to their acculturation strategies which involves a two-fold process of cultural and religious maintenance and a desire for contact with a common culture. With respect to these push and pull factors, these women

employ separationist or integrationist acculturation strategies.²³ I will discuss the economic and educational push factors first, followed by the pull towards the rural Mennonite enclave of southern Manitoba.

A. Push Migration: Leaving Latin America

Many of the Dietsche are pushed out of Latin America for economic reasons. They are driven by necessity, that is, their search for employment is largely instrumental and thus does not fit into an acculturation category. For a few, their return signified a separationist strategy. Utilizing a strategy of integration, a few women stated that poor educational opportunities for their children was a significant push factor in migrating, implying a willingness to accommodate to Canadian society.

1. The Instrumental Economic Factor in Leaving Latin America

A majority of Dietsche Mennonites could be considered *push economic immigrants* since many left Latin America “because its economic conditions are such that their very subsistence is threatened or there is no gainful work for them available” (Isajiw, 1999:65). There are several economic push factors leading the Dietsche to return to Canada. The devaluation of the peso in the 1960s, the introduction of farm subsidies in the USA (which left small Mexican farms unable to compete on the market), and periods of drought encouraged the Dietsche families to seek a means of livelihood outside of Mexico (Quiring, 2003:102). The importance of farming, coupled with high fertility

²³In response to cultural maintenance and contact with the dominant host society, immigrants exhibit several acculturation strategies -- assimilation, marginalization, separation or integration (which are described in chapter 2). These are not mutually exclusive, in that one person may “seek economic assimilation (in work), linguistic integration (by way of bilingualism), and marital separation (by endogamy)” (Berry et al., 1992:279).

rates, results in a continual need for land and contributes additional economic-related push factors. Their preference for farming has often left few other employment options for the Dietsche, causing many to seek work outside their communities. As a result, new colonies grew throughout Mexico and Latin America to keep pace with this extensive growth. However, not all the new colonies have been able to survive given the poor economic conditions. This too leads to returning to Canada.

Statements made by several of the Dietsche women indicate that they did not intend to return to Canada to integrate into Canadian society. Helen's response is typical of many of the women, indicating she left because, "well it was that there were such poor years, and there was such very little rainfall, and then it became poor there." For many, the return was largely an instrumental means for their husbands to earn a livelihood to maintain their family, rather than a deliberate attempt to integrate into Canadian society vis-a-vis the workforce.

The women's statements reinforce Quiring's (2003) account of an inherent contradiction within the Mennonite colonies in Latin America. Making their livelihood as farmers was a means to separate from the larger society. However, as the population within the colonies increased, fewer people were able to make a livelihood in the new colonies. This became a major factor in pushing many out of Latin America and towards Canada. If they had a choice, many of the push migrants would have preferred to remain in Latin America rather than relocating to Canada.

2. Separationist Strategy: Push out of Mexico

While many returned for economic reasons, one woman's return was a

separationist strategy. Marie stated that one of the reasons they left Mexico was the threat of integration into the Mexican society. When asked about her motivation for returning to Canada, she said:

There's a lot of Mennonites who don't feel very secure being in Mexico or being Mexicans because well it's a different culture. Like our people, the Mennonite people, are not a Latin people. So the mentality is different and so I think they are always a little bit scared of the Latin culture. I guess (we) felt more secure if (we) moved back to Canada.

Marie indicates that returning to Canada meant a greater security in maintaining the Mennonite culture than remaining in Mexico and facing possible integration into the Mexican culture.

3. Integrationist Strategy: The Educational Push Factor

Education is another push factor encouraging re-migration for some women, presupposing an integrationist strategy. Two older women, Agatha and Lena, and two younger women, Sarah and Trudy, indicated that they were dissatisfied with the schooling in Latin America and that this was a primary motivation for their re-migration to Canada. When asked about their motivations for returning, Agatha said, "well because of school, it was, I think, the main thing. Now it would be a different story. Now they (the Mennonites in Mexico) have all kinds of schools and churches." When they immigrated, she says, they had "just the Old Colony school and church." She and her husband wanted their children to have a better education because "we wanted them to know a bit more than we did. We knew we didn't learn much there (in Mexico). And, so, the opportunity was better here to learn more than they did there." Along with wanting more opportunities for their children, Agatha felt that the lessons taught at Old Colony

schools were dated and that parents had no power to criticize the educational policies of these schools. The fact that these were the only Dietsche schools available further encouraged them to return. Lena had similar opinions about education in Paraguay, having also been educated in Canada. Additionally, she wished her children to learn English as she had. Sarah obtained a Canadian high school diploma when she immigrated with her parents from Belize. She returned to a Latin American Mennonite area when she married but eventually returned to Canada, wanting her children to have the expanded educational opportunities not afforded by the schools there.

These women's opinions on education make them more likely to utilize integrationist strategies than the other Dietsche women who used more separationist strategies and were pushed out primarily for economic reasons. These women left Latin America, in part, because of a desire for greater contact with the larger world vis-à-vis the education of their children. However, they also valued the religious nature of the education provided in southern Manitoba (for example, prayer in schools) thus preserving this aspect of Dietsche culture and religion and again implying the use of integrationist strategies. These women's responses indicate a greater emphasis on imagining a different future particularly for their children (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:984). A reflexive examination about a past that no longer "works" and actively moving to a new country as a result, implies a willingness to accept a certain degree of social and cultural change. These four women expressed dissatisfaction with their current situation in Latin America, understood that to ensure a better education for their children would involve emigration and a likelihood of integration into a different culture and way of life.

B. Pull Factors: Drawn to Canada and Southern Manitoba

1. The Instrumental Pull of Economic Opportunity and Canadian Citizenship

Beyond the economic, cultural and educational factors which push the Dietsche out of Latin America, there are several pull factors enticing the Dietsche women to return to Canada. Just as the Dietsche were pushed out of Latin America because of few employment opportunities, they were also pulled to Canada for economic reasons. Some of the women said their husbands had jobs arranged prior to leaving Latin America. Others were pulled by the possibility of their husbands obtaining work (often agricultural). The women were less concerned about their own employment strategies since the majority did not enter the workforce upon their return to Canada. The pull to Canada for work was for instrumental reasons and thus cannot be categorized separationist or integrationist. Employment in Canada is seen as a rather inviting option because of their historical, religious, cultural, and familial connections to Canada.

The Dietsche's claim to Canadian citizenship is another pull factor influencing their migration. Despite their decades-long history in Latin America, the Mennonites rarely obtained citizenship there. Given their beleaguered history with the Canadian government which led them to migrate to Latin America in the first place, they wanted to remain as separate from the state as possible in their new home in Latin America (Quiring, 2003). As well, Marie's earlier statement about the differences between the Mexican and Mennonite cultures indicates that there were also cultural and religious distinctions that may have strengthened the distance between the Mennonites and Latin Americans. Remarks made by other women corroborate Marie's statement that some

Mennonites feel a lack of affinity for Latin American culture. Marie also added that they were motivated to move to Canada because,

(my husband) didn't want our children to be kind of second class Canadians. Like our grandparents moved to Mexico. My parents were born in Mexico. They kept their Canadian (citizenship). We were all born in Mexico, but then it becomes more difficult to be a Canadian. We wanted to have our children here and then we would move back to Mexico and live there.

One reason Marie and her husband wanted to move to Canada was so that their children could obtain Canadian citizenship. This supports Quiring's (2003) observations that most Dietsche prefer Canadian citizenship if given a choice. Marie and her husband's initial plan to return to Mexico, while indicative of their desire to remain largely separate from Canadian society, however, never materialized, implying that they have integrated to some degree.

The Dietsche Mennonite's historical roots in Canada has allowed many the possibility of obtaining Canadian citizenship, but doing so has been fraught with difficulties. Nettie's account describes some of the practical and legal complications surrounding many of the Dietsche Mennonite's re-migration to Canada.

Nettie: At first we came in '78 and then we found out (my husband's) papers weren't (in order), he wasn't here on his 24th birthday and then it was nothing. He had nothing then.

Tina: He couldn't claim Canadian citizenship?

Nettie: No, he couldn't claim. So then we went back (to Mexico). In '78 someone from Ottawa came to Mexico and it took only nine months to get citizen(ship) and that's when the children and I did.

Tina: You were able to claim citizenship?

Nettie: Yeah we did it, seven children and I did in Mexico. Then in '79 we got those, our citizenship, and then we came back (to Canada) and then I had to sponsor (my husband) so that he could get his citizenship.

Tina: How were you able to get your citizenship?

Nettie: Because I was born before my mother's twenty-fourth birthday and

my dad was a Canadian, born a Canadian. And my grandparents on both sides were Canadian. So I think that's what made it very easy for me.

Nettie's account reflects Quiring's (2003) research into the ambiguous laws surrounding the claims of Mennonites from Mexico that allows some to become citizens without ever having been in Canada, while others are denied. Despite the difficulties some of the families faced, the possibility of Canadian citizenship was an additional pull-factor. None of the women indicated that their claim to citizenship was for integrative reasons, thus it would seem that their reasons were more instrumental, which is common among other immigrant groups (Wilkinson, 2002). Citizenship allows them to legally work, to maintain their way of life, and enjoy the benefits of Canadian society. The citizenship laws have since changed, making it more difficult for the Dietsche and other children of Canadians to attain citizenship from outside the country. This will prevent many Dietsche from gaining entrance into Canada (Janzen, 2004:15).

2. Separationist Strategy: Migration to Rural Mennonite Villages

Dietsche Mennonites are attracted to Canada for employment and citizenship reasons but many are pulled specifically to southern Manitoba for reasons of cultural and religious similarity. In this regard, the Dietsche are similar to other immigrant groups who are more likely to migrate to areas where elements of their culture and religion stand a likelihood of being maintained (Li, 1998). Dietsche immigrant women indicate that their past, located within the rural sacred village with its interconnection between Mennonite culture and religion, provides some explanation as to why they are attracted to southern Manitoba. The majority of the women stated that they selected Manitoba because they wanted to continue to live in a Mennonite community. In effect, the

majority of the women I interviewed adopted a separationist strategy in this regard. They wanted to separate themselves as much as possible from other cultures. To do so, they return to southern Manitoba with its highly concentrated Mennonite population, Mennonite culture, and the sacred villages.

The women felt that settlement within a predominantly Mennonite area provided the greatest opportunity to maintain their Mennonite cultural and religious identities. When asked why they chose southern Manitoba, Agatha said, "I guess here there were more Mennonites, that's why we kind of were looking for this area. Northern Ontario doesn't have very many Mennonites." Southern Manitoba's large Mennonite population would give their families a better chance of preserving their religious and cultural beliefs. Weinfeld (1994:247) suggests that "ethnic residential concentrations, whether as ghettos or neighbourhoods, have been linked to ethnic communal cohesion and to the preservation of communal and cultural ties." In this way, migration into a similar ethnic community is a logical choice for those who wish to maintain their cultural and religious affiliations in a new country. He adds that living in ethnic enclaves is mainly voluntary. The women in my study support Weinfeld's view since many, like Agatha, state that they voluntarily relocated to the area expressly to preserve their Mennonite identity. They could have migrated to, and some had lived in, other regions in Canada but were drawn to southern Manitoba for religious and cultural preservation.

Maintaining a connection to the land is also important to many of the participants' understanding of Mennonite culture and faith. Some women indicated that they wished to continue farming upon their return to Canada, but after immigrating realized that it was

not financially tenable. They did, however, have a clear preference for rural settlement. This is a characteristic of the Dietsche people that makes them unique from many other immigrant groups since the vast majority of recent immigrants migrate to cities. In Canada, for example, only 6 percent of all immigrants in Canada live in rural areas (Wilkinson, 2005). This trend of urban resettlement among immigrants is not unique to Canada. In the US, 95 percent of all immigrants live in cities (Scott, Coomes and Izyumov, 2005). Living in rural areas helps to ensure that the Dietsche are relatively isolated from the outside influences of the larger non-Mennonite Canadian society. In this regard, their acculturation into the Canadian economy was largely instrumental, that is, they enter the workforce out of financial necessity rather than as a means to integrate into Canadian society. Nevertheless, obtaining employment in small rural centers with like-minded community members can be construed as a separatist strategy.

Connected to these arguments is the desire of many to come to southern Manitoba because the Mennonite villages are familiar to them. Upon their first migration to Canada from Russia, Mennonites transplanted the *Strassendoerfer* (street villages) to southern and southeastern Manitoba (Epp, 1974:214) and subsequently transplanted them to Latin America. Nettie said that they moved to Manitoba “because of the villages. It felt more like how we were used to it in Mexico. I missed living in the villages. And in Ontario it was not like that. That was one thing, that it feels more at home here.” Nearly all the women have lived in a village at some point upon moving to Canada and many still lived in one. Betty, who lived in a town, was planning on moving to a smaller village when their family was able to afford it. Living in this type of setting seems to be of particular

importance since it was deemed essential to cultural preservation and keeps them close to the land.

While Ravenstein's model of push/pull factors can help clarify some of their motivations to return to Canada, it cannot adequately account for all the cultural and religious motivations intimated by the Dietsche women (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003:7). The push/pull model helps uncover patterns to their reasons for leaving Latin America. Dietsche Mennonites moving to southern Manitoba leave Latin America largely for economic reasons. Importantly, they *do not* leave in order to abandon their cultural and religious traditions. The women's responses partially support Quiring's (2003) findings that the continued contact between Canada and Latin America influences their decision to return, pulling them to Canada. The rural areas where they relocate within Canada is also significant, indicating their desire to preserve their religious and cultural traditions. The push/pull model does not further illuminate variations between women with respect to motivations to preserve religious and cultural traditions. This is where Berry's typology brings clarity to the various individual women's responses by highlighting the patterns of how and why they acculturate in the way that they do. Berry's typology divides the process of acculturation into two basic elements -- contact with another culture and maintenance of one's religion and culture -- to demonstrate that acculturation depends on individual choices made in relation to others. All the women in this study preserve elements of their religion and culture, making them all appear to be assuming the same acculturation strategy. By considering their relation to the larger society, *vis-a-vis* a reciprocal desire to reach out to the host culture or segregation from the host culture, we

can distinguish different strategies.

The next section explores Dietsche women's experiences in their role of cultural and religious transmission as mothers; it is also organized utilizing Berry's typology.

II. Being a Mother: Cultural and Religious Transmission

A. Introduction: Motherhood in Latin America

In many Latin American Mennonite communities, women's lives revolve around the exigencies of a subsistence-based household and home. In these homes, mothers are responsible for caring for children and all household work such as cooking, baking, laundry, cleaning, gardening and conducting some farmyard chores such as milking cows, feeding animals and cleaning their pens (Fehr Kehler, 1999:8). Because of the enormous amount of work this way of life entails, children are often regarded as an asset to the household/farm's overall maintenance. The average family in the Old Colony in Latin America "may include from six to nine children. Many still believe that having numerous children makes them fortunate and wealthy, although not in a material sense" (Quiring, 2003:55). In conjunction with these beliefs, the most conservative churches do not condone the use of birth control.

In traditional Latin American families generally, the mother's role in regards to her children is to maintain discipline, teach them various household activities and proper conduct, and to monitor their daily religious practices. While women were responsible for children, older female children were also expected to help care for younger siblings. Kitchen maids, usually a relative or neighbor's teenage daughter, were also commonly hired when the household contained three or more children. A mother's work was

focused on the household and ensuring their children's conformity to the norms of the community. In other words, the focus was on the development of household management skills and disciplining behaviour, rather than on individualized play time, or development of individuality or self-esteem in a "Western" sense. As soon as they were able, the children were expected to contribute to daily household chores.

In this chapter I explore how the Dietsche women's role as mother helps to encourage the preservation of culture among their children. Almost all Dietsche Mennonite immigrant women wish to retain various elements of culture, religion and language, as do most other immigrant groups (Weinfeld and Wilkinson, 1999:50). A common feature of most ethnic groups is the "centrality of children," which is also important for the Dietsche women interviewed. Weinfeld and Wilkinson (1999:56) along with other researchers find that children are held in special regard by nearly all cultures, based on studies of various ethnic groups including Hispanics, Asian Americans and American Indians. While we know that children are important and that women play a central role in cultural transmission, we do not know how culture is transmitted between mothers and their children. For some Dietsche women, the focus on children and cultural preservation tends to lead to separatist acculturation strategies among themselves and their children, while others employ more integrationist strategies. Dietsche women's responses regarding working for pay illustrates how their primary responsibility to children affects their acculturation strategies and how some change their strategies through successive stages of their children's lives.

B. Working for Pay — Oarbeit/Ütschaufen²⁴

1. Employing a Separationist Strategy with Young Children

All of the women who had young children at home employed a separationist strategy. The centrality of children and accompanying household tasks partly determines Dietsche women's acculturation strategies into the labour market particularly when their children are young. For all the women in this study, caring for their children and their household was the top priority. Their role as mother affects their attitudes to working for pay and the type of jobs they procure. How they negotiate their mothering role is also determined by the nature of the workplace. As a result, working for pay must not interfere with caring for children. The amount and type of work women take on for pay also depends on the stage of their children's development; those with young children are less likely to undertake paid employment than those with older children.

A separationist strategy entails little contact with other cultures and a desire to fully preserve all aspects of culture and religion. Thus, those employing this strategy when their children are pre-school age generally do not work for pay outside the home and care for their young children themselves. As a result, those who do not go to work when their children are young are more likely to adopt separationist strategies. The expectation that women stay at home while caring for young can be seen in Anna's comments.

Tina: You have never worked outside the home when you've had children at home?

Anna: I have not. I stopped when I was pregnant, then I stopped working.

²⁴In Low German the term "Oarbeit" refers to the "work" that one does sometimes as employment or labour. "Ütschaufe" also refers to "work" but specifically that work done for wages usually as a hired hand (Thiessen, 2003:271).

I did not work for pay until we were here (in Canada), but now I work (for pay) at home.²⁵ So my children have not grown up at a babysitters.

A few of the women like Anna had the opportunity to work for pay in Canada before they had children, but many came to Canada with young children and had no employment experience. None of the women in my study pursued employment until all their children were in school or could be cared for by older siblings, mainly because of their concerns about cultural and religious preservation. In general, care for their children by others was sporadic and for very short periods given their uneasiness over “outside” care-givers.

An unintended consequence of Dietsche women’s preservation of the traditional mothering role is similar to Turkish women’s acculturation in Canada,

Not working outside the home, most women of low SES do not get to interact with the larger society and become secluded at home and within their own ethnic circles. This most certainly reflects on their acculturation attitudes. Any idea of a relationship with the larger society is remote; hence, they have the lowest preference for integrationist and assimilationist attitudes of all immigrants (Ataca and Berry, 2002:23).

Marie’s statement about the use of babysitters illustrates many of the women’s attitudes to contact with other cultures:

I have used a babysitter only when I needed to go to the doctor or, there was a babysitter when I went to Bible study. I have almost had no use for babysitters. I mean babysitters are fine if you absolutely need them in an emergency. I don’t know, but otherwise we got our children for the hours that it’s convenient and also for hours that it’s inconvenient; they’re ours. And they’re just ours and we’re responsible for them. And I’m not willing to let other people instill their values in our children if they’re different from ours because somebody is going to instill values in the children. And they better be us because they’re ours and we know what we want. Who else should have the privilege of raising them than us? And that’s why I think it’s sad that so many small children have to go to daycares.

²⁵She sews part-time at home for a clothing company.

