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University of Alberta

Settlement Experiences of Immigrant Women at an Edmonton Settlement Agency

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*

in

International/Intercultural Education

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the many people who made it possible. First, I thank the women of