Within their cultural milieu, it is expected that mothers stay at home to care for their young children and to instill cultural values and religious imperatives upon them. This is similar to first generation immigrant Muslim mothers whose “lives center around their children,” and who “gain their most important identity through this role” (Sherif, 1999:207). Both Muslim and Dietsche women are the centre of the family and their role is religiously and socially prescribed. Other possible impetuses may explain their sense of responsibility for their own children and reticence towards alternative care. While it may be expected that community women would care for each other’s children, if asked, the large number of children that Dietsche women typically have makes this prospect prohibitive (i.e., it would be difficult to locate a suitable babysitter if all suitable candidates are too busy caring for their own children). As well, perhaps their views on alternative full-time care prohibit them from seeking care for their children within their own community for fear of being criticized for shirking their maternal responsibility. Regardless of these explanations, alternative care for their children is generally viewed as a threat to the role of mothers in the home and the “proper” transmission of one’s culture and religion to the next generation. All the women I interviewed cared for their children and their households on a full-time basis until their youngest children entered school and could be cared for by older siblings, thereby overcoming any possible criticism from the community.²⁶

²⁶All the women in my study had an average of 5 children and by the time the youngest was in school, the oldest child was old enough to care for younger siblings.

2. Work: Employing a Separationist Strategy with School-age Children and Teenagers

The women with older children who employ separationist strategies with respect to work, fall in two categories: 1) those who do not work for pay, and 2) those who do part-time work that does not require interaction with the larger society. This type of work usually involves bringing work home or working with other Dietsche Mennonites in the community. For these latter women, working for pay revolves around their children, and as a result, sometimes involves them. Some women maximized time with their children by involving them in their paid work. Trudy only worked during the summer on a vegetable farm where she was able to bring her children along, while Betty took her children along to help when she had cleaned a restaurant in the evening. These women try to balance the often conflicting spheres of work, raising children, and maintaining a household while prioritizing their role as primary care-givers. In this environment, the women engage in a variety of strategies to keep their children part of the work process and minimize the disruption to their role as mothers by working jobs that accommodate child-rearing. In this regard, Dietsche Mennonite women seem to differ from women in other ethnic groups. Immigrants from many other ethnic groups seem to have kinship networks that are more forgiving and willing to play a more active role in cultural and religious transmission (Weinfeld and Wilkinson, 1999) than is seen among the Dietsche immigrant community. As well, preservation of the traditional gender roles of primary care-giver and maintaining a household seem to outweigh the benefits of a higher income. In other words, the Dietsche do not wish to leave cultural and religious transmission to others just for the sake of having a better “lifestyle.”

Despite their lack of education and English language skills, these women have shown great ingenuity in arranging their work schedules around their children.

A few of the women do not enter into any type of paid employment even after their children are older and able to care for younger siblings. Along with preserving women's traditional caring role as well their role in maintaining the home, self-sufficiency is more important than being employed. As a result of this value system, Dietsche women are more likely to sustain a gendered division of labour by remaining within the home. Being self-sufficient also affects some women's desire to work for pay. When asked if she wished to be employed Helen said,

Helen: Not particularly.

Tina: Why not?

Helen: Doing both would be too busy for me. First working and then later in the evening one's house. And another thing, I like sewing everything myself. And one would not get around to everything.

Dietsche women who employ a separationist strategy have a different value system than the pervading "Canadian" culture. The Dietsche value simplicity rather than the continual hustle that comes with juggling childcare, household, and employment duties seen among those practicing a "Canadian" value system. Also related is the preservation of some aspects of self-sufficiency. For instance, Helen cites sewing, which at another point in the interview she said included the family's clothes and bedding. She and other women also maintain large gardens while others also raise their own animals or process animal products. So caring for children in the Dietsche culture is much more than child management. It entails household management, the production of goods (meals, clothing) and services (cultural and religious maintenance).

In the process, they preserve the maintenance of a traditional household with a gendered division of labour. Most of these women also indicated that their husbands were not supportive of their entrance into the workforce even after their children were in school. Helen said her spouse was not “interested” in having her work for pay; “he thinks that if I’m home with the children, sewing, washing and making food and then he thinks that’s good.” This is similar to other women who immigrate to North America from patriarchal cultures. Berger (2004:72) speaks of Nadra, one interviewee, stating:

Growing up in traditional, patriarchal Indian society, with its strict social stratification, she internalized the expectations of a woman to be docile, submissive, and obedient and to serve the needs of her husband, children, in-laws, and extended family.

This is a very similar value trait seen among the Dietsche in my study. Thus, a separationist strategy with respect to work, preserves the traditional subsistence way of life as well as reinforcing the orientation around the household and traditional gender roles.

3. Work: Employing an Integrationist Strategy with School-age Children and Teenagers

Some of the Dietsche women utilize an integrationist strategy with respect to working for pay, especially when their children start school or become teenagers. They tend to work in jobs in local factories. This puts them in contact with people from other cultures increasing the likelihood of integrating rather than segregating. Nevertheless, women’s work for pay continues to revolve around their children. Susan said, “One just has to spend more time with them. That’s the [reason] I started working outside the home for pay at night. I felt that my kids needed me to spend more time with them, if I wanted

to teach them. I started working the nights when they sleep.” An alternative shift available at her factory, a split-shift, would take her out of the home in the evenings for two weeks at a time. Thus, Susan is compelled to renegotiate her schedule at work in order to accommodate her role as mother. In order to be the role model she feels her school-age children need, along with earning a living for her family, she has reorganized her life. This is an example of individual agency in terms of balancing mothering with paid employment.

Women like Susan arrange their work not only to accommodate mothering, but to ensure the continuation of individual household production and self-sufficiency. While Susan worked outside the home for pay, she continued to maintain a garden and some farm animals. While she finds it difficult, “when one works for pay outside the home and then yet the house and then yet the garden,” she perseveres because she enjoys working outside. She says this is the type of work she is used to and cannot give it up. To make her life manageable, she makes specific choices about what to grow. For example, she does not grow peas because they are too much effort for the small amount that her children eat.

These women juggle integration into the workforce with maintenance of their traditional way of life, and chores related to gardening, household maintenance, and child-rearing, precisely the juggling that Helen wished to avoid. These women acknowledge the necessity of their paid employment in supporting the family financially in a new environment. Nevertheless, entering paid employment and maintaining the role as mother in the home is considered a “problem” that requires a “solution”(Emirbayer

and Mische, 1998). The women actively choose to engage in paid labour but not to the detriment of their primary role in raising their children, thus “solving” the “problem” although sacrificing their personal time in the process.

C. Caring for Young Children

The next section discusses the role of household chores in preserving and transmitting Dietsche Mennonite culture. When asked what their role was in regard to rearing their young children, most of the women listed household chores and ways they met their young children’s physical needs. Their answers revealed how childcare and preservation of culture is intrinsically linked to household tasks. The older women generally adopted a separationist strategy with young children; they were mainly concerned with meeting their children’s physical needs, running of the household and transmitting as much of the Dietsche culture as possible. They encouraged cultural transmission through their children’s involvements in these tasks. Most of the younger generation used an integrationist strategy, but while they were also concerned with the household, they also concentrated on interacting with their young children. As a result, while all the women “stayed at home” with their young children, employing a separationist strategy with respect to employment to varying degrees, women’s interactions with their children differed. This section examines the women’s expectations in mothering young children.

1. Separationist Strategy: The Older Generation Do Not Play

Dietsche women who were over age 40 generally adopted a separationist strategy with their children. All these women arrived in Canada with young children and

had little contact with the larger society. When asked what they did as mothers, many of these women talked about “staying at home” and having the children close to them.

These women follow the tradition of having many children, approximately six children on average, with less than 2 years between the birth of each child. When I asked Nettie, a mother of over eight children, what her main responsibilities were as a mother of young children she said, “Oh feeding them and cleaning them, that’s all I ever did; feed them, and clean and wash diapers. That's what I did for the better part of my life.” The number of children and closeness in age between them meant a continuous stream of household labour that kept these women at home. She found it difficult to articulate the way she passed on Dietsche culture to her children.

The preservation of culture with their young offspring is noted in the way these women interact with their young children. In Agatha’s earlier statement she said that she had not played with their children. Instead, their interaction seems to be at the level of conducting and coordinating household tasks. For example, Susan says,

When I baked buns and they got bored, they wanted to help. Of course, I got them to wash their hands. When I made the dough and when it was ready then they helped me make buns. The oldest was 5 years (old) and the youngest was just one year (old) (laugh). I, I held what they made apart a little, but they had just as clean hands as I had. Like that, they have helped all over since they were little. They know that they have to watch out by an oven and like that.

In this way, these women pass on their traditional ways of doing household tasks to their children, both boys and girls, by beginning at a very young age to involve them. This illustration is typical of interactions between mothers and children in Latin America described by other Dietsche women in my previous study (Fehr Kehler, 1999). In this

way, the women are trying to pass on the value of household chores and self-sufficiency in terms of emphasizing cooking from “scratch.”

2. Integrationist Strategy: Younger Generation and Young Children

Those women below 40 years of age generally adopted a more integrationist strategy with respect to caring for young children. These mothers talked less about tasks related to physically caring for young children and conducting household work, and more of playing with their children. When I asked Helen what her role was with her young children she said,

It was always fun for me to play with them. And taking care of them and bathing them and putting on clean clothes and giving them food and sewing for them. It was always fun for me. That’s how it is for me today yet.

Even though they mention household tasks like cooking and sewing, these women spoke more about having fun with their young children, a sentiment that was not expressed by the women in the older generation. This is in contrast to the hierarchical arrangement within the traditional conservative Mennonite family where the mother assumes a dominant place over children (Redekop, 1969). Engaging in children’s activities would degrade her status and put her household authority in jeopardy. When I asked Trudy what she did for and with her children when they were young she said,

Trudy: Like one always does with them. Play with them and do certain things with them and read the Scriptures together with them. And I always played with them on the floor a lot. Now, as one knows, many people do so. But as one was taught, they said it was a *Schomp*,²⁷ if someone sat on the floor and played with the children.

Tina: That was a, what?

Trudy: A *Schomp*. How would you say it in English? Like one should

²⁷*Schomp* directly translated means “shame.”

be ashamed of oneself if you sit there and play with children.

Tina: You do not think one should be ashamed of that?

Trudy: No.

Trudy and Helen engage in an act that their traditional culture saw as a “Schomp,” a shameful act. Agatha’s earlier statement and these younger women’s accounts indicate that younger women are not preserving this aspect of traditional Dietsche culture.

Generally, women who adopt this strategy decide to have fewer children, approximately three on average, with about 3 years between each child. Furthermore, most of these women had already left the most conservative churches for churches that do not assert strong regulations regarding birth control. For Lisa, limiting the number of children was a decision made in discussion with her husband but was nevertheless, a deliberate act of agency and a breaking with tradition. When asked why she and her husband decided to have fewer children, Lisa said,

It seemed to be so hard and so much work, it seemed to me that one would not have enough. It takes a lot of time for me (to care) for two children, and how can one have time for all the homework in the school and everything so that they could do everything well? And it seems to me that it is so busy, I do not think I could be a mom. I mean, not that it does not also work (for) the one who has that many. I think that if one had (that many) it would work, but it seems to me, rather to have a couple, and try to take better care of them rather than having many and not being able to give them what they need.

Lisa states that she could not be an adequate mother for a larger number of children in this new society since to be a “mom” one has to have the time required to meet all of her children’s needs. Like other women who employ an integrationist strategy, they want to continue to preserve some cultural aspects within the home, but also want to be able to provide the time and energy required for the demands of their new society, particularly

being involved in school. Within this strategy, children's "centrality" is focused more on a mother's engaging with her children rather than on largely caring for children's immediate physical needs vis-a-vis household tasks that are intrinsically linked to the "traditional" conservative Mennonite understanding of "mother." Having fewer children allows them to "take better care" of them. It also includes the need to integrate, to a certain extent, into the larger society, a commitment generally not seen among the older women.

This section dealt with how Dietsche women raise their young children, the next section focuses on how the Dietsche women have preserved and transmitted their culture within the context of the larger Canadian society as their children mature. Some of the women employed a separationist strategy, preserving a connection to the land and maintaining self-sufficiency while others used an integrationist strategy by encouraging their children to engage in the larger society.

D. Raising Children in Canada

1. Connection to the Land and Self-Sufficiency: A Separationist Strategy

A connection to the land and self-sufficiency are two important Dietsche Mennonite cultural values that most of the women wish to instill in their children. However, those who engage in a separationist strategy tend to emphasize these aspects to the exclusion of other pursuits, and want their children to learn to value working on the land and doing for oneself. Marie said she wanted her children to learn the value of "doing their own cooking and baking, not buying too much things prepared already and growing things for yourself so that you know what you have." I asked her if that was how

she grew up and she said,

Yes. My mom always had a garden, and a beautiful flower garden too and my father was always so proud of my mom of all the things that she grew in the garden and when he went some place he bought seeds and stuff to please my mom so that she would have a beautiful yard.

Orientation to the subsistence way of life in the past where gardens are not only grown to feed bodies but also souls is clearly evident among those with separationist tendencies as many of the women indicated their enjoyment of their flower gardens. Growing vegetable and flower gardens dates back to the Mennonite's early history in Prussia, and was preserved in their migration to southern Russia (Jost Voth, 1991:232). This practice has been passed down through the generations in much of the Mennonite diaspora, including Latin America, and is now being practiced in Canada. Agatha said that she valued working outside, especially since her paid employment occurs indoors. Working outside, she said, was how she grew up and so gardening helps preserve this aspect of her culture.

Many of these women include their children in household, yard and garden work to help in the subsistence economy of the household. The majority of these women raise their children in rural locations with space for a garden, and a few also raise animals. Judy, along with other mothers, stated that she wanted her children to have an appreciation for the origin of their food. Judy grew a garden on her own land but was unable to keep animals in her small town, and kept them at a relative's farm. In this small way, she still maintained a connection to the farm, particularly for the sake of her children.

Tina: Did you have a garden?

Judy: Every year we had one and the children had to help. And we slaughtered chickens. They were supposed to know how to do that too.

Now it's not so necessary because you can go and buy it in the store. But I have nevertheless, the older ones anyway, taught them how to slaughter chickens.

Tina: Did you also slaughter pigs?

Judy: Every year we did one. And when we slaughtered they had to help. We just bought it from my husband's uncle. And we drove there often so that the children could be on the farm among the chickens and pigs and so they could see everything. And now almost all of them know what it looks like. Well, not how much work it all is, that they don't know. But that is a lot of work.

Women like Judy wanted their children to have an appreciation for their culture by producing some of their own food. Many found ways to transmit certain elements of an agrarian life to their children even though circumstances, such as lack of finances to buy appropriate land did not allow some of the women to be as self-sufficient as they would have liked. While preserving cultural foods and folkways is common among immigrant women of other ethnic groups (Berger, 2004; Del Negro, 1997; Jost Voth, 1991), these attitudes towards maintaining traditional agrarian practices and migrating to rural spaces to maintain them is quite unique to the Dietsche.

Some of the mothers also said they value the subsistence work that comes with raising their children in rural areas. Justina said that being involved in gardening and caring for animals keeps her children busy. This is a different type of "busy" than children in towns or cities enjoy which typically centre around entertainment or individual interests. Marie was glad they were able to move to a village:

This was more space for the children too. And then we could have animals. We had cows, sheep, cats, goats, dogs, rabbits. We have had a lot of animals and that was a good experience for the children. They learn to do chores, (and) they learn to take responsibilities. I think people who grew up in towns in cities, well they have lots of things that they can do too, but there's not that connection to nature than if you grew up in a rural area.

Other mothers also commented that their children gained an appreciation for plants and animals but also learned to take responsibility. These women value the opportunities afforded by an agrarian setting.

The use of a separationist strategy seems to have significantly influenced their children since the majority of the women's adult children preserve self-sufficient gardening activities maintaining a connection to the land. Two of Marie's children were not in a position to have their own garden, however, three of them were now able to do so. She said, "I think if they would all have room, they would all grow things for themselves. But right now it's George and Elizabeth, and Margaret and Henry that will be having big gardens." Other women of adult children reported that their children grew produce when they were able to have a yard of their own. This tends to be one aspect of culture that is preserved among the second-generation. Another indication that there is a strong preservation of this aspect of culture is that the majority of the adult children live in the rural areas with many continuing to live in southern Manitoba.

2. Engaging in Canadian Culture: An Integrationist Strategy

While the majority of the women preserved some aspects of self-sufficiency and a connection to the land, those who employ an integrationist strategy also value providing their children with other opportunities afforded by Canadian society. Sarah said about returning to Canada,

I had big hopes for our kids. You know, I loved music, I play piano. I wanted them to have a chance to explore their creative abilities and pursue different careers. You know out there you're either a farmer or you work for a farmer. And I guess I just wanted to give my kids more options.

These women value the opportunities provided by the larger Mennonite and Canadian culture. Others, like Trudy, also said they were glad their children did not have to do all the work that they did as children and are pleased that they are able to engage in play and leisure activities. They enroll their children in music lessons, sports and other extra curricular activities, which mothers who employ a separationist strategy tend not to do.

Allowing their children this level of involvement in the larger Canadian society is not always without some angst. They are afraid their involvement will challenge their traditional understanding of what is appropriate work and what it means to be family. For example, Trudy and Lisa voiced trepidation about letting their sons play hockey. Trudy said,

Trudy: I do not want him to but he really desires to. And it is always disappointing for me that I could not do what I had desired so I will have to allow him.

Tina: So why do you not want to let him?

Trudy: When one looks at it, they drive so far away, I don't know if I could handle it when they were so far away, so far away from me.

Many of the other women interviewed stated that part of being a mother meant keeping their children close to them, having them around. This sentiment is also voiced by Israeli immigrant mothers who value being together with family members above individualism (Berger, 2004:50).

The same sentiment came out in a statement by Lisa regarding their children's future work,

We would probably later let them do what they want to, as long as it is good work and not something that we would think was unnecessary. Stephen talks about being in sports, like in hockey teams and like that. And, well, we try to teach him that he should not just make his living

from that. Rather, we do not think it would make a good family life or like that. We are not against sports, they can willingly play sports.

Lisa did not want him to focus on sports as a way of making a living since it was contrary to her understanding of a culturally acceptable form of employment, that is, something that is necessary and that promotes a good family life. Thus, while women who engage in an integrationist strategy want their children to have opportunities afforded by Canadian society, they do not want them to become influenced by it to the detriment of their cultural values.

3. Raising School age and Teenage Children: A Separationist Strategy

Most, if not all, of the women interviewed when asked what behaviour they expected of or attempted to instill in their children, said they wanted them to be *jescheit*, that is, “well-behaved” or “trim and proper.” Thus, the majority of the women, when discussing their children’s behaviour did not want them to behave like the larger society, instead they wanted them to value traditional behaviours. With respect to contact with the larger society, the women either attempted to keep their children away from the larger society as much as possible thus using a separationist strategy while others allowed their children greater contact and freedom. The former employ a separationist strategy while the latter use an integrationist strategy.

In regards to contact with other cultures, as their children entered school, mothers using a separationist strategy restricted their children’s interactions with other cultures. Early in her return to Canada, Nettie used a separationist strategy by not allowing her oldest children to enter high school. She said, “we didn’t allow the first ones

because we allowed ourselves to imagine that high schools were not good. So then we took them out of school when they were finished grade eight.” Later, however, she allowed her younger children to attend high school. This attests again to the fact that strategies can change over time. All of the mothers allow their teenage children to work. This is considered acceptable contact with the larger society because of the value of work. Otherwise, the mothers want them to be home as much as possible and not “hang out” with friends too often. Susan said of her oldest, “when he stays at home, then I know that he’s not being naughty on the streets and like that. Then I know what he does.” Another way women minimized contact with other cultures is by sending them to private schools. Two of the women sent their children to private, highly Dietsche populated, and religiously conservative schools. Two other women sent their children to more progressive private Mennonite schools. Furthermore, some women were restrictive of their children’s friendships. Agatha, whose children are adults, said,

We were careful of what kind of friends they had. I think that’s very important. I know when we moved here I know we had to be very careful. Bob was a little guy. We didn’t know the people here; we were careful what kind of friends they got. I think that has helped them a lot because, later on some of the kids that came here wanted to be friends with him (and) they weren’t the best kids. So we were very thankful that we had been strict. They wanted him to come over for night and that kind of stuff. I always said no.

Controlling children’s contacts and limiting their time outside the home in uncontrolled environments, are means used by many women to preserve and transmit their cultural and religious values.

Helen said she wanted to raise her children as her parents raised her. When asked how she wanted to do so she said, “that one should often take them along to church

when they are old enough to be able to go to church. One should be trim and proper, not impertinent.” Going to church is one example of appropriate behaviour expected by all the mothers. In Canada, this also includes attending Sunday school, which, as some remarked was not part of the “church” experience in Latin America.²⁸ The women often named unacceptable behaviour when discussing how they wanted their children to conduct themselves. Helen said she wanted to teach both her boys and girls, “to stay away from all sorts of foolish things.” I asked her,

Tina: And what is “foolish?”

Helen: Well, I would say now, as some who get together do drugs or drink (alcohol) or getting into trouble everywhere. One would not want one’s children to do those things, but one doesn’t know if they will. But one tries to steer them away from it.

Like Helen, many of the mother’s greatest concerns was that their children would get involved with the wrong kind of peers, those who abused substances and got “into trouble.” These women gave other examples of improper behaviour: being dissatisfied, using foul language, lying, disobeying parents, being disrespectful to those in authority, having sex outside of marriage, and wearing improper clothing, like shorts or short skirts.²⁹ The women generally applied these strictures to both boys and girls, expecting the same level of proper behavior from both. This differs from the South Asian and Muslim communities where parents place greater expectations of proper behavior on girls than on boys (Handa, 2003; Alvi et. al., 2003). A few of the women noted one difference with respect to sex outside of marriage. In traditional Latin American churches only the

²⁸The “Sunday School movement” only arrived in southern Manitoba after the majority of the conservative Mennonites immigrated to Latin America. In Latin America, the children receive religious instruction through their colony schools.

²⁹Clothing will be discussed in the next chapter.

girl was required to publicly announce her shame by donning a kerchief at time of baptism (Fehr Kehler, 1999:45-46). In conservative Canadian Mennonite churches, however, both young women and men are held accountable.³⁰

The women invoke the voice of their elders, the voice of authority within their cultural communities, to direct proper behaviour. For example, to encourage children's appropriate behaviour Helen said to her children, "we say such and such you should not (do), and (they say), 'who says?' And (we say) 'our mom and dad have said that one should not and then you should not now either.'" Along with their own parent's directives, the Bible is also invoked as a voice of moral authority. Nettie said that they used "the Bible to explain that such and such must not be done." When asked how she would "steer" her children away from "foolish" activities, Helen said:

That would be done through the Scriptures, with the Bible. If one talks about something and then they ask if it shouldn't be done, "No, the Bible says that one shouldn't and then it's wrong." And then they believe one about that. And they can yet understand the Bible much better than oneself. Soon they ask, "Where can that be read?" And then one tells them and they get the English one (Bible).

Teaching children culturally acceptable forms of behaviour is strongly related to their religion which is the source of their moral authority. Placing rules on behaviour, as well as the means to enforce them, are the ways in which the Dietsche women preserve their culture and religion.

Regulations and sanctions are strategies of identification and a means by which community is imagined and produced. It is through the sanctioning of those who transgress the boundaries that communities are constituted as bounded entities. By observing specific norms of conduct, 'we' come to feel identity with each other and see ourselves as different from 'others' (Handa, 2003:111).

³⁰Confession of past sins is expected prior to baptism and church membership.

Regulating their children's behaviour is a means to identification with one's ethno-religious community. The women in this study also engaged in transmitting religious practices to their children that further reinforced their identification with their culture and religion.

E. Children and Religious Preservation

Dietsche women take on, in large part, the responsibility to raise their children to be religiously Mennonite. Nettie's response is typical of many women when asked to identify what they wanted to teach their children: "To, I don't know, what kind of words I should use? I wanted to bring them up to be Christians." All the women wanted to train their children in the Christian faith and discussed various ideas about how this is accomplished including: living out one's faith on a daily basis, the importance of going to church and Sunday school and having a personal relationship with Jesus. I should note that there was little agreement among the women in relation to what is necessary to live as a religious Dietsche Mennonite. With respect to religious preservation, I will focus on the topic of prayer in the home since it was the topic discussed most by most of the women when asked about religious practices, something in which the women are actively involved in preserving.³¹

1. Separationist Strategies of Prayer: Maintaining Traditional Practices

Some Dietsche women like Justina, Helen, Betty, Judy, Nettie and Susan, retain prayer practices brought with them from Latin America and employ a separationist strategy in preserving them. The majority maintain contacts mainly within the Dietsche

³¹Church involvement is discussed in Chapter 5.

community and attend the most traditional churches. An example of a traditional practice that they continue is that of praying before and after meals. Judy said that some of her children who had grown up most of their lives outside of Latin America asked why they continued to pray after meals. She told them, “first pray that Jesus should be our guest during the meal. After that then we thank God for the food that we received.” She said that this answer satisfied them and then said, “then we didn’t do it because we had to. (Instead, we did it because) it made sense to them.” Sometimes, practices held for centuries become questioned by young people exposed to new ways, especially those in diasporic communities such as the Dietsche. What is interesting is that she gives her children an explanation instead of simply stating that it is tradition. And because of the reason she gives, the children attach meaning to the ritual and tend to continue to enact the ritual as adults.

It is mainly the women’s responsibility to teach their children how and when to pray, and to monitor their prayer behaviour. Along with teaching them to pray at meals, some of these women indicated that they taught their children to pray by themselves at particular times of the day: in the morning when they get up, and before they go to bed. The mothers regulate their children’s behavior by reminding them from time to time. Betty, like other women using this separationist strategy, said that she taught her children to recite High German prayers when they were first able to speak. Susan said, “I have taught all my children German (prayers) and as far as I know they all do it in German.” The women employing separationist strategies in regards to prayer practices, also preserve the practice of praying in silence, prayers are not spoken aloud but said to

oneself. This would make it difficult for the mothers to tell whether their children are praying, not to mention monitoring the language in which they are praying. The women, however, did not indicate concern in this regard. Bowing their head in silence, is indication enough for them that their children are in compliance.

With respect to a different Mennonite group in the USA, Lee (1998:14) states that orchestrated religious action, such as baptism, does not depend on individual's meanings about the act, but "on a shared understanding and conformity to established rules of behavior." The persistence of the act and its social meaning to promote cohesion, for example, do not rely on personal beliefs about the act but on the performance of the act itself. This is similar to the personal religious ritual of prayer, perhaps because of its social connotations. The Dietsche Mennonite community engages corporately in religious prayer at community functions, as well as in each others' homes. In this way, the cultural practice is reinforced outside the home. For the most part, among those who use separationist strategies, daily household religious practices seem to be a matter of conformity to an established ritual taught by the mothers to their children. When a ritual becomes questioned, as in Judy's case, it is affirmed by attaching an acceptable meaning to it. For those who utilize an integrationist strategy, if the ritual becomes personally and socially meaningless, it is lost. More work needs to be conducted on traditional religious rituals in the home, their preservation, personal and corporate meanings in order to understand its place in Dietsche cultural preservation.

2. Prayer in Transformation: An Integrationist Strategy

Some women have transformed their prayer practices with their children and

exhibit integrationist tendencies. Sarah, when asked what the religious practices in her home were said,

Just normal things like praying before meals. We have a devotional time right before bedtime. We usually have a prayer time also before they go to school. It seems they almost expect it already, (they say) 'Well we can't go on the bus before we pray.'

We have some learned prayer poems. Some are in German some are in English. And we also try to get them to word their own prayers. The older ones especially. That's working good, they enjoy it.

I'm trying to teach them that they don't always have to say a recited prayer. Like sometimes (one will say) 'I don't know what to pray, can I just pray the Lord's Prayer?' (I say,) 'Sure, but you can tell God anything. You know if you're mad at me and I've done something to you, tell Jesus that and ask him to help you deal that.' That kind of thing. And so it's been, it's a learning experience. I wasn't really taught that part as a child. I had to pray these learned prayers. And they didn't always express what we wanted to say.

Other women utilizing an integrationist strategy gave similar answers. They maintain some traditional aspects, but often change others by adopting other practices reflective of the more evangelical nature of the wider Mennonite community. The frequency of prayer times remains the same, they pray at meals and many continued morning and evening prayers, what has changed is that they conduct them with their children and encourage their children to word their own prayers. These women are actively involved in praying with rather than monitoring their children's prayer lives. While some of them taught their children learned prayers in German, they also taught English prayers, marking a transition to the dominant language. These women have more contacts with non-Dietsche people and more evangelical churches, giving them possibilities for adopting new ways of praying. In Sarah's explanation to her child about wording his own prayer, prayer is seen as a means to an end, that is, a way to relate to God ("tell God anything") and alter

one's relation with others ("if you're mad at me and I've done something to, you tell Jesus that and ask him to help you deal that") rather than constituting conformity to a pattern of behaviour and repetition of traditional prayers, as it does for those using a separationist strategy.

Another change is that women employing integrationist strategies no longer pray after meals. Lisa said that, "we sometimes have a problem if we have guests who also (pray) after they eat. We don't (pray after we eat) and we have already stood up and they are praying yet and then we quickly sit down again." She laughed and said, "That feels a little bit funny." This awkward moment illustrates the change in practices that has taken place and the differences between Dietsche Mennonites using separationist and integrationist strategies, differences that have to be negotiated when meeting in community and household events.

Furthermore, women who employ an integrationist strategy tend to make decisions based on their children's future, imagining a new way of being a Mennonite (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:971). The hope of all the women in my study, regardless of their integrationist or separationist strategy, is that their children become Christians. However, the women using an integrationist strategy want to transform their children's religious experience to essentially make them a different kind of religious Mennonite than those who use a separationist strategy. Having been exposed to new ways of being Mennonite, they alter the structure of their past religious experience of prayer by transforming prayer practices. The traditional prayer practices are not entirely discarded, but are adapted to the new environment thereby integrating themselves and their children

into the larger Mennonite community.

III. Conclusion

The past is the basis for how Dietsche women negotiate their future plans and the means by which they arrive there (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:975). Thus,

as actors respond to changing environments, they must reconstruct their view of the past in an attempt to understand the causal conditions of the emergent present, while using the understanding to control and shape their responses to the arising future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:969).

The past has a stabilizing effect allowing individuals to maintain identities and meanings in the present and preserving them into the future. One dimension of agency is the “practical-evaluative” wherein a problem is encountered, is related to the past, then possible consequences of actions are considered and finally decisions are made (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:997-1000). This can be a deliberate or an unconscious decision. Several problems arise in the practical-evaluative dimension due to the Dietsche women’s migration and change in environment and stage of children’s growth. They often deal with these “problems” by employing either separationist or integrationist strategies. Many of the women’s actions are oriented to the past even as they contemplated the future. Their ways of negotiating differences between the past and the present vary, as evidenced by the discussion in this chapter. Despite the varying ways these women made sense of their new lives in Canada, whether using a separationist or integrationist strategy, there is a common denominator. All women utilize their individual agency to varying degrees, which gives them some power in negotiating their new lives in Canada.

As a result, they resettle using various techniques. For instance, a change in the

way work is organized in Canada meant making decisions that would accommodate their work around their traditional role as mother. When many initially return to Canada, they utilize a separationist strategy preserving “traditional” gender roles. Their husbands assume the role of “provider” while women “stay at home” caring for the children and household at the same time preserving and transmitting their culture. As the children become older and more independent, some women continue to preserve separationist strategies by remaining at home and concentrating their efforts on self-sufficiency and producing from the land. Other women use an integrationist strategy by entering the workforce or allowing their children to become involved in typically “Canadian” activities such as hockey. While all the women wanted to pass on their Mennonite faith to their children, some of the women remained rooted in the past, preserving as many elements of their religious heritage as possible, while others integrate into the larger Mennonite society and adopt different ways of practicing religion. For instance, some of the women employing separationist strategies with respect to religion maintained traditional prayer practices, while those using integrationist strategies used practices drawn upon in the larger Mennonite community. In short, none of the women assimilate into Canadian culture but rather preserve their cultural and religious traditions while either separating from the larger society or by making contact mainly with the larger Mennonite society of southern Manitoba. This does not mean that changes do not take place, as was demonstrated, some practices are dropped while others are adopted.

This chapter examined the integration and separation strategies used by the women when negotiating a balance between paid and unpaid work and their role as stay

at home mothers, along with the value of land and self-sufficiency, engaging in “Canadian” culture and in religious preservation. The next chapter examines the extent of preservation and transmission of other Dietsche practices including language, clothing (etc). It also uses the integrationist/separationist framework developed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Dietsche Women's Identity

I. Introduction

This chapter explores various facets of Dietsche Mennonite women's identity in terms of their acculturation strategies. The first area of exploration is attire (namely dress and head coverings) as a means of identification. The second concerns their identification as Mennonite and as Dietsche. Thirdly, I explore their identification with Low German and High German. Once again, the women use separationist and integrationist strategies of acculturation, in terms of their attire, cultural and religious identities as well as language. However, some women use a strategy of marginalization with respect to attire. An "integrationist" strategy entails preserving aspects of their ethno-religious culture but also having contact with the larger culture and thereby adapting to and adopting elements of the new culture. On the other hand, a "separationist" strategy involves a concentration on preserving cultural aspects while abstaining from contact with other cultural groups. "partMarginalization" implies that someone does not desire or is unable to have contact with another culture and is also unable or does not desire to maintain their own culture.

II. Attire: Boundary Maintenance versus Integration Strategy

A. Head Coverings: A Religious Symbol in Decline

1. Background

The black kerchief which a woman wears on her head, along with traditional clothing, distinctively identified Dietsche women in their Latin American sacred village. In most Latin American Mennonite churches, a kerchief is first worn by women during

baptism, continually upon marriage, and after the death of a husband. In some of these communities, girls also wear a kerchief before baptism, usually white, but its religious and cultural significance are not the subject of this study. The women interviewed indicate that kerchief styles varied according to their membership in specific churches. By wearing the kerchief, the women expressed their conformity to traditional church practices. Susan stated that, "there (in Latin America) I did it (wore a head covering) for the *Jemeend* (church), however, not that I did it for myself." To her, the kerchief represented their identification with a particular religious organization.

Upon immigration to southern Manitoba, Dietsche women are presented with the choice of whether or not to wear a kerchief. In southern Manitoba, the Old Colony and Reinlander Church insist on the use of a kerchief, while the Sommerfelder Church allows individuals to choose. In other Mennonite churches, kerchiefs are not worn. A woman's decision regarding wearing a kerchief, therefore, is not necessarily an indication of religious commitment since all the women in my study were strongly committed to the Mennonite faith yet not all wore a kerchief. My observations reveal, however, that women are less likely to continue to wear a kerchief if they associate with churches other than the Old Colony or Reinlander.

Some of the literature on Islamic women and veiling is useful in locating Dietsche women's experiences in the larger Canadian context. Muslim women's use of a head covering or veiling is one way in which ethno-religious groups set boundaries between themselves and the larger society (Hoodfar, 2003; Handa, 2003). That some Dietsche women do not maintain the kerchief in southern Manitoba indicates that this

symbol is not necessarily seen as useful in maintaining boundaries. Less than half of the women interviewed regularly wear a kerchief. One of these women stated she only wore the kerchief to church. Furthermore, those with grown children reported that few of their married daughters and daughters-in-law wore kerchiefs. Those with young children did not think their daughters would wear one in adulthood. The dropping of the kerchief suggests that many Dietsche women may, to a certain extent, be integrating into the larger non-Dietsche Mennonite society. To wear or not to wear the kerchief is an individual choice. The Dietsche women make choices about whether to cover for various reasons, often religious. This part of the chapter examines the reasons some women maintain this tradition, while others do not.

2. Separationist Strategy: The Kerchief as Ethno-Religious Identity Marker

In the context of southern Manitoba, Dietsche women who continue the tradition of wearing a kerchief adopt a separationist acculturation strategy. This differs from many Arab Muslim women in Canada who claim to use the veil as an integration strategy. The choice to dress “differently” from the mainstream symbolizes both separation and integration. Hoodfar (2003:21) explains this apparent contradiction by stating that

by taking up the veil, they (Muslim women) symbolically but clearly announce to their parents and their community that, despite their unconventional activities and involvement with non-Muslims, they retain their Islamic mores and values. They are modern Muslim women who want to be educated and publicly active, but not at the cost of their moral principles.

Thus, on one hand, they integrate into the larger society by participating in

“unconventional” Muslim activities but on the other hand, maintain their identity as Muslims by continuing to observe traditional patterns of dress. By veiling, Muslim women demonstrate that their integration into the larger society does not result in a deterioration of their ethno-religious values. In this respect, the Dietsche women who wear kerchiefs, have different intentions from the Muslim women. In Hoodfar’s study, Muslim women who continued to wear the veil were more likely to participate in mainstream activities. In my study, the women who continued to wear the kerchief were the least likely to have contacts outside Dietsche circles. In other words, for the Dietsche women, the kerchief tends to symbolize their desire to remain separate from the non-Dietsche population.

To the women, however, separation was not the point of wearing the kerchief. The fact that it is prescribed in the Bible was one reason provided by many of the women for wearing the kerchief. Justina said, “the Bible tells us to dress different than men, to dress modestly and it also tells us to cover our heads.” She continued by saying that she wore a kerchief as a part of her religious beliefs. None of the women said they wore one because the Church insisted it; instead they referred directly to the Bible as the source of authority. It is interesting that they did not directly acknowledge the Church as the administrator of this directive and instead emphasized their individual agency.

Secondly, and in contradiction to their emphasis on individual agency given above, some of the women saw a head covering as associated with a husband’s authority over their wives. Judy, who wears a kerchief, said that the Bible says a woman must wear a kerchief if that is her husband's wish. She also indicated that if a husband does not want

his wife to wear one, she should comply. Two of the women who did not wear kerchiefs, however, did indicate that their husband held authority in the home. As a result, women who did not wear a kerchief did not necessarily experience parity in their relationships. Two of the other women who wore kerchiefs felt the choice of wearing a kerchief was indicative of their relationship with God. Nettie, one of these women, said, "that's clearly written in the Bible that a woman, a married woman, if her prayers are supposed to be heard, she is supposed to cover her head." But, she says, she does not judge those who do not wear them. Thus, Dietsche women cite the Bible as an inspiration to wear a kerchief, but they had different interpretations on what exactly the Bible pronounced.

A third reason some of the women continued to wear a kerchief was to preserve their traditional religious and cultural identity (Isajiw, 1999:192-193). Betty said that wearing a kerchief is apart of how she has always lived and suggests that abandoning the head covering would require abandoning the rest of her traditional dress. For her, a kerchief was part of the overall traditional attire. Helen, who also expresses her Dietsche identity as a "lived-in ethnicity," said that, "as one has learned, one has to yet have a kerchief on one's head." Individuals who display a lived-in ethnicity

admit that their identification with the cultural past makes a difference in how they think and behave. Involvement at this level presupposes a canopy of constraints, demands, and responsibilities (Fleras and Elliot, 2003:98).

Wearing a kerchief is something their grandmothers and mothers have done and which has been encouraged in their generation. This type of ethnicity may be said to preclude individual agency, however, according to Emirbayer and Mische (1998) these women are bringing the "iterational" element of agency to the fore. They are choosing to maintain

this element of their culture to maintain their traditional identity.

Nevertheless, change, subtle as it may be, does occur even among those who continue to wear a kerchief in Canada. This is evident in the type of kerchief worn in Canada, which differs from those in Latin America. Betty's comments about the beauty with which kerchiefs and caps³² are made in Mexico, exhibits a sense of loss:

Betty: All wore a kerchief and a cap. I also have that along. Oh but there (in Latin America) they made them very pretty, very beautiful. The people were very proud. Like, in the past they used them (a cap) in Russia. My mom often said, the cap that they use now is not nearly the one that they used to have. They had a belief that they had to (wear a cap). They still say that now (in Latin America), but now many don't.

Betty states that the style and use of the kerchief and cap have changed since the Mennonite's time in Russia, and the transformation continued in Latin America. As well, she notes that their use has also changed in Latin America, acknowledging a transformation of culture. In research for my honours thesis, my cousin showed me embroidery patterns handed down to her from our grandmother. These were used to decorate kerchiefs as well as other household items such as pillowcases and bedspreads. Despite the extensive time spent discussing kerchiefs and culture with these women in the present study, none of them mentioned this as an important tradition to pass on to their children.

Daniel Lee (1998:15) suggests that for "the construction of community, members depend on rituals and symbols for the simple reason that their own personal beliefs, because they are socially without meaning, cannot 'equip them to be social.'" A community is not formed because members all have the same beliefs about a symbol or

32 A black "cap" is worn under the kerchief and consists of a flat piece of material covering the head and layers of curled ribbon that sit above the forehead.

ritual. Instead what holds them together as a community is the enactment of a ritual or use of a symbol. The kerchief, as a symbol, transcends the personal beliefs of each Dietsche woman and for some, marks the boundaries of their community. However, many individuals with a Dietsche heritage contest the symbol, even those who want to retain other aspects of their ethno-religious heritage. Individual personal beliefs opposing the kerchief has a significant impact on its use and thus on the ability of the kerchief to remain a boundary marker. As a result, the kerchief is losing its ability to symbolize the community, or at the very least, distinguishes only the most traditional followers of the Mennonite faith.

3. Assimilationist Strategy: Declining Use of the Kerchief

Forgoing the use of the kerchief indicates, to a certain extent, the utilization of an assimilationist strategy. These women do not preserve this element of their culture and have increased their contacts with non-Dietsche who also do not observe it (Kalin and Berry, 1994). Many of these women had already been influenced by or moved away from the most traditional churches prior to their move from Latin America, making them more accepting of change in Canada. Anna said that she has never worn a kerchief since it was not practiced in her church in Canada. Lisa, having made up her mind prior to leaving Latin America that she would continue to wear the kerchief, said of her experiences in Canada:

So many people that I got together with were so fine and seemed so Christian. I thought I saw much more light³³ from them than I did from many back there (in Latin America). Then at one time, I decided I did not want to (wear a kerchief).

³³“Light” refers to a Christian’s actions as a reflection of their beliefs. When one shows “light,” one is seen to sincerely act out one’s beliefs.

I interpret this to mean that through her experiences with other Mennonite women in Canada, she saw that one did not have to wear a kerchief in order to be a good Christian, leading her to reject the kerchief. She was not outrightly rejecting the Mennonite religion or her Dietsche culture, though she was changing a significant practice. The loss of one aspect of culture, however, does not preclude the abandoning of all. These acculturation strategies are specific to particular areas thus allowing for multilinearity, that is, allowing an individual immigrant to use different strategies depending on the area of culture and religion in question. Like those who wore kerchiefs, some of the non-wearers also refer to the Bible to explain why they have discontinued their use. Anna said that in her Canadian church,

It has never really been explained to us clearly, but it is up to us and how we understand the Bible and how we believe. And as I often understand it, one does not know quite clearly, but hair is given to one to cover oneself and why should (one's hair) also be covered with something else?

In this regard, research on Islamic practices could be informative. McDonough (2003) and Reem (2003) indicate that some Muslim women also allude to scriptures to either promote or oppose veiling. McDonough (2003) said, however, that few of the women in her study were familiar with the scriptural passages that spoke about veiling. Similarly, in this study, only one of the women interviewed cited a biblical passage regarding head coverings. McDonough (2003:89) states of her study that

the respondents' evidently shallow familiarity with Islamic texts reinforces the idea that religious knowledge is primarily acquired as a result of oral transmission and the filtration of religious knowledge through family and mosque.

Anna's comment that head coverings were never really clearly explained, may also

indicate that a similar process takes place in the Mennonite churches and community in southern Manitoba.

Some of the women who do not wear kerchiefs sometimes feel subtle pressure by other Dietsche to wear them. They felt that their religious convictions were being questioned. Sarah, who does not wear a kerchief, said,

Well it's (wearing a kerchief) not so much an issue for me, it's dealing with other people who think it's an issue. I think if they want to wear it and it's part of who they think God wants them to be, go ahead, I pass no judgement on it. But I don't think they need to expect it of everybody.

She attributes the pressure to preserve the practice to individuals rather than as a church directive, perhaps because she has never attended a church that continues this practice. A study on veiling in the Canadian Muslim community revealed significant tensions between women who veil and those who do not. In one study, 58 percent of veiled women made negative comments about women who did not veil, of those who did not veil, 12 percent said that removal would exhibit "enlightenment" (Reem, 2003:91). These tensions are not as pronounced among Dietsche women, since women on either side of the issue claimed they do not "judge" those who differ in practice. However, Sarah and other women who employ assimilationist strategies, do talk about feeling "expected" to wear a kerchief.

A few of the women, however, indicated that they also felt compelled to maintain the tradition of wearing kerchiefs by relatives in Latin America. Trudy said that,

They (her Latin American relatives) say, "We find it so difficult, the way you are. You have to wear a kerchief, you have to wear a dress otherwise you will not get to heaven. That is wrong." And I say to them, we can always have Jesus in our hearts.

Family in Latin America continue to persuade women in Canada to retain their traditional culture. In this way, the women's connection to Latin America continues to exert influence by emphasizing the role of women as cultural brokers in southern Manitoba. As a result of this subtle pressure, some who did not wear a head covering in Canada made a point of doing so when they visited relatives in Latin America as a sign of respect and to maintain peaceful relations with them.

Not all the Dietsche women express their ethno-religiosity in the same way. The women apply different meanings to wearing or foregoing a kerchief, and these individual beliefs have social consequences. When a woman wears a kerchief, it makes her more easily identifiable by others and presents an appearance of uniformity. It suggests to "outsiders" that the Dietsche want to preserve as much of the cultural and religious practices from Latin America as possible. The tension occurs when they arrive to the churches in southern Manitoba having different interpretations of the Bible and additional opportunities to exercise the projective element of their agency with respect to the use of a kerchief, i.e., foregoing its use while maintaining Christian beliefs. Contacts with the larger society in southern Manitoba has meant that a significant proportion of the first generation Dietsche women are forgoing the practice along with a majority of the second generation. As a result, the kerchief seems to be losing its place as a creator of boundaries (Hoodfar, 2003; Handa, 2003), and "source of social solidarity" (Lee, 1998:1) for the Dietsche community in southern Manitoba. The following discussion about clothing discusses a similar phenomenon and the transformation of a cultural and religious practice.

B. Clothing: From Lived-In Ethnicity to Symbolic Ethnicity

As Hoodfar (2003:3) states, “clothing is probably the most silent of expressions used by human societies to demarcate social boundaries and to distinguish ‘self’ from ‘other’ at both the collective and individual levels.” Mennonites, like some other ethno-religious groups, have used attire as a means of maintaining their identity. In Canada in the 1930s, as Mennonites were becoming increasingly integrated into mainstream society, they looked for “substitute symbols of, and standards for, separation. The most prominent symbol of nonconformity turned out to be dress” (Epp, 1982:510). In this context, dress expressed non-conformity to the rest of society by being modest, simple, economical and distinguished between the sexes (Epp, 1982:510-513). Presently in southern Manitoba, a few traditional Mennonite churches maintain strict dress codes, while the majority of Mennonite communities in Latin America continue to maintain barriers through particular styles of dress (Quiring, 2003:53).

As with kerchiefs, there remains a distinction between those who maintain traditional and modern forms of dress. None seem to have fully assimilated into mainstream “Canadian” ways of dressing, though there are variations in the extent of mainstream conformity among the women utilizing integrationist strategies. As with the use of kerchiefs, using integrationist strategies indicated a connection with *Kleine Gemeinde*, Mennonite Church Canada/USA, EMMC and *Gemeinde Gottes* churches in Latin America, while those with separationist strategies are affiliated with more traditional churches in southern Manitoba.

1. Separationist Dress Strategies

Those employing separationist strategies with respect to clothing can be divided into two categories, those who continue to wear Dietsche Latin American-style dresses and those who prefer wearing simple dresses or skirts but not of the styles worn in Latin America. All these women also employ additional separationist strategies, such as, wearing their hair in a traditional manner which is, long and pulled back into braids which are pinned to the head and covered by a kerchief. They also do not wear makeup or jewelry.

The women continuing to wear traditional clothing are the most readily identifiable as Dietsche. Many of these women believe that clothing is directly tied to religious beliefs, and to maintenance of their ethnic tradition just as they did with wearing a kerchief. In a discussion about clothing, Helen said, “in the scriptures it is simply written, women or girls are not supposed to wear men’s clothes. Then I think that a woman should wear a skirt.” Wearing a skirt is intended to distinguish and separate the sexes, but it also has the effect of distinguishing themselves from other Dietsche women who prefer less traditional clothing. This is similar to practices within certain Muslim communities. According to Eid (2003), within Western communities of Muslims, “gender issues are often assigned a role of cultural buffer contributing to the retention of ethno-religious identity and to the maintenance of hermetic frontiers between ‘Us’ and ‘Them.’” Just as with kerchiefs, the women’s retention of ethno-religious clothing erects a barrier between themselves and the larger society, including the larger non-Dietsche Mennonite society.

This barrier, however, may not be entirely intentional. These women's past repertoire influences their actions rather than an orientation to the present or future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). When asked if there were some customs that she continued from Mexico, Betty said,

Now here I have my clothes, those customs I hold yet. Whenever I put anything on from here (Canada) it just looks ugly to me. I have learned to be like this, that's how I look. If I put on unfamiliar clothes, that just looks so ugly to me.

These women tend to wear Dietsche-Latin American style of clothing because it is familiar and viewed as appealing whereas adopting a "Canadian" styles of dress is considered unpleasing. Maintaining this cultural distinctive is defined by what Betty has learned is "beautiful." Nevertheless, by wearing traditional clothing the outward manifestation is the maintenance of their ethno-religious identity as opposed to integrating into the larger Canadian society.

While these first generation Dietsche women continue to wear clothing that is the same as what they wore in Latin America, their children's practices differ slightly from their own. Betty and Helen still have control over their children's attire and thus dress them in clothes more reminiscent of their traditional heritage. This is evidenced by Helen's comment about her children's clothing: "My girls have never worn pants. Well, except when they have gym at school, that day yes. Then that's the only time, otherwise not. Otherwise they do not want to." It is interesting that she allows a suspension of this religious directive rather than preventing her daughters' participation in gym class. Wearing pants for gym class seems to be for instrumental reasons rather than a sign of inculturation since it is a deviation from the norm. On a regular basis, Helen requires her

daughters to wear skirts, though she allows their style vary from her own. She said she does not require them to dress in a manner similar to how she grew up, “. . . as long as they do not wear pants. My husband does not want them to wear pants and neither do I. And so, if they have just a skirt and t-shirt on, that’s good enough for me.” While she was rigid in her own observance, she seems to be somewhat more flexible with her daughters. In general, skirts, not pants, are the norm they hold to for their daughters.

The other women using separationist strategies, also prefer skirts, but do not hold strictly to traditional cultural styles. This group has some common characteristics. They have all attended the Old Colony Church in Canada and most are now attending the Sommerfeld Church. They have lived in Canada for a decade or more, indicating that time in Canada is a relevant factor in clothing adaptation. As well, these women were active in the Canadian workforce. When they talked about wearing pants, it was in the context of the workplace. It is in this setting that they are marginalized with respect to clothing.

2. Marginalization and Attire

Marginalization occurs when there is little possibility or interest in maintaining one’s culture and contact with other cultures. In the context of the workplace, these women do not wear their more traditional clothing. On the other hand, they do not have an interest in contact with the other culture, that is, they do not wear the clothing that the host society deems appropriate for women (pants) in order to integrate into the host society. Handa (2003) discusses the use of traditional and Western clothing in different spaces by women in the south Asian community. Some of the women she interviewed

said that they wore Western style clothing in some locations to “fit in” where traditional garb would make them conspicuous. Handa (2003:95) states,

Feeling comfortable in Western clothes in certain spaces at certain times is presented as a matter of individual choice and preference, thereby hiding the discourse of assimilation and integration.”

This describes the marginalization strategy in which many ethnic women engage. Nettie’s remarks about why she wears pants in the workplace also masks the discussion about acculturation. In discussing wearing pants, Nettie re-frames what it means to wear a skirt within the workplace in terms of maintaining self-respect:

I have conceded to (wearing pants). I don’t think a woman should *have* to wear pants. But the way it is these days, and the work that I do, I would have more respect for myself if I used pants than if I wore a skirt because I am often on the floor. I did (wear a skirt) for a couple of years. But the young men, they think of all sorts of things. They become so foolish. When the material is cleaned up, then they try to see if my skirt would fly up. And that didn’t have to happen often and I knew, let it look how it would I would just use pants. I do not use pants because I think it looks nice. I use them for protection or for cover.

At the beginning of Nettie’s first statement she emphasizes her preference to wear a skirt at work, but reiterates the importance of her self-respect. She chooses to wear pants to protect herself, thus undermining the male gaze in her workforce. While she is marginalized in terms of clothing in the workplace, she frames her choice in terms of valuing self-respect, a traditional value, which is more essential than valuing wearing a dress within the workplace.

However, outside the workplace, Nettie sees *wearing a dress* as engendering respect. Later in the interview, when she talked about difficulties she was having with one child’s integration into Canadian society, she said, “(Her) dress code is not good

enough for me. She never wears a dress. I always simply think a woman should wear one if she wants to have respect for herself.” Nettie’s seemingly contradictory statements may be understood by using Berry’s (et al. 1992) theoretical paradigm. He (1992:178) stresses “alternative outcomes” and “multilinearity” which allows the women to fall at various points along the acculturation line with respect to various social spheres, such as work, religion, linguistic integration etc. On the one hand, they seek economic integration by entering the Canadian workforce. On the other they are marginalized in the workplace by having to wear non-traditional clothing when they have no interest in doing so. Furthermore, they continue to apply separationist strategies with respect to clothing outside the workplace, preferring to wear skirts.

3. Mother’s Using Separationist Strategies and Their Children’s Integration and Assimilation

For some mothers in this second group, their children’s attire continues to be a concern and sometimes a site of contention. These children, many of whom are teens or adults, seem to have integrated into the larger society by adopting Western clothing. Many of the mothers, however, object to complete assimilation for their children and view some of their children’s choices in attire as disrespectful and rebellious. For example, when discussing how she speaks to her children about being a Christian, Susan said,

Susan: They are not supposed to be rebellious and like that. But it feels like that at our place that is getting weak but one thinks that one must pray more.

Tina: What gets weak?

Susan: Well, since they don’t listen to one totally. (They) are starting to more often wear shorts and such short shirts and that feels sometimes that it does not seem like it is for a Christian.

Their children's move to assimilate is perceived as "rebellious" and un-Christian. While Susan and the other women do not believe that they or their children have to preserve traditional clothes, many continue to associate clothing, hair styles, and adornment with obedience and religious beliefs. Proper attire, however, is also associated with what it means to be a proper girl or boy. Along with not wearing shorts and short shirts, some women said that being a Christian girl meant having long hair, not piercing ears and wearing clothes that distinguished them from boys. Not all women mentioned clothing constraints placed on boys, however, Nettie said,

Nettie: They (boys) should dress with respect too. Yeah, they must just as exactly. For them they use pants and jeans and slacks but it is also possible to do it wrong.

Tina: How?

Nettie: Ah, I don't know exactly how but, you know with some, they hang almost to the ground or half way to the ground or they reach badly over.

Tina: So you can see their underwear?

Nettie: Yeah. I don't like that. For me that's not properly dressed. That's just barely covered. But the boys have kept more so what we have taught them, other than using shorts.

Clothing is not neutral, there are right and "wrong" ways of using apparel that are associated with how one is masculine and how one is feminine. In her study of East Indian girls, Handa (2003:126) found that "the message of feminine regulation is hidden under a message of cultural preservation." That is, being a "good" or "bad" girl was closely associated with dressing like a "proper" Indian girl. In the same way, these Dietsche women feel their children's assimilation of larger Canadian society's clothing trends not only signifies their acceptance of the larger society's values around femininity and masculinity but also suggests a loss of religious preservation.

4. Assimilationist Dress Strategies

Many of the women utilized assimilationist strategies with respect to clothing. These women have little or no desire to preserve their traditional attire and they desired contact with the larger society by adopting forms of Western attire, thus using an assimilationist strategy. Nevertheless, these women have not entirely assimilated. Most women in this group wore pants on a regular basis, had adopted short hair styles, and no longer wore a kerchief, but they also largely refrained from wearing jewelry and makeup. Also, while adapting to Western styles, all the women tended towards conservative and simple styles rather than of the latest fashions. Other values such as simplicity and utility seem to guide some of the women's behaviour.

Increasing religious and cultural pluralism in Latin American Mennonite communities seems to influence these women's use of assimilationist strategies in Canada. Unlike those employing separationist strategies, these women, except one, had not attended the more traditional Old Colony or Reinland Church in Canada. Some of the women, like Anna, were more accepting of this assimilationist strategy since they had already begun to dress less traditionally prior to immigration to Canada. This was connected to attending less traditional churches in Latin America.

Anna: My mom really liked it if we had a skirt on, not too long and not too short, the way that she had. Though the church that I went to, there it did not bother them if one wore pants. Although I usually wore a dress, because I did not want to annoy my mom. Though she knew quite well that I wore pants, but she never said that I should not.

Anna and her mother were caught in a period of transition in their Latin America church. While their church may have had more relaxed dress codes than other churches in Latin

America, she and her mother were still constrained by their habitus. Anna and her sister Lisa put more distance between themselves and their past when they immigrated to Canada and are able to employ the projective and practical-evaluative dimensions of agency upon arrival to the society (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

Lisa: We did not wear such clothes as some do, from whom they usually talk about coming from Mexico. Though, I thought, since we just moved from Mexico to here, they (Canadians) would really look (at us) a lot. However, many spoke English to me more readily, since my clothes were different than many (who came from Mexico). So then I knew that they looked at us as though they thought we had been here longer. Then it felt a bit different yet. And in the winter, when I started to use pants and like that, then it seemed to me that I felt a little bit more at home, or felt more comfortable. And then one changes more easily so that you feel more like you are apart. I think, what does it help to live here and try to dress and have everything like it is out there (Mexico), that did not make sense to me.

Lisa contextualizes her clothing experiences by comparing what she wore when she arrived, to what Dietsche women who arrive from more traditional churches in Latin America. Her statement points to the differences between Dietsche women's experiences. Lisa, along with women who adopt separationist strategies with respect to traditional clothing, are willing to change, a sentiment that was not evident among the women employing separationist strategies. These women evaluate their present situation in relation to their past, and decide on a future course of action by changing their attire and not continuing with the patterns of the past (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:994).

Assimilation is also a process that is negotiated, often over a period of several years. This is noted in a conversation with Agatha, who had lived in Canada for 39 years:

Agatha: I almost right away put on a different dress (from what I used to wear in Mexico). So actually I wanted to be different. I did not want to hold on to what I had. So the first year anyway, I bought a dress.

Tina: What about pants?

Agatha: That took me a bit longer. I tried them, but they were not comfortable. Now I use them at work, well at home too, I almost always wear pants.

Tina: And what about cutting your hair?

Agatha: That also took a bit longer. When my husband first allowed then I did it right away.

Tina: So he didn't want you to do it at first?

Agatha: Well, he didn't really say, but I could feel it that he would not like it. If I would have done it, it would not have actually been serious.

Agatha's statement reveals the importance of time in the transformation of identities (Rummens, 2003). Assimilation is a process that takes time and is contingent upon various factors beyond religious imperative and a personal desire to integrate. Agatha's identities as a married woman and a Dietsche interact with her growing identification with the larger Mennonite society in southern Manitoba. While she may have been ready to assimilate with respect to certain aspects of culture as she widened her contacts outside the Dietsche community, her submissive role in relation to her husband initially prevented her from doing so at first.

All the women who utilize an assimilationist strategy with respect to traditional dress, are less likely than those utilizing a separationist strategy to connect attire with religion. When asked what being a Mennonite meant to her, Sarah said

It's not about clothes and so much traditions. Mostly it has to do with our faith and daily living. We try to teach our kids an emphasis on peaceful living, like not going to war and stuff like that.

Rather than basing clothing choices on traditions, the women remove the religious connotations from clothing. While attire is no longer a religious identifier, appropriation of Western clothing means the women begin to identify with Canadian culture. Among those who use an assimilationist strategy, there is a movement away from linking religion

with culture in terms of mode of dress, which is indicative of lived-in ethnic identity, to a more situational or symbolic ethnic identity (Fleras and Elliot, 2003:99).

While they use an assimilationist strategy in not preserving traditional styles of clothing, neither do they entirely assimilate into mainstream “Canadian” culture. In general, they did not wear clothing or wear their hair in the latest “Canadian” styles, and many did not wear makeup or jewelry. Marie said,

Makeup, I think it's unnecessary. I've never tried it so I've no experience with it, same goes for earrings and stuff. I think there's no need for it. I don't say that's a sin if you do it. I prefer [that] our girls don't have it.

Attire becomes associated with other Dietsche cultural values such as simplicity and utility. Some of the women who utilize more assimilationist strategies wore makeup at times, a few had earrings and most had cut their hair, but generally the women accorded little significance to being “fashionable.” Non-conformity to the world, one of the principles of the traditional Mennonite religion (Epp, 1974:187), seems to continue to motivate the acculturation process, arresting complete assimilation.

Immigration and its resultant process of acculturation presents immigrants with the ability to change the social structures of their ethnicity through their employment of agency. They encounter many “problems” that require solutions. Deliberations are made with an orientation towards their past, since this is what they know, but are also geared towards the future. For some, the past is more powerful and leads to an attitude of separation and a lived-in ethnicity, while others are more inclined towards the projective dimension of the future that allows for change and subsequent integration into Canadian society. Some of the women are compelled by religious imperatives to adhere to a

feminine mode of dress. Their past informs their present which creates stability in their identities in the context of their new society (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:971). These women, like Helen, were more inclined than others to preserve traditional attire, which, in effect, drew clearer boundaries around their identity as Dietsche women.

Marginalization occurs when women, who use separationist strategies, enter the workforce and feel the need to wear non-traditional clothing. Within an assimilationist strategy, women no longer view clothing as a means of enforcing boundaries around one's ethno-religious group. There is a separation of religious beliefs from cultural expression signaling a distinct shift from a lived-in ethnicity to one that is more symbolic.

Less than half of the women have preserved the wearing of kerchiefs and fewer have preserved traditional clothing. Clothing, as with kerchiefs, no longer clearly marks the boundaries of the Dietsche community since not all continue to wear the same type of clothing nor do all don kerchiefs. The process of integration begins, for some, in Mennonite communities in Latin America prior to their immigration. Those who use assimilationist strategies by adopting Western clothing, view their religion and ethnicity more symbolically than traditionally. Moving to a new context allows them some freedom to pick and choose aspects of their heritage, but for many of the women this occurred over a number of years.

Sarah commented that being a Mennonite is no longer about adhering to a dress code and maintaining all the traditions. She said it was about living out their faith and emphasizing the peace dimension of the religion. The next section will explore how the women employ different acculturation strategies in their identification as a Mennonite

and Dietsche.

III. Mennonite versus Dietsche Identity

This thesis is an attempt to better understand the identity of Dietsche Mennonite women in southern Manitoba by focusing on cultural preservation and transmission. I began the interviews by asking the women about their definitions of Mennonite and Kanadier. Since “Kanadier” is a label given to these women by outsiders, it is not a name to which these women ascribe. Many of the women identified as “Dietsche.” This section explores these women’s own personal identities as Dietsche and Mennonite around their ethnicity, that is, how they see themselves with respect to their ethno-religious culture in the context of southern Manitoba. I have attempted to determine what identities are salient and what this means for the preservation of cultural and religious traditions.

A. Separationist Strategy: A Fish-Bowl Perspective

Helen and Betty employ a separationist strategy with respect to their identity, equating their Mennonite, Christian and Dietsche identities with one another. They are among the more recent immigrants who have arrived directly from the Old Colony Church and who continue to attend the most traditional Mennonite churches largely populated by Dietsche Mennonites. When I asked Helen what it meant to be a Mennonite for her, she said, “That one should be a Christian.” Being a Mennonite, for her, is synonymous with being a Christian. She also felt that attending a “German” Mennonite church was an integral part of being a Christian and being Mennonite. Helen and Betty also did not differentiate between being a Dietscha and being a Mennonite. They did not make a distinction between being a religious Mennonite and a cultural Mennonite or

Dietsche. This was different from the way most of the other women described themselves.

At times, these women found it difficult to express what it meant to be a Mennonite, or Dietsch. I can sympathize with their feelings. Any differences between Mennonite religion and Dietsche culture were not articulated to me growing up in a Dietsche home. My mother had grown up in a very religious Mennonite community in Mexico and her religion and culture meant her family lived differently from the rest of society. Their cultural and religious knowledge is *intrinsic* rather than *extrinsic*, meaning that simply because someone is unable to articulate what is unique about their culture does not mean they are unable to share and teach it to their children. This is a common experience, shared by many other ethno-religious groups. Mason (n. d.) likens people's orientation to their own culture to fish in fish-bowl: "Like the fish, they have been swimming in their own culture all their lives. A fish doesn't know what water is. Likewise we do not often think about the culture we are raised in." In this way, these women did not differentiate their Dietsche identity from their Mennonite identity as they were encapsulated into a single identity.

B. Integrationist Strategy: Differentiation Between "Mennonite" and "Dietsche"

An integrationist strategy entails a greater personal distinction between being a religious Mennonite and a cultural Mennonite or Dietsche. Since one identifies in relation to others, the more contacts one has outside of one's group, the more one is able to distinguish one's own culture from others. Many of the women interviewed identified as religious "Mennonites," and differentiated themselves culturally as "Dietsche." Anna,

when asked what it meant to be a Mennonite said:

I do not have trouble saying that I'm a Mennonite. And I think I can understand what it means to be a Mennonite. Most of the Dietsche are just called Mennonites, or many call themselves Mennonite. We believe the Bible and we know what it means to be a Mennonite, that one has those beliefs from the Bible, or Menno Simons, from (whom) Mennonites come. Not that we just believe that the name Mennonite means just Dietsche. It is also important to us that we teach our children that they are also raised to be Christians and believe in God like we do. We always thought that "Mennonite," that was merely just the word for us Dietsche, that was merely the word by which we identified ourselves. And later we were made aware that referred to our beliefs.

Anna's response reflects many of the other women's replies. She states that not all Mennonites are Dietsche, recognizing that there is a difference between being a Dietsche, that is, a cultural Mennonite with a distinct history in Latin America, and being a religious Mennonite. For Anna, as for the other women, being a Mennonite is about upholding biblical beliefs and those passed down from Menno Simons, one of the leaders of the early Anabaptist movement. Thus, for those who employ an integrationist strategy, being a Mennonite continues to be, most often, linked to religion, to being a Christian, rather than being specifically cultural.

Identifying as a Dietsche for these women is more of a cultural trait whereas identifying as a Mennonite is more of a religious identity that they share in common with other Mennonites in their community. Nettie said,

To me there is a difference between Dietsche and Mennonite. Dietsch and Mennonite are two separate things, to me. Dietsch is the language and Mennonite is what we believe. But there are also Mennonites, they also call themselves Mennonites, but they have a totally different language. So that cannot be the same, being Dietsch and Mennonite.

These women acknowledge that many others call themselves "Mennonite" but are

culturally different. Some of this differentiation might have to do with linguistic differences. The Low German and High German languages are a significant distinction differentiating Dietsche people from other Mennonite cultures. When asked if she called herself Dietsche, Marie said,

Of course we are Low German. Yes, we would also say we are Dietsch. Since we, however, really we aren't Dietsch. I think that our forebears come from Holland, perhaps they are from Poland, I don't know, however, yes we are Dietsche. We aren't the same kind of Dietsche as the Germany Germans. And those who come from Germany are also not Germany Germans, they are Russian-Dietsche. And we are Mexican-Dietsche now. And I suppose many of the children are Canadian- Dietsche.

When Marie says “however, really we aren't Dietsch” and talks about “our forebears,” she recognizes the multicultural heritage of the Dietsche people. For example, the “Germany Germans” or “Russian-Dietsche” she refers to are those Mennonites who remained in Russia during communism, were subsequently expatriated to Germany in the 1990s, and are now settling in the southern Manitoba. According to Marie, the Dietsche have a varied cultural and linguistic history, that there are many cultural Mennonites who use Low and High German and the difference depends on their place of origin. Using hyphenated terms allows her to differentiate between the different Dietsche. Fleras and Eliot (2003:100) state that “a hyphenated identity entitles people to compartmentalize their identities; the demands of a particular context or requirements of a particular ethnic group will determine which identity is to be activated.” In the context of southern Manitoba, the hyphenations allow Marie to locate her Dietsche heritage in relation to other's Mennonite heritage. This is similar to the hyphenated Canadian practice existing elsewhere, for example, among Chinese-Canadians. Li (1998:5) refers to the Chinese in

Canada using the hyphenated term “Chinese-Canadians” to denote their history within Canada, their origin within China, and their distinction from other Chinese remaining in mainland China as well as those Chinese living in other countries.

IV. Identifying as a Religious Mennonite

A discussion about the Dietsche women’s church background in Latin America and the religion practiced in southern Manitoba, further illuminates their acculturation and identification processes. Of the thirteen women interviewed, six had moved away from the Old Colony and attended other churches while living in Latin America. When these women immigrated to Canada, they continued to identify with the same or similar churches in Canada. These churches tended to encourage integration into the dominant Mennonite society in southern Manitoba. Four of the seven remaining women who came from the Old Colony Church in Latin America converted to integrationist churches after they arrived in Canada while three continued to identify with a traditional church in southern Manitoba. The majority of the Dietsche in southern Manitoba prefer to attend integrationist churches signifying their own integration into and identification with the larger Mennonite community, at least in terms of religion.

A. Separationist: Preservation of Traditional Religion

Three women, Justina, Helen and Betty, who come from and continue to identify with the traditional (Old Colony and Reinlander) churches, use a separationist strategy. The traditional churches seat men and women on opposite sides of the church, have strict dress codes, and have a worship service for adults separate from the children’s Sunday School. Their choice of a separationist traditionalist church re-enforces the preservation

of cultural and religious traditions. Betty and Helen are relative newcomers, arriving in the late 1990s during a large arrival of Dietsche immigrants to the area. As newcomers with small children, their exposure to people other than the Dietsche is limited due to various cultural barriers, particularly language. These women continue to dress in traditional clothes and wear kerchiefs on a daily basis. Justina, however, came in the late 1970s; she wears a kerchief but discarded her traditional dress upon arrival to Canada though she believes women should wear skirts and not pants. She and Helen send their children to privately run rural Mennonite schools; they are the only women in the study who do so.

Betty said she thought they would always stay at the Reinlander church, “since we have always been there and my parents too, and we have learned there. We have our membership there and we have married there.” They rely on their past repertoire to deal with changing circumstances arising due to their immigration to Canada (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). When asked why they attended the Old Colony Church here in Canada Helen said, “out there, (in Mexico) we went to the Old Colony and so we did here also.” Even though they have left Latin America for Canada, they have a strong sense of identification with their traditional religion and culture and have a strong desire to preserve their religious and cultural heritage in Canada.

While these women identify with their church, they are not as concerned about their children’s continued identification with the Old Colony or Reinlander churches. Justina was asked whether she wanted her children to find marriage partners in the Old Colony Church and replied, “not necessarily in the Old Colony Church. I would like it if

they found partners that believe the way we do, but it wouldn't necessarily have to be Old Colony." She went on to say that the Reinlander or Sommerfeld churches would be acceptable, but that she did not have much experience with the other churches in the area. In short, the women would be satisfied if their children married Mennonites outside their particular church but preferred that they marry other Dietsche. Endogamy is a strategy used by many ethnic groups to preserve culture.

B. Integrationist Strategy: Becoming Part of the Larger Mennonite Society

Those employing an integrationist strategy can be divided into two categories, those who originate from the Old Colony Church and those who originate from other churches in Latin America. Nettie, Judy and Susan are three of the four women who originated from the Old Colony Church and shifted to the Sommerfeld Church after their arrival to Canada. The fourth, Agatha, moved to the EMMC. Nettie, Judy and Susan shifted to the Sommerfeld Church because of their children. Susan's family moved to a new church after they were reprimanded when one of her boys failed to comply with their church's dress code. Afterwards, their children expressed greater satisfaction from attending the Sommerfeld's English language Sunday school rather than their former church's High German program. Some of Judy and Nettie's teenage children desired baptism but would only do so in the Sommerfeld Church, not their parent's Old Colony Church. When I asked Nettie why she switched to the Sommerfeld Church she said,

Our boys, they went to that (Sommerfeld) Church. That's one thing. When they got ready to go through baptism and everything, then we always went there. And then one time we just always kept going there. The oldest four all became members of the Old Colony Church. So when the (younger) boys became members, then they did in the Sommerfelder Church. And then we went there and then we just stayed there and eventually we

became members.

Her younger sons, who had been exposed to southern Manitoba society at a younger age than their older siblings, contributed to their parents' change in churches. From further conversation with Nettie, it seems that language may have been an additional reason for this change, a reason also echoed by Judy. Judy's children, who were unable to understand the High German being used in the Old Colony Church, encouraged the entire family to move to the Sommerfeld Church. She said her children wanted to understand the process of baptism and membership. Being baptized into the church as an adult is an essential part of being a Mennonite. After supporting their children in this decision, their parents began to attend this church as well. Being faced with the problem of their children's desire to integrate into the larger Mennonite society, the women are more likely to integrate as well.

While this change in churches may suggest that these women have not been entirely successful in retaining the Old Colony religious traditions, the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church retains many conservative elements, and maintains some traditional Mennonite practices and beliefs. Contrary to the "traditional" churches, this church allows for greater choice in exercising one's beliefs, accommodating to a more individualistic religiosity. More importantly, this church is home to a large population of Dietsche immigrants, which may allow integration into a larger Mennonite congregation with the benefit of some Dietsche cultural maintenance at the same time.

Six other women also employed integrationist strategies; they wanted to continue the process that had begun in Latin America and thus sought churches that were familiar.

In Latin America, these women, some of them children at the time, had shifted from the Old Colony to various churches that had been started by Mennonite denominations from Canada. These include the EMMC, Kleine Gemeinde (EMC in Canada), Mennonite Church Canada/USA (formerly General Conference), Gemeinde Gottes, and Sommerfeld Church. Anna said that she moved to Canada knowing that it would be different than Latin America, but said that in her church in Latin America they did not maintain the traditional practices anyway. This is a familiar sentiment for many of these women. When asked about whether she wanted to continue to hold the beliefs with which she grew up, Sarah said,

I don't think it's important that they (the EMMC) keep the Old Colony practices. Out there it's the horse and buggy thing and the dark clothes. And that, I don't think, is important. I think the focus on God as the centre of your life and church as being an important part of your life, and that kind of stuff, I think that is very important to pass on to them.

These women no longer retain the idea that one's self or one's church has to be separate from the rest of society, thus rejecting the Old Colony practices. These women have integrated into more liberal Mennonite society that allows for greater individual choice. They have moved away from a lived-in-ethnicity towards a more flexible expression of ethnicity which allows some cultural preservation and the adaptation of new practices and beliefs. This borders on symbolic ethnicity -- though in the case of Dietsche returnees, I would hesitate to label it as such as there are distinct elements which the women use to maintain their distinctiveness within the larger Mennonite society.

Despite my use of the term "integration", the women have not entirely assimilated into the wider Canadian society. They continue to preserve some elements of culture and

religion. For instance, Sarah said, "I guess we chose a Mennonite village because we wanted our kids to keep their Mennonite identity, even though we're not Old Colony the way our ancestors were. We are still Mennonites." One consideration in Berry's acculturation typology refers to "the *process* by which individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes under way in their own culture" (Berry, 1990:234). These simultaneous processes may account for the apparent inconsistencies among those who claim to have removed themselves from the influence of the Old Colony Church yet maintain some traditional practices. Whether this transformation is due to personal desire or assimilatory pressures from the larger Mennonite community is difficult to tell. The women using integrationist strategies tend to see their adaptation as based mainly on personal choice and not social pressure.

While many of the women have employed integrationist strategies in their identification as Mennonites, viewing it as a religious rather than a cultural label, their identification as Dietsche is cultural. More specifically, it is related to the preservation of the Low German and High German languages.

V. Identifying as a Dietsche: A Matter of Language

Language has both positive and negative aspects given its centrality to both "cultural maintenance and participation in the larger society" (Berry et. al., 1992:305). Learning the language of the host culture is one of the most important means of participating in the larger society, yet, for many, loss of language is equivalent to loss of culture. Language also has the ability to reconstruct, to a certain extent, one's culture in

diaspora and thus it “speaks for someone and from a specific place, it constructs a particular space, a habitat, a sense of belonging and being at home” (Chambers, 1994:24). Language is also a cultural distinction between many immigrant groups. For example, Hispanics in the United States, though diverse in geographical and historical backgrounds, are “marked and molded” by the Spanish language (Arana, 2001). Language is one means of asserting identity in a multi-ethnic society. Two languages, Low German and High German, are associated with Dietsche people’s culture and religion and are examined separately.

Some of the women used the terms “High” or “Low” to denote the type of German to which they were referring. Others used the term “German” interchangeably to refer to either Low German or High German. A few other women used the term “German” to refer only to High German, though they occasionally used the term “High German.” The reason for these differences is unclear. Furthermore, no patterns regarding integrationist or separationist strategies emerged with respect to the use of terms. Typically, the women’s use of “German” to denote either “High” or “Low” depended on the context, for example, if they were talking about their spoken language, they assumed I knew that they were referring to “Low German.” When I asked for clarification, they would specify. In this thesis, when the women use only the term “German,” I have prefaced the terms “Low” and “High” in brackets for the sake of clarification.

A. Low German: Mother Tongue

All Mennonites with a history in Russia have a common linguistic history. Mennonites began using Low German in Prussia prior to their initial migration to Russia

(Thiessen, 2003). They continued to use it as their everyday language in Russia and in their subsequent migrations. The diaspora of the Mennonites has meant they do not have an internationally recognized homeland, and as a result, one way they have carried their sense of cultural peoplehood is through their mother tongue. Low German, then, may be considered the only Mennonite “homeland” (Thiessen, 2000). Many Mennonites in Canada, who have no experience in Latin America, communicate largely in English while Low German is used less frequently or only symbolically. Conversely, the Mennonites who migrated to Latin America preserved this language maintaining it as their everyday language of communication.

1. Separationist Strategy

Seven of the women interviewed use separationist strategies with respect to the Low German language. They exhibit the least English proficiency and most had a year or less of English language skills training. While all were not adverse to learning English, they were faced with obstacles that prevented them from doing so. Either personally they did not feel capable of learning or were unable to do so because of family and work responsibilities. These women’s experiences are similar to Turkish women in Ataca and Berry’s (2002) study. They found that,

Not working outside the home, most women of low SES do not get to interact with the larger society and become secluded at home and within their own ethnic circles. This most certainly reflects on their acculturation attitudes. Any idea of a relationship with the larger society is remote; hence, they have the lowest preference for integrationist and assimilationist attitudes of all immigrants. The acquisition of culturally appropriate knowledge and skills, including English language skills, is thereby hindered (2002:23).

The Dietsche women’s role as mother, as in other immigrant groups, partly determines

their separationist strategy. Since I discussed learning English in the last chapter I want to, therefore, focus on the preservation of Low German with their children.

Four of the seven women utilizing a separationist strategy were deliberate about making Low German the language of the home. While Betty and Helen did so largely because of their own inability to communicate well in English, they along with Anna and Lisa wanted children to learn Low German for both instrumental and cultural reasons (Weinfeld, 1994:240). They stated that it was important for their children to maintain Low German so that they could continue to speak with Dietsche relatives, enabling them to maintain the Dietsche culture. Anna's answer regarding their children's use of the Low German language use was typical of these women:

Anna: Our boys are supposed to speak (Low) German³⁴ at home when we are home. If they are outside playing with other children then they can use English, because many do not know German. However, when they are inside, they are supposed to speak German to us or if we are driving somewhere, they are supposed to speak German to us. However, we have to very often remind them and then they use a lot of English. But we try, we want them to. That's one thing, one way of doing things, that we really wish they would hold, they should be able to use German. They have grandparents and a lot of cousins and uncles and aunts that do not know English. That is important for us, that they will be able to use German.

By ensuring that their children learn Low German, they hope to enhance their children's connections in their community and with other Dietsche-speaking family members. As well, a couple of them felt that maintaining Low German improves their children's employability, an instrumental reason for linguistic preservation. Lisa says she and her spouse also try to preserve the language with her children,

... so that they can speak with those who come here from (Latin America). And I also say that it is necessary that one can speak more than

³⁴In this quote, Anna refers to Low German throughout.

just one language. Since Alicia wanted to find a job, and they always asked her how many languages she knew. And she willingly wrote it down that she also knew (Low) German. And she needs it anywhere if one works with people. Often those who are from (Latin America) do not know English. And it is good if they do not try to forget it and they keep it.

These mothers, along with their spouses, attempt to maintain the Low German language in the home, but are flexible with their children, allowing them to use English in public while “playing with other children.” As a result, the emphasis on language maintenance is largely cultivated “at home,” but has public ramifications. In this way, generational links are maintained recreating a cultural space within the diaspora in which language becomes central to cultural survival. Some of these mothers view retention of the ethnic language as an asset to their children’s employability in the diasporic community and is further evidence of the “bridge” which women’s cultural reproductive role plays.

2. Integrationist Strategy

The remaining six women applied integrationist strategies based on their greater use of the English language compared to those using a strategy of separation. Those who were most fluent, Sarah, Justina, Lena and Marie, had learned English prior to having their own children. Sarah, and Justina moved to Canada as teens. While Sarah earned a Canadian high school diploma, Justina never attended Canadian schools but learned English on her own. Lena is fluent in English because she was born and attended school in Canada prior to her migration to Latin America as a child. Marie studied in a Latin American school run by Mennonite Church Canada/USA that taught English along with High German and Spanish. Agatha immigrated in the 1970s, is also self taught and relatively fluent, perhaps due to attending an English language church early in her

migration, increasing her contact with English-only speakers. Trudy, while not as fluent, is taking English classes full time and would like to further her education.

Only two of these women, Sarah and Lena, intentionally made Low German the dominant language of the home. They did so to guard against what they saw as the widespread use of English in their community. Sarah stated that she made Low German the principal language with their children because in their community,

There's a lot of English. Because we're the only ones who speak Low German to them. In school it's English, their friends are English, church is English. Just we are speaking Low German. And I understand that it's much easier to converse with your friends in the language that's spoken all the time. Between them, when they're playing, we leave them alone. Just when they're talking to us, they can even speak in English but then they have to repeat it in Low German.

Sarah and Lena, fluent English speakers, saw the threat of the dominant English language and knew they had to make a concerted effort to retain the language. It was important to them to retain their culture as well as to communicate with non-English speaking relatives. A few of the other women using an integrationist strategy also stated that they wanted their children to be able to communicate with relatives, but were not deliberate about communicating to their children or having their children communicate in Low German on a regular basis.

3. Lack of Fear for Language Preservation

All the women in the study used a strategy of integration regarding their children's language, that is, their children communicated in Low German and English. This in itself is not surprising since all schools, whether public or private, are conducted in English. Children learn Low German in the home since the majority of parents

communicate to their children or to each other in Low German. What is interesting is that neither those who employed separationist or integrationist strategies were concerned about the potential of loss of Low German among their children. Loss of heritage language is one of the greatest fears of most ethnic groups and which differentiates the Dietsche from many diasporic communities. There are several reasons why many may have a lack of fear regarding the retention of the Low German language.

One reason may be that most of the women were satisfied with their children's knowledge of Low German. Justina said that,

the kids all understand it, they have no problem understanding it because we (she and her husband) always talk (Low) German to each other and they hear it and they even talk it back to grandma's and grandpa's sometimes.

Women like Justina have a sense of security that their children can communicate in Low German and thus may not make it a priority for their children to use it on a regular basis in the home. Another reason they may not fear language loss may be their children's immersion in the Dietsche community situated in the larger quasi-sacred village. Low German is reinforced privately within Dietsche Mennonite homes, outside the home in some churches as well as in other public spaces. In the wider Mennonite community of southern Manitoba, Low German is still used by many of those who have never left Canada. More generally, this larger community continues to connect strongly with Low German on a symbolic level. They may feel that since their children encounter Low German in many different social, religious and community situations, this will reinforce language retention.

A third reason that may apply to women who use an integrationist strategy is that,

it may be linked to the women's fear that their children will not be able to integrate into the larger society if they speak Low German exclusively. Trudy said that she was not very concerned about her children retaining Low German because,

We are here where, where we speak differently. It is difficult for me that I just only learned one language and then one [language] that one cannot get by because one cannot get a job or something. We (she and her husband) always speak Low German at home, but (the children) never, they always answer in English.

In this regard, Trudy feels marginalized by her inability to speak "good" English which has complicated her ability to integrate into the larger society. This is something she does not wish her children to experience. Nettie also said that she did not pressure her children to retain Low German because she saw how difficult it was for her children to attend English schools having only learned Low German while growing up. The Low German language, in a sense, becomes a scapegoat for the problems they or their children experience in immigrating to a new country. The opinions of Nettie and Trudy, however, are a minority. Most of the women interviewed expressed a strong desire that their children retain Low German but expressed little fear that it would be lost to future generations. This may be due to its entrenchment in the communities in southern Manitoba, but it cannot be the only reason-as sheer number of speakers is no guarantee that fear of language loss is not felt by a community. We need only look to Quebec to see that even in communities with large numbers of minority language speakers, there is often widespread fear of language loss.

4. Language and Cultural Change

Language, as an element of culture, is never entirely replicated or preserved

because culture is dynamic and constantly shifting. While some women like Lisa and Anna encourage their children to communicate in Low German, the assimilatory forces of the dominant society and emphasis on English is strong. When asked what language their children spoke to them Lisa said:

I almost have to say that I don't know. I am just used to how they speak to me, I think they speak a lot more English than (Low) German. (Low) German is among there too, however, they have it all mixed up. It's not just one language. We are all beginning to speak more mixed up.

Because of the women's integration into the larger Mennonite community in southern Manitoba which operates predominantly in the English language, they must incorporate English into their linguistic repertoire. This was evidenced during the interviews when they would "Low Germanize" English words, that is, they would add "en" at the end, or "je" at the beginning of English words to make them sound more Low German. This is done when there is no equivalent Low German word. The borrowing of English words within an ethnic language is called "ethnolect" by Weinfeld (1994:241) and occurs in many languages.

While all the women said that their children spoke Low German, many of their grandchildren did not. What seems to be important, is their ability to communicate with their grandchildren rather than the specific language in which they communicate. The third generation Dietsche in southern Manitoba, like most other immigrant groups, suffers significant language loss. This is in contradiction to the women's assumptions that Low German language was not in jeopardy, as discussed in the earlier section. Isajiw, (1999:172-173) states,

language inculturation among diverse ethnic groups proceeds relatively

rapidly from one generation to another . . . there are variations between the different ethnic groups and some show different patterns, but in general by the third generation the process of lingual inculturation is almost complete.

Alba et al.'s (2002:467) study on non-European immigrants in the US, generated similar findings. This results in a "three-generation process of Anglicization." In Alba et. al's (2002:472) study, over 90 percent of third generation children in Asian homes between the ages of 6 and 15 spoke only English. Thus, while most of the women interviewed in my study preserve the language and attempt to transmit it to their children, it does not guarantee that the next generation will continue to use the language. The continued entry of Low German speaking people from Latin America and Germany into southern Manitoba, the inclusion of Low German in worship services in many Mennonite churches, and the recent publication of the Low German Bible, may reinforce the work many of these women do by preserving the Low German language. However, these tactics may not be enough to ensure linguistic survival. The results of these processes will be unknown for quite some time.

B. High German: A Religious Language

"Segen Vater, diese Speise, unser Kraft und Dir zum Preise, Amen."
 "God our Father, thank you for this food, bless it to our health and to your praise, Amen."

High German is a typically written rather than orally transmitted aspect of Dietsche Mennonite culture, and is used as a religious rather than everyday language in Latin America. High German became the written language of the Mennonites while they lived in present day Poland in the early 18th century. This occurred because the Bible had not been translated into Low German and was declining as a written language (Quiring,

2003:16). In Latin America, however, High German continues to serve a role in maintaining the Dietsche Mennonite identity and separation from other cultures. The women's responses regarding the preservation of High German in southern Manitoba have to be understood in light of its use in Latin America. The majority of schools in Latin American colonies use High German to prepare members for participating in worship services, largely through congregational singing, and for written communication (Fehr Kehler, 1999). In Latin America, mothers taught their children High German prayers, which were silently repeated before and after meals and at bed time. While most of the women in this study attended Old Colony schools, some said that their grasp of High German was minimal because of the poor quality of education they received there. According to the women who attended or had children who attended the Kleine Gemeinde, Gottes Gemeinde, and Mennonite Church Canada/USA schools in Latin America, the schools also taught High German, but much more comprehensively than the Old Colony schools. In Canada, as in Latin America, High German is not taught by mothers to their children, instead it is taught in schools. In private schools, only High German is offered. In public schools in southern Manitoba, children have the choice of taking either High German or French as a second language. The level of instruction in High German in the Manitoba school system often results in the children's language ability generally exceeding that of many of their parents.

1. High German: A Separationist Strategy

Marie, Trudy, Helen and Betty utilize a separationist strategy with respect to their High German language since they strongly identify with the High German language in

several ways, more so than the other women who tend to prefer Low German. They all prefer churches where High German has been the dominant language, teach their children to pray in High German, encourage their acquisition of High German in school, and prefer to have their children attend a High German Sunday school. Marie, however, identified most strongly with the High German language in contrast to other women. When asked if she spoke Low German in her home, Marie said, that she and her husband “have always spoken High German with our children since they were little. They can all speak High German. They all speak Low German, just not all equally well.” She is the only woman interviewed who uses High German as the primary language of the home. Marie may place a greater emphasis on High German because of her education in Latin America. Marie attended a Mennonite Church Canada/USA school in Latin America which gave a much greater level of instruction in High German than the Old Colony schools, and is, therefore, much more fluent in the language than the other women. She stated that she feels other Dietsche Mennonites need to be better educated in High German, since it is integral to the Dietsche culture. Marie was a part of a lobby group in the area to begin a High German immersion program in the public school system. When asked why she was promoting the High German language she said:

Well, we are not English. And I have nothing against English and against any other nation, but they all keep their languages and we throw ours away, which is not good, because we will never be English, although we might speak English but we're not English. We're German and Low German. And since Low German isn't written that much, our culture, like our worship services and the Bible and everything, [is] in High German.

She does not identify with the dominant English language and society, and is, in this way, using a separationist strategy related to her political views. She is a revisionist, working

to promote the High German, rather than the Low German, aspect of the Dietsche culture. For Marie then, High German is more important than Low German, and certainly more so than English. For her, High German is not only apart of her religious repertoire but enters more fully into her daily life.

Helen, Betty, Trudy and Marie use several methods to preserve the High German language. First, they enrolled their children in schools where High German was taught. Betty suggests that this allows their children to be fully involved in their German churches. Second, these women and their families attend churches where High German is the dominant language just as they did in Latin America. Third, they pray and read the Bible in High German and value their children's ability to do the same, which encourages family communication and cohesion. It remains an important religious language in the home for these four women. However, at times some of the women and their children also use English or Low German for communication. What makes these three women different from the others in the study is the primary nature of the High German over the other languages used for religious purposes.

2. The Place of High German within an Integrationist Strategy

Among those who utilize an integrationist strategy, the Low German and English languages supplant High German as the religious language in the church and at home. Many of the women who had already left the Old Colony Church in Latin America attended churches where Low German or English are dominant. Some of the women said they left the High German churches in Canada so that their children could better understand the English Sunday schools and services. Some of the women also joined

churches that use a combination of Low German and English, as they became more integrated into the larger Mennonite community. As a result, these languages became more significant in other aspect of their lives.

Tina: In what language do you read the Bible?

Nettie: Now I do in English but back then (in Latin America) I did in (High) German. English doesn't bother me. I can read it much better than I can speak it. And many words, I have learned that I can understand that I did not learn to understand in High German. And then by listening to ministries, I have learned to understand the English Bible very well.

Nettie's comments highlight the central role English plays in her religious life. English is not, however, her only form of communication. At another point in the interview, Nettie also said that she enjoys translating hymns into Low German and has sung them for small groups with a friend.

As with some other women in this study, Nettie's comfort in using High German at church is low. This is not unusual, as Quiring (2003:44) states,

Even though most school instruction takes place in High German, many still know little High German when they leave school. Many Old Colony people, including some teachers, cannot converse well in High German. . . Some also understand little of that spoken and sung in the High German church services.

Susan corroborates this statement; she also mentioned that in Latin America, she could not understand what was being spoken and read in the church. In Canada, she can follow religious services as they use the language she is comfortable speaking. Regarding church services in Canada, Susan said:

And, I say I can now understand everything here. Here, there are those that use Low German. I did not have a good school, it was then always in High German, and it was only so often that they had a Low German word in the Church.

All the women, regardless of their linguistic preferences, valued their religion and were keen on improving their own spiritual lives, but many felt unable to do so in the most traditional churches because of their poor knowledge of High German. Various churches in southern Manitoba responded to this dilemma as the number of Dietsche Mennonites increased. Most importantly, they incorporated Low German in services. The Dietsche people's increasing integration into the larger Mennonite community exposes them to the religious use of Low German, and many find they are now better able to understand what is said and read and written in a religious context. The use of Low German and English over the use of High German recently caused a split in the Old Colony Church in southern Manitoba. A smaller faction wished to preserve a strictly High German service, while the majority accepted the use of Low German and English.

For women applying an integrationist strategy, their own spiritual development, and that of their children, is more important than the language in which it occurs. Many teach their children the High German prayers, as they had been taught, but as their children matured, encouraged them to formulate their own prayers. The devotional lives of their older children, reading Bible stories or the Bible, and prayer, as far as their mothers were aware, were conducted in English. When asked about her children's ability to understanding the Bible and what goes on in her traditional church Justina said, "the thing is they learn to read their Bibles in the English version. So I guess as long as they read, it doesn't really matter to me what language they read it in."

These women's responses varied from indifference to enthusiasm regarding the education of their children in the High German language. By moving to southern

Manitoba, their children have a greater chance of learning High German since it is readily available in the public schools. Many of the mothers are confident of their children's High German abilities. Some see it as an asset to their employability because they are able to communicate with and thus provide services for the newly immigrated German Mennonites. Others, particularly the older women, acknowledge that while their children may learn High German in school, their abilities are limited. For these women, their own poor knowledge of the language may translate into a reduced need to perpetuate this language among their children. Furthermore, the fact that High German is viewed primarily as a "religious language," and is used much less than English even in southern Manitoba, may contribute to this seeming lack of "importance."

VI. Conclusion and Further Analysis

In the process of acculturation to Canadian society, Dietsche women's various identities intersect with each other, thereby transforming them. All the women indicated a strong desire to identify as Christians and have their children also identify as Christians. Their identification is informed by their Mennonite context and in particular their Dietsche heritage. These identities as a result, are all interrelated. This is particularly evident when some of the women used the designations of Christian, Mennonite and Dietsche interchangeably. They do not define their Christianity in relation to the larger Christian Church, but instead, with the Mennonite religion. It is more precise to talk about "identities" rather than a singular "identity" since all individuals are multi-dimensional and all identities have the potential to interact with one another which can create new identities (Rummens, 2003). They identify as Mennonites in relation to their

socialization, their attendance and adherence to a Mennonite church and their current residence in a Mennonite community. In the process of acculturation, some women continue to preserve their religious traditions, while others shed particular cultural distinctives that they do not see as imperative to their Mennonite religion. Nevertheless, all continue to attend Mennonite churches, many of which hold to some traditional Mennonite beliefs and have a large number of Dietsche attendees.

Identification as a Dietsche means different things to different women. On the one hand, for those adopting a separationist strategy, "Dietsche" is synonymous with the term "Mennonite." On the other hand, women exercising an integrationist strategy, view the Dietsche as distinct from other groups of Mennonites with differing historical, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. That is, the Dietsche are those Mennonites with a history in Latin America. For many, "Dietsche" also refers to their use of the German languages, particularly of Low German. The title "Dietsche," like other terms of identification, incorporates these different ideas.

The contexts in which Low German and High German are used determine the extent of their preservation within the Dietsche community. Low German, as an oral language spoken mainly by the Dietsche, is taught in the home by parents. While some of the women believed it was important to maintain this language for the perpetuation of their culture, those employing an integrationist strategy did not see it as more important than learning English. The importance and use of High German also varied among respondents. Though its use is not as central in the public sphere compared to English, nor in the private compared to Low German or English, it is, however, still of symbolic

value to many of the immigrants. Their varying answers about language preservation may be indicative of how they perceive the community in which they live. A few of the women do not see the value in preserving either of the languages because of its marginal utility as compared to English in the larger community. Others value either or both because they find them useful for cultural maintenance in the predominantly Mennonite community where Low German continues to be used by many and where High German is presented as an option to students in the public and private schools.

It is their identification with their religion that often informs their decisions about whether or not to preserve aspects of their culture, particularly in the case of head coverings, though not as evident in clothing. The women who applied a separationist strategy continued to use kerchiefs because they believed it was necessary in order to be good Christians. Some of these women also adhered to it because it was part of their "lived-in ethnicity." They continued to identify strongly with their past religious and cultural traditions. Those who did not wear kerchiefs and did not conform to "traditional" clothing styles, did not associate religious significance with them. They believed they could be good Christians without them. The religious interpretation tends to override its use as a tool of ethnic boundary maintenance. The same holds true for clothing. Clothing marks the boundaries of the Dietsche community for only some of the women. Those who wear traditional clothes identify themselves as separated from the larger society while those who wear North American styles do so to integrate into the dominant Mennonite community. There are also those women who believe wearing a dress is important to being a Christian woman, but do not believe wearing a particular "Dietsche"

style is necessary. Being modest is an important cultural and religious value that seems to underlie many of the women's concerns about clothing rather than the preservation of a style of clothing as a means of marking their ethnic boundaries.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

I. Separationist and Integrationist Strategies Utilized by Dietsche Women

This thesis examines several aspects of Dietsche women's lives in order to demonstrate the extent to which they have been able to preserve their cultural and religious traditions upon their return to Canada. To do so, Berry's (1990) acculturation typology helped frame the strategies used by the women to preserve and transmit their culture and religion. The women are not characterized by a particular strategy, i.e., as either "separationist" or "integrationist," since they use multiple strategies for different aspects of cultural preservation. Nevertheless, some women tend to use one strategy more than another. The mode of acculturation used by the women, either separationist or integrationist, does not necessarily prevent their children from integrating or assimilating to the larger non-Dietsche community. At times, the strategies they used for themselves were different than those used for their children. For instance, while the women themselves may use separationist strategies by maintaining connections only with other Dietsche, they allow their children to have more contacts with the larger society by allowing them to go to public school and to have friends of different cultural backgrounds.

For all immigrant groups, culture and religion are not static, but are preserved and transmitted in interaction with the larger society. This means that change is inevitable. The Dietsche are similar to other ethno-religious groups in Canada that struggle with ethnic and religious preservation and transmission. Perhaps the efforts by the mothers to

preserve elements of their culture and religion slow the pace of change though these strategies may not be enough in the face of the larger society to ensure extensive preservation. More research on the second generation of Dietsche needs to be conducted to discern how they practice their religion and culture and their perception of their parent's influence in their lives.

Part of the analysis also examines the reasons for their return to southern Manitoba. Their return migration to Canada is generally borne out of economic necessity, the possibility of citizenship and its attendant benefits. These reasons were more utilitarian rather than affective. However, the return to a largely Mennonite and rural populated area is a means for cultural and religious preservation as many seek to separate themselves from the larger Canadian population. Their choice of relocation largely suggests a desire to maintain culture and religion.

I also examined Dietsche women's role as mothers in the process of cultural preservation and transmission. When their children are young, the role of mother encouraged isolation upon their return to Canada. They stay at home with children rather than working outside the home for pay and sometimes instead of attending English classes. As a result, some of these women are severely hampered in their acquisition of the English language. Those using a separationist strategy maintain a respectful distance from their children and are less likely to engage in play with children as opposed to women employing an integrationist strategy. Those utilizing an integrationist strategy as their children enter school, may begin to work for pay as it does not interfere with raising children. Those using a separationist strategy typically do not work for pay or work for

pay along with their children. Furthermore, they encourage their children to construct their families to be based on a patriarchal structure of male-headed households.

Self-sufficiency and a connection to the land are important cultural values and are seen in the women's tending of gardens, harvesting and processing produce, caring for farm animals, and sewing. While those using a separationist strategy engage in these activities more extensively and involve their children in them, those using an integrationist strategy encourage other activities among their children such as recreation, sports and arts, within the larger society. While many people garden in Manitoba, this may be an instance where the women's efforts in preserving and transmitting the cultural practice of gardening seems to have been effective, since the majority of adult children have gardens of their own. Nevertheless, there may be other factors influencing gardening, such as a conducive environment and popularity of the practice among other cultures.

All the women, regardless of the acculturation strategies they used, reported that religion was very essential to them and it was imperative to instill in their children. They have been successful in that the majority of their children attend a church. However, a few of the women interviewed maintained traditional practices and attended more traditional churches while the majority had changed religious practices to reflect the Mennonite community into which they integrate.

Most of the women self-identified as Dietsche Mennonites. In this regard, the majority used an integrationist strategy and distinguished themselves from other Mennonites by using the term "Dietsche." They utilized "Mennonite," however, when

discussing their religion. The two women who did not distinguish “Dietsche” and “Mennonite” used separationist strategies with respect to traditional dress. They both wore kerchiefs and traditional clothing at all times. A few other women also used separationist strategies by wearing kerchiefs but less traditional clothing. They had lived in Canada for a longer period of time than the two women who used mainly separationist strategies, and though they preferred to wear dresses, they did not feel compelled to wear traditional garb like the other two. As a result, these women were marginalized in their workplaces where they felt pressure to wear pants. Many of the rest of the women used assimilationist strategies in terms of their clothing though they had not entirely absorbed into the larger “Canadian” society since they were not concerned with being “fashionable” and many did not wear makeup or jewelry.

Regardless of the women’s acculturation strategies, their children had mostly assimilated with respect to head coverings and attire. Most of the women did not think their daughters would continue to wear kerchiefs. However, since several churches in southern Manitoba continue to promote the practice of wearing kerchiefs, it is likely that some will continue to do so at least for religious worship. The two younger women, more recent immigrants, who use a separationist strategy with respect to attire, dressed their children in more traditional clothing though had adapted the styles to their new culture. The children of the other women had either integrated or assimilated with respect to attire. A few of these women had wanted their children to follow traditional practices, but the majority were content with their children’s assimilation regardless of whether they themselves used separationist or assimilationist practices. In short, maintaining traditional

dress in the second generation is not important for the majority of women interviewed. Most of the women accept that this type of change is inevitable; generally clothing becomes lost as a boundary marker for the ethnic community. However, clothing is not entirely lost as a site of contention between the first and second generation, something that is evidenced in other immigrant communities (Handa, 2003; Alvi et. al., 2003). While a particular “style” of attire is no longer important, many first generation mothers continue to place constraints on their children’s attire. Their clothing should be “respectful” and “proper,” that is, their children should not wear items such as shorts, girls should not wear short skirts and boys should not wear baggy pants. It seems that some of their children struggle against these strictures.

The Low German and High German languages have been used, as with clothing, to separate the Mennonite people from mainstream Canadian culture. Many of the women returned to the country when their children were young and thus remained separated from the larger society, preserving the Low German language and passing it on to their children. Some of the women continued to deliberately reinforce Low German in the home, while the majority were content with their children’s sometimes imperfect abilities and did not fear language loss. Loss of language is one of the greatest fears of most other cultural groups and is something that makes the Dietsche women I interviewed unique. While language retention is high, interviews of women with grandchildren indicate that their grandchildren are not speaking Low German. As a result, while most of the women do not fear language loss at the present time, like most other immigrant groups, language loss is likely to be significant by the third generation. Few of

the women continued to attend churches where High German remains a dominant language. However, the majority use an integrationist strategy preferring to attend churches that used English, High German and Low German. High German was used in most homes predominantly through prayers. Since High German is the domain of organized religion among Mennonites, this is not different than traditional practice.

The use of a combination of separationist, integrationist and assimilationist strategies, reveals that many of the women, even those who seek contact with other cultures, continue to preserve some traditional cultural and religious practices and values while seeking some integration into larger society. The employment of separationist strategies reveals the exercise of the habitual or iterational element of their agency, relying on their past to direct their actions in the present. Despite a desire to preserve traditions, over time, many support interactions and contacts with those outside Dietsche circles. Those using integrationist and assimilationist strategies act with intention that is directed towards the future. While a few of the women used more separationist strategies than others, the majority used a variety of strategies, evidence of multiple strategies (Berry et. al., 1992). The use of different strategies in various social aspects, reveals the non-linear fashion of acculturation. It also shows that a person may be directed towards change in one area, while simultaneously working to support the structures that provide stability for their identities.

II. Mennonite Studies and Immigration

This thesis also contributes to the knowledge about Dietsche Mennonites as well as contributing to the literature in Mennonite studies. It also contributes in other areas

including immigrant studies, particularly in regards to identity and acculturation, women, and return migration. The relatively small size of the Dietsche Mennonite population in relation to other immigrant groups, their migration to rural locations, and general desire to minimize contact with the larger society may have contributed to the lack of research on this population. Furthermore, this research promotes a more holistic picture of the Dietsche than has been presented in the media. Any attention that Dietsche Mennonites have recently received in Canada has been largely negative (Mitrovka and Bourette, 2004; Wentz, 2002). It is hoped that this study has added a more balanced and scholarly perspective. It begins a discussion on how the Dietsche are maintaining and passing on cultural and religious traditions, and how they sustain a Dietsche Mennonite identity while facing various assimilatory forces. As this research was conducted using qualitative interviews, it is intended to give a face and voice to some of these returnees. Ultimately, the hope is to foster understanding and subsequently empathy for a little understood people.

Not only does this thesis add to the knowledge of Dietsche Mennonites but to the larger area of Mennonite studies in Canada. Much of the research in Mennonite studies in Canada is historical or religious in nature. This is one of the relatively few sociological studies on Mennonites in Canada (Driedger, 2001, Driedger and Kaufman, 1991; Redekop, 1988). This thesis also adds to the sparse literature on smaller more traditional groups of Mennonites in Canada who maintain vestiges of a sacred village heritage. I also concentrate on the daily, lived experiences as detailed by women. Often, research in Mennonites communities tends to focus on the institutional level of society, thus often

excluding women's voices since they have generally been discouraged from assuming public roles. In particular, this research adds to the limited number of qualitative studies conducted with Mennonites, the majority of which consider women's lives (Harms, 2004; Fast, 2004; Martens and Harms, 1997; Klassen, 1994). It also joins in the discussion on Mennonite identity, both religious and cultural, in the context of a pluralistic society (Gerbrandt, 2005; Driedger, 2000; Loewen, 1988). As Mennonitism, a branch of Christianity, has grown in southern countries, and as many "cultural" (Germanic, Dutch, Swiss) Mennonites have become part of mainstream society in North America, what it means to be "Mennonite" is often questioned (Gerbrandt, 2005).

This thesis locates Dietsche Mennonites in the current studies in immigration in Canada. It contributes to the literature on ethnic identity retention, acculturation, return migration, rural migration, and women's immigration, particularly their role in the preservation and transmission of culture and religion. This thesis adds to the discussion on retention of ethnic identity from the perspective of individual immigrants (Driedger, 2003; Fleras and Elliot; 2003; Cha, 2001). It follows other studies conducted to determine the extent of ethnic identity retention within various ethnic communities by questioning participants about various elements that make up one's ethnic identity (Driedger, 1996; Isajiw, 1990). By questioning immigrants about their practices, this research goes beyond recording behaviours that indicate ethnic identity retention to discern the nature of their agency in doing so. As well, within the literature on ethnic identity retention (Arana, 2001; Cha, 2001), this research brings religion to the fore as an integral element (Bramadat, 2003), which has been neglected in these studies for quite some time.

As well, the study is concerned with the subject of return migration, a relatively unexplored phenomena particularly on returnees to Canada (Takeyuki, 2001; Isajiw, 1999:68). It is concerned with the reasons for the return, and continued connections to the country to which they are returning which impact cultural and religions maintenance and propagation. This thesis confirms Quiring's (2003) work on the impetuses for return: economic reasons, ability to gain Canadian citizenship, and its attendant benefits, and the ability to provide a better future for their children. It also confirms the idea that they return to areas already populated by other Mennonites, that these connections aid in their return and in their integration. The reasons for their return differ significantly from the reasons they left Canada. What is similar to other return migrants is that the group's culture and religion have undergone transformation in the migratory country creating a sub-group. This phenomenon is similar to other immigrant groups, such as returning Japanese from Brazil (Takeyuki, 2001). The Brazilian Japanese's attempts to reintegrate into Japanese culture are often thwarted and thus many promote Brazilian culture rather than celebrating their Japanese culture. The Dietsche, conversely, who were largely separated from Latin American society, practice very little of the Latin American culture. Yet, many are unsuccessful at preserving and transmitting aspects of their Dietsche Mennoniteness. It is their past history in Canada that makes them unique from other immigrants to the country in that they have a collective conscious about Canada that is often a catalyst for their return (Quiring, 2003). What is unique about the Dietsche return migration is that they are members of a separationist ethnic minority group who never integrated into the host Canadian society prior to their departure to Latin America.

Nevertheless, they face many of the same concerns as other immigrants with respect to ethnic and religious retention, language acquisition, and issues around employment.

I also address immigration within the context of a rural location, whereas most studies on immigration are concerned with urban populations (Isajiw, 1999). Considering the decline of rural populations in many parts of Canada, the study of immigration to rural areas is of current relevance. In fact, immigration is suggested as one solution to population decline which is currently being explored among many rural centres in Canada (Wilkinson, 2005). Furthermore, this paper adds to the research about immigrants and ethnic groups living in ethnic enclaves (Fleras and Elliot, 2003; Li, 2001; Berry and Laponce, 1994). It supports the idea that many members of ethnic groups, particularly new immigrants who live among other members of their ethnic group may promote, to a certain extent, preservation of culture (Li, 2001; Berry and Laponce, 1994).

Within the field of immigration studies, this thesis particularly adds to the literature on immigrant women's experiences in a number of areas (Del Negro, 1997; Buijs, 1993). Most significantly, it contributes to the literature on cultural and religious preservation and transmission by mothers (Tsolidis, 2001; Nauck, 2001; Rayaprol, 1997). As with other studies, this research confirms that immigrant women spend much time and energy in the maintenance and propagation of their culture and religion. Unlike other studies which focus on second generation immigrant's accounts of their mothers (Tsolidis, 2001) or concentrate on first generation immigrant women's roles in public spaces (Rayaprol, 1997), this investigation concentrates on the accounts of first generation women's roles in the home and with their children (Devore and London, 1999;

Dosanjh and Ghuman, 1996). Moreover, the discussions of head coverings and dress contribute to recent literature regarding the south Indian and Muslim communities in Canada (Hoodfar, 2003; Handa, 2003). The sections specifically speak to women's use of attire in ethnic boundary maintenance and the subjective meanings they attribute to dress.

III. Theoretical Contributions

This thesis also makes some theoretical contributions in a few areas. In utilizing Berry's (1990) theory of acculturation and Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theory of agency, I was able to highlight the sometimes contradictory modes of acculturation chosen by those women to promote and preserve their culture among their children. It supports Ravenstein's (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003) push/pull theory of migration, that the majority of those who migrate do so because they are unable to make a living in their present location and are drawn to a new location by the possibilities of bettering their life circumstances. Economic considerations are a major factor in the return migration for many Dietsche Mennonites. However, contrary to Ravenstein, those who were interviewed were not drawn to urban centres but to rural areas as part of a consorted effort to maintain culture and religion. As well, many these women and their families have specific reasons for returning to Canada and to southern Manitoba validating Quiring's (2003) findings on push and pull factors of return to Canada for Dietsche returnees. For example, Many of the Dietsche are pulled to southern Manitoba because of historical and family connections to the country and the area. More research needs to be done in this area with Dietsche populations in other parts of Canada.

This research accepts Berry's (1990) theoretical paradigm on acculturation. It

demonstrates that adaptation within the host society is determined by two issues, cultural maintenance and contact and participation in the host society. It confirms Berry's (1992) theory that immigrants do not simply "assimilate" or become "absorbed" into the host society. They adapt to and become part of the host society along a spectrum of acculturation, namely, separation, integration, assimilation and marginalization. As well, this research confirms that immigrants may use different and sometimes conflicting acculturation strategies within various social spheres, such as work, religion, linguistic integration etc., thus exhibiting "multilinearity." For example, a woman may be assimilationist in terms of her dress, but may exhibit forms of integration in terms of her language usage. Rather than utilizing Berry's typology as "attitudes" I prefer to use "strategy" to describe the choices made by the women in my study. The use of this term adds to the immigrants agency in terms of the women's ability to negotiate their new society and preserve certain aspects of their religion, culture and language.

The theory, however, has some shortcomings. It does not discuss the motivations behind the strategies. For example, a woman may have decided they wanted contact with other cultures in the way of dress and no longer want to wear cultural clothing, thus assuming an assimilationist strategy. However, they do not nor do they want their children to assimilate entirely, for example, by not wearing short skirts and shorts, preserving the idea of "respectful" or "appropriate" dress. The theory also assumes that the acculturation takes place in relation to the majority host society. However, with the Dietsche, as with many other immigrants, they are also acculturating in relation to a larger ethnic community. For example, the majority of the women wanted their children

to marry other Mennonites, evidence of a separationist strategy with respect to the larger Canadian society. However, some also stated that they were indifferent about whether they married a Dietsche or a non-Dietsche Mennonite, indicating an integrationist strategy with respect to the larger Mennonite society. -

As well, the theory does not account for acculturation as a process over time. It requires a comment about one's present circumstance and thus does not reveal the stages through which an immigrant moves to come to the present acculturation strategy. I tried to capture this change by creating subcategories of areas of acculturation, for example, I divided their mothering experiences between the strategies as mothers when their children were young and their strategies when they entered school age and teen years. The theory also does not aid in the more difficult assessment of acculturation with respect to cultural and religious values, such as self-respect or modesty, than overt behaviours such as the use of a head-covering. In using this model, it is difficult to account for the transformation of culture which inevitably takes place. For this reason, I encourage others to incorporate theories which recognize individual agency and choice such as the one proposed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). Another shortcoming of this theory, in the context of my study, was that transmission of culture to the next generation was not a part of Berry's typology. While the women in my study used a certain strategy for a particular social action for themselves, their strategies for transmitting culture were sometimes at variance. As well, at times it appears to make little difference — most children will likely lose significant aspects of their culture and language as they negotiate their lives in southern Manitoba.

This study utilizes Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conceptualization of agency to make up for the shortfalls in the acculturation typology. Agency is more than just the ability to act but is multi-faceted working to either support or challenge structures. This theory allows me to understand how these women's agency was manifested in the rupture that occurs when one migrates into a new society. I found that the iterational or habitual aspect to agency coincides to the separationist strategy. Within this strategy, an immigrant's agency is oriented towards sustaining identities and thus orient their actions towards the past rather than the future. Those employing a assimilationist strategy were more projective in their agency. They oriented their agency, with respect to cultural and religious maintenance and transmission, towards the future, to change or adaptation of culture and religion and reaching beyond their heritage culture and religion to others. Both the integrationist and marginalization strategies are more a combination of the projective and iterational elements. The integrationist strategy assumes that the actors are able to make decisions while those using a marginalization strategy are more likely to be in a position where their choices are limited by structural constraints. Since the majority of women assumed integrationist strategies either for themselves, and most often with their children, the tendency is towards an orientation towards the future.

IV. Future Research

There are some limitations and short comings of my study that point to the need for further research. This project is based on a small number of participants and is not meant to be generalizable to the rest of the Dietsche community. Larger samples need to be studied in order to better understand trends and attitudes towards cultural and religious

transmission. This study is also limited in that it concentrates only on mothers. Further research is required to study male response to acculturation and transmission of culture and religion to their children as well as their roles and responsibilities in families, in the community and workforce. Furthermore, the parameters of this study did not encompass discussions with returnees' children. To date there has been no research on Dietsche children's acculturation in Canadian society. Future studies could examine their acculturation strategies and compare the results to other second generation immigrants. What cultural values, and traditions, religious beliefs and practices, do they continue? How do second generation Dietsche Mennonites manage their ethnic and religious identity? What strategies do second generation Dietsche use to handle the double socialization into their ethnic culture and religion and into the host society? Do they keep the two worlds apart, engage primarily in the ethnic world, push the ethnic world aside, or involve themselves in alternative activities (Isajiw, 1999:194)? It was also not within the parameters of my thesis to give a comprehensive examination of the host society's response to the returnees.

Another possibility for research is to examine civic, public, religious (church and para-church organizations) and business reactions regarding the arrival of the Dietsche. In this regard, I have many questions left unanswered. Does migration to a new society afford them more power than they had in their traditional communities? Do the attendant benefits of living in a society with greater freedoms for women reach these women who often use separationist or integrationist strategies that maintain their generally lower status in a patriarchal community? What has been the social and economic impact of the

Dietsche return to southern Manitoba?

Further research also needs to be conducted in other Dietsche Mennonite communities located in areas across Canada and the US including southern Ontario, northern and southern Alberta, Nova Scotia, Texas and Kansas. Some research into migrants' lives has been conducted in a few of these locations but more research is required. There has been no other study on preservation and transmission of culture and religion in any of these communities. However, the evidence available seems to suggest that, like the women in this study, Dietsche Mennonites in other provinces also engage in various responses to acculturation (Guenther, 2004; Fast, 2004; Bowen, 2004). What is required is a longitudinal study on how culture and religion progress, change and deteriorate despite the attempts by the majority of women attempt to maintain traditions.

Appendix A

Participant Grid 1 Acculturation Strategies: Factors in Returning to Canada

	Economic versus Educational Push Factors	Cultural Push Factors	Economic/ Citizenship Factors	Return to Southern Manitoba Factors
Judy	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Susan	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Betty	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Anna	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Lisa	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Sarah	Integrationist		Instrumental	Separationist
Helen	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Justina	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Nettie	Instrumental		Instrumental	Separationist
Trudy	Integrationist		Instrumental	Instrumental
Agatha	Integrationist		Instrumental	Separationist
Lena	Integrationist		Instrumental	Separationist
Marie	N/A	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist

Participant Grid 2 Acculturation Strategies: Mothering

	Stay Home with Young Children	Older Children and Work for Pay	Maintaining Distance versus Playing with Children	Raising School-Age and Teenage Children
Judy	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist
Susan	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Separationist
Betty	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist
Anna	Separationist	Separationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Lisa	Separationist	Separationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Sarah	Separationist	N/A	Integrationist	Integrationist
Helen	Separationist	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist
Justina	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist
Nettie	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Separationist
Trudy	Separationist	Separationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Agatha	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Lena	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Marie	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist

Appendix B

Participant Grid 3 Acculturation Strategies: Cultural Practices

	Connection to the Land and Self-Sufficiency	Prayer Practices	Head Coverings	Attire	Attire at Work
Judy	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Marginalization
Susan	Separationist	Separationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Marginalization
Betty	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	
Anna	Integrationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	
Lisa	Integrationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	
Sarah	Integrationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	
Helen	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	
Justina	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	
Nettie	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Marginalization
Trudy	Integrationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	
Agatha	Separationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	
Lena	Integrationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	
Marie	Separationist	Integrationist	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	

Participant Grid 4 Acculturation Strategies: Dietsche and Mennonite Identity

	Mennonite versus Dietsche Identity	Religious Mennonite Identity	Low German Language	High German Language
Judy	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Susan	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Betty	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist
Anna	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Lisa	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Sarah	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Helen	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist	Separationist
Justina	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Nettie	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist	Integrationist
Trudy	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist
Agatha	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Lena	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist
Marie	Integrationist	Integrationist	Integrationist	Separationist

Appendix C: Consent Form: English

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.

By signing this form you agree to participate in the research "Cultural Preservation and Transmission Among Kanadier (Dietsche or Low German speaking) Mennonites" which is being conducted by Tina Fehr Kehler. This study seeks to uncover the processes of how Kanadier Mennonites keep their culture and how it is passed on to their children. You will be asked questions about your own child rearing practices, cultural practices, and your family's involvement in Canadian culture. This research involves providing information about your own experiences and opinions about this process in one interview session. This interview will last approximately two hours and is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question, ask questions to the researcher, take a break during the session or terminate the session at any time. As well, you may choose whether or not the session is tape recorded. The interview will be typed into a computer and stored on a disk to be kept in a secure location.

The researcher is obligated to report any discovery of abuse of minors to the appropriate authorities.

All information obtained will be kept confidential. The researcher will discuss your information in connection with your name with only her thesis committee. Finally, the researcher has made sure that no one will identify your name with any statements you make that may become part of her final Master's thesis paper.

A summary of findings will be made available to you upon request.

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

Contacts:

Tina Fehr Kehler, researcher, Master's student, University of Manitoba, 331-3732

Dr. Lori Wilkinson, thesis advisor, Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba, 474-8491

Dr. Royden Loewen, thesis committee member, Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, 786-9391 (speaks Low German)

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

Appendix D: Consent Form: High German

Bbenachrichtigen Einwilligen

Diesen einwilligen papier (einen Kopie wird euch gegeben vor eure Verzeichnis und Referenz) ist nur ein Teil von die benachrichtigen einwilligen prozess. Es sollte ihr ein grundlegend Idee geben ueber was diese Vorschung ist und was eure Teilnahmen wird sein. Sie dürfen nur fragen wenn ihr mehr Information Bedarfen. Bitte nehme die Zeit zum diesen Papier bedachtlich ueber lesen und alle diese Information vorstehen.

When Sie diesum Papier Zeichen uebereinstimmen Sie das Sie werden Teilnahmen mit diese Vorschung. Die Vorschung ist " Cultural Perservation and Transmission Among Kanadier Mennonites". Tina Fehr Kehler macht diese Vorschung. Diese Vorschung ist ueber die Kanadier Mennonites und wo sie eure Kultur halten und es zu eure Kinder uebergaben. Tina wird euch fragen ueber wo Sie eure Kinder aufzieht haben, eure Kultur Praktik, und eure Familie Verwicklung in die Kanadische Kulture. Diese Vorschung verwickelt eure Information und Erfahrung in diesum Gegenstand in einem Unterredung. Diesum Unterredung dauert um ungefehr Zwei Stunde und ist ganz freiwillig. Sie dürfen nur die fragen antworten was Sie moechten. Wenn Sie fragen haben, die Vorsicher wird die antworteten. Wenn Sie eine Pause Bedarfen order die Unterredung endigen, Sie dürfen nur sagen. Sie koennten auswahlen weder diese Unterredung wird aufgenehmt. Die Unterredung wird im Computer gemacht und wird in einen Sicher platz gehalt.

Die Vorsicher sollte alle Missbrauch von Minderjaehrig Kinder Berichten zu die Behoerde.

Alle Information is vertraulich. Die Vorsicher wird eure Information (und euren nahmen) besprechen mit Ihren Dissertation Komitee. Euren nahmen wird nicht identifizieren mit eure Angabe in die letzter Kopie von Ihren Meister Dissertation Papier.

Sie koenten ein Kopie von der Befunt haben wenn Sie fragen.

Wenn Sie diesem Papier ueberstimmen Sie haben ja gesacht das Sie haben alles versteht zu eure Gewissheit und das Sie werden Teilnahmen wie ein unterworfen. Im keinen weg ist diesem Papier einen auf verzichtung vor eure legal vorantwortung. Oder einen erloesen vor die Vorsicher, Sponsor, oder alle andre Institut was Beteiligung haben von ihre legal und professionell resonsibiliteten. Sie koennten sich zurueckziehen von diesen Studie irgend Zeit und/order sich enthalten von irgend von die fragen mit deinem Schaden order Konsequenz. Euren andauren Teilnahmen sollte es einwillig sein wie eures anfaenglich einwilligen, so Sie solten frei fuehlin wen ihr nues information Bedarf order etwas auf zu klaeren.

Contacts:

Tina Fehr Kehler, Vorsicher, Meisters Student, Universitaet Manitoba, 331-3732

Dr. Lori wilkinson, Dissertation Berater, Assitent Professor bei die Universitat Manitoba, 474-

8491. Dr. Royden Loewen, Mitglied von die Dissertation Komitee, Vorsitzer von die Studie von Mennonites bei die Universitat Manitoba, 786-9391 (er spricht Plat Deutsch)

Die Vorschung wird nachgeprüft von die Psychologie/Soziologie Vorschung Sittenlehre Verwaltungsrat bei die Universitaet Manitoba. Wenn Sie irgend fragen oder leiden haben ueber diesum projekt Sie konten iregnd von die vor nahmende menchen herstellen order die Menschlich Sitternlehre Sekretariat herstellen (474-7122). Einen Kopie von diesum einwilligen Papier wird euch gegeben vor eure Verzeichnis und Referenz.

**Appendix E: Interview Schedule Low German
Unjahoolinj Jefroage auf Plautdietsch**

1. Unjahoolinj Väästallung (Introduction to Interview)

Etj welle spazeare met die von diene Ennwaundrung tridj no Kanada. Etj welle spazeare von jiene kjinga gröt to wausse en Kanada. Etj welle spazeare von woo jie doon dien kjinga dautselwje ooda aundasch oppbrinje von vo jie wieren oppjebrocht. Uch well etj von aundre Menschen, nich von Latin America, spazeare, woo de jie behandle han, en woot jie to daun han met aundre Menschen.

2. Fäastaliije Jefroage (Introductory Questions)

Easch well ekj eensje hinjagruntije jefroage froage.

- Woo fäl kjinja hast dü? Waut senn dee äare nomes en woo ault senn dee? Senn eensje fonne de befriet? Han eensje fonne de kjinja? Wua wonnen de nü? Woo fäl deist dü de besäkje ooda met råde?
- Enn woone darp enn kolnie deedst dü oppwause? Ne woone kjoakj deedst dü bejleite?
- Woo fäl school has dü jehodt en Latin America? En Canada?
- Has dü ooda däs dü ütschaufe? Hoodst or has dü kliene kjinja? Waut deidst ooda deist dü met de?
- Deist dü waut friewellijch schofen?

3. Ennwaundrung Erfoarung (Immigration Experiences)

- Nü well ekj fonn diene Ennwaundrng erfoarung von Latin America no Kanada spazeare.
- Kaunst dü von daut råde? Haudst dü waut wenschen fe die selfst en wajch trakjen? Haudst dü waut wenschen fe diene kjinja? Wia diene wenschen ondrasch fe diene mejales aus fe diene junges?
 - Wuaromm deiden jie no Manitoba hia han trakjen?
 - Waut haudst due to'm doohne äwa jünt Ennwaundrung?
 - Wo deidst dü diene kjinja halpen därech dit tiet?
 - Deist dü fonne diene jeräs räden met diene kjinja? Deit diene oomtchja?
 - Deist dü fonne Latin America räden to diene kjinja? If yes what?
 - Wua wonhen diene Frintschoft? Jeschwiste? Ellre?
 - Wo foaken däs dü to no de räden, schriewen oda beseaken? Jleewst daut halped diene kjina von diene Kultuadaut en dentj haule?
 - Hoolen jie (Latin American country's) Heljedau?

4. Kjinja Opptrakjen odda Oppbrinje (Raising Children)

Nü well ekj fonne kjinja opptrakjen odda oppbrinje råde.

a. Parents concerns over cultural transmission

- Easch well ekj råde fonne waut du wäst diene kjinja liere han
- Easch, waut voll jie welle daut diene kjinja sollen lieren?
- Es daut too onhoole waut easch emma wea?
- Es doa waut fonne (Latin American country) daut dü west diene kjinja sollen lieren?

Dest dü de daut lieren?

-Des no diene kjinga vetalle fonne (Latin American country)? Wann joh, waut? Wann nijch, woaromm nijch?

-To woone school doon diene kjinje bejleite?

-Waut dentjest dü äwa dee school?

-Woo fäl school han diene kjinja jahodt?

-Woascht dü diene kjinja wieda lote gone to school äwa hühschool?

b. Roles of mothers in cultural transmission/preservation

Nü well akj räde fonne waut dü deest aus en Mutta (Grootmutta).

-Waut dees aule dach enn aule wääkj?

-Waut, kos denken, deedst dü emma met enn fea diene kliene bebe's? Wan de wearen noch nijch en school, noch blooss klien? Wan de wearen en school? Wan de wea en hühschool? Wan de wearen ütjewossna menschen?

-Waut deed diene oomtchja?

-Wea daut aundasch twaschen diene mejales enn junges?

-Jleiwst dü daut dua senn waut dinja daut mejales sollen blooss doone? Junges? Waut?

-Waut wenschst dü daut diene mejales wauren doone wan de senn ütjewossna menschen? Dien junjes?

-Deist dü diene kjinja opptrakjen aus dü weasch oppjatrokjen? Wann jo, woo? Wann nijch, wauroomm nijch?

-Wea haf Follmacht en diene hüs?

-Bess dü uch een grottmutta? Wann jo, waut deis dü met, en fea diene grottkinje? Waut daut aundasch aus de wauren grotta? Es daut aundasch, waut dü deis, twaschen de junjes en mejales?

Jeschpräk (Language)

-As Plautdietsch hoohle wijchtijch? (Grootkjinja?)

-Waut jeschpräk rädst dü too diene kjinja?

-Waut jeschpräk räden diene kjinja too dü? Too diene oomtchja? Too jiedra aundra? Twaschen dü enn diene oomtchja?

-As Hüch Dietsch hoohle wijchtijch?

-Doone diene kjinja Hüch Dietsche näme en school?

-Kjenn jiene kjinja noch Hüch Dietsch?

Äten (Food)

-Määkjs du enn Goade? Han jie Tiea jehodt?

-Deist noch äten von (Latin American country) mäakjen? Waut mäakjs? Wenn nijch, wuaromm nijch?

-Doon diene kjinja uch soont äten mäakjen? Waut mäakjen de? Wenn nijch, wuaromm nijch? Es daut aundasch twaschen diene mejales enn junges? Wuaromm ooda wuaromm nijch?

-Deist uch Kanodesche äten mäakjen? Waut mäakjs? Wenn nijch, wuaromm nijch?

c. Mother's role in religious adherence

Nü well ekj fonn diene kjristlijche läwe räde.

-Bess dü een Krijst? Bess dü een Mennonite? Wud dü selfst een Dietsche nane? Wenn jo, waut meent daut too die?

-Senn diene kjinja uch Krijsten? Mennoniten? Dietsche?

-Kjanst dü de nom, Kanadier?

Jiedadach Kjristliche Läwen (Everyday Christianity)

-Waut deist dü derjch de dach daut es from? Diene kjinja? Diene aumtchja?

-Wea haf diene kjinja daut jeleat?

-Deist dü fonne kjristlijche dinge räde met diene kjinje? Deit diene aumtchje?

-Hoolst dü no mejales en frües kleid to'm auntrakjen? Deist dü kleide brucke? Doone diene mejales?

-Hoolst dü no mumtjes en dük auntrakje? Deist du? Wann jo, wann? Wes han daut diene mejales de uck brucke? Wann nijch, wauromm nijch?

Kjoakj (Church)

-Deist dü en Kjoakj bejleite? Wenn jo, ne wauna? Wenn nijch, wauromm nijch?

-Wenn jo, waut ha jie to doone en kjoakj? Diene kjinja, diene aumtchja?

-Han jie emma ne eene kjoakj bejleite? Wenn jo, wauromm? Wenn nijcht, wauromm deide jie ommtüsche?

-Jleewst dü dua es waut aundasch twaschen waut ne frü ooda en maun konn doone enn kjoakj?

-Jleewst dü diene kjinja woaren emma too de selwja kjoakj bejleite?

-Senn diene ütjewossna kjinja befriedt? Fonne woone kjoakj deeden äare poatnesch komme?

-Wud daut die baudre wenn diene kjinja wud ne en aundre kjoakj bejleite?

-Wudst dü woll han daut diene kjinja soolen een poatna fjinje fonne diene kjoakj? Sollen de uch fonne Latin America senn?

-Kjennst dü menschen fonne aundre kjoakjen?

5. Kanodaschen Jedoone (Canadian Culture)

-Wan dü deidst hea han trachjen, wo deide ondre menschen hea en Kanada die behaundle?

-Wo wiere diene kjinja behaundlt?

-Met wäm däs dü toopkome? Diene kjinja? Haf doot je'endret aus dü has hea han jetrochen?

-Han jie en t.v.? Na waut daun jie aunseene? Däs dü oppausen woot diene kjinja doon aunseene?

-Han jie en radio? Däs doot selfst harchen? Däs dü oppausen waut diene kjinja doon harchen?

-Kreascht dü sseitunge (newspapers or magazines)? Fonne wua?

-Waut donne diene kjinja läsen? Deist oppausen ne waut de donne läsen? Es daut oondrasche twaschen diene mejales en junges, waut dü loots am läsen?

-Donn jie Kanodesche heljedach hoole? Wauna?

6. *Schluss Moake* (Closing)

-Wo oolt woascht dü?

-Wo lang sennn jie befriedt?

-Wua wonst dü?

-Wot es diene oabeit? Diene oomtchja's?

-Wo fäl jelt deist dü fedeene? Dine oomtchja?

-Kjanst oondre mumtjchas doot wude wallich seen to'm dit doone?

Appendix F: Interview Schedule: English

1. Introduction to Interview

What I am interested in is having a conversation with you about coming back to Canada. I want to discuss what it is like raising your children in Canada. I want to talk about how you try to teach them the same way or different ways than you were brought up. I also want to talk about how other people, who are not from Latin America, have treated you and what relationships you have with them.

2. Introductory Demographic Questions

First I would just like to ask you a couple of background questions.

-How many children do you have? What are their names and how old are they? Are any of them married? Do any of them have children? Where do your children live now? How much contact do you have with them?

-In which village and colony in Latin America did you grow up? Which church did you attend?

-How much education did you have in Latin America? In Canada?

-Do you, or have you worked outside the home for pay? Did you or do you have small children? If so, who cared for them?

-Have you volunteered?

3. Immigration Experience

I would now like to ask you about your migration experience to Canada. Many people seem to move back and forth between Mexico and Canada and within Canada.

-Can you tell me about the time when you left Mexico? What was your hope in moving? Did you have hopes for your children?

-Why did you move to Manitoba?

-What role did you take in deciding to move to Canada?

-How did you help your children through this time?

-Do you talk about your immigration experience with your children? If so, what do you tell them and what do they remember? If not, why not?

-Where does your extended family live? Siblings? Parents?

-Do you keep in touch with family back home? Friends? If so, how? If not, why not? Do you think that keeping in touch played a role in preserving your culture with your children?

-Do you keep holidays that you did in (Latin American country)?

4. Raising Children

Lets talk about raising your children here in Canada.

a. Parents concerns over cultural transmission

-First lets talk about what you want to teach your children.

-Are you bringing up your children with the same beliefs, values, and religious practices with which you were brought up in Latin America? If yes, what are these values, beliefs and practices? If not, what values, beliefs, practices do you wish to instill in your

children?

- Do you talk to your children about life in Mexico? If you do so, what? If you do not do so, why not?
- What kind of Mennonites do you think your grandchildren are going to be?
- What schools have your children attended? How much education have they had?
- What are your thoughts about their schools?
- Will you allow your children to attend school after highschool?

b. Roles of mothers in cultural transmission/preservation

Next lets talk about how you are involved in raising your children (and if applicable grandchildren).

- What does your job as a mother involve? What is your role in infant care, care of young children, school age children, teenagers, young adults married adults.
- What is your husband's role in parenting?
- Were there differences between raising your girls and boys?
- Are you raising your boys and girls differently from each other? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Are there certain things girls and boys must do differently?
- What are/were your hopes for your girls and boys when they grew up?
- Are you raising your children in a similar way to how you were raised? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Are you a grandmother? If so, what do you do for and with your grandchildren? How does it change as they age? Are the things you do differet between the boys and girls?
- Who has authority in your home?
- If you are a grandparent, how are you involved in your grandchildren's lives?

Language

- Do you feel it is important to preserve Low German?
- What language do you speak to your children? Between you and your husband?
- What language do your children speak to you? To your husband? To each other?
- Do you feel it is important to preserve High German?
- Have or do your children take High German class in school?
- How well do your children know High German?

Food Preparation

- Have you grown a garden? Have you raised animals?
- Do you continue to prepare the same foods as you did in Latin America? If so, describe them. If not why not? Do your children (or their spouses) prepare foods from Latin America? If so, what? If not, why not?
- Do you make "Canadian" foods? If not, why not?

c. Mother's role in religious adherence

Now I want to talk about religion.

- Do you consider yourself a Christian? Do you consider yourself a Mennonite? Do you

consider yourself a Dietsche? What does it mean to you?

-Do your children consider themselves to be Christians? Mennonites? Dietsche?

-Are you familiar with the term Kanadier?

Everyday Christianity

If you, your children, or your spouse are active in daily religious practices, can you please describe them?

-Who taught your children these practices?

-Do you talk about your faith with your children? Does your spouse?

-What are your beliefs about females wearing dresses? Do you wear dresses? Do your girls?

-Do you wear a kerchief? If so, when? If so, do you expect your daughters to do the same? If not, why not?

Church

-Have you been involved in church since moving back to Canada? If not, why not? If so, please tell me about your involvement with the church. Your children. Your husband.

-Have you gone to the same church since your arrival? If so, why? If not, why did you switch?

-Are there differences between what women and men are able to do in church?

-Do you think your children will continue to go to the same church as you attend? Why or why not? If you have married children, from which churches did their partners come? Do you want your children to marry within your church? Others from Latin America?

-Do you know people from other churches? Describe your interactions with others from different churches.

5. Observations on the influence of Canadian and Canadian Mennonite Culture

-When you returned to Canada, how did you feel you were treated? How were your children treated?

-With whom do you get together? Your children? Has that changed in the time you've been living in Canada?

-Do you own/watch tv, radio, newspapers or magazines? If so, what do you watch, listen to or read? Do you try to control what your children watch, listen to or read? Do you allow different things for boys and girls?

-Do you observe Canadian holidays? If so, what?

6. Closing Demographic Questions

What is your age? Length of marriage? Place of residence? Occupation? Spouse's occupation?

Income?

-Can you give me the names of other women who would be willing to be interviewed?

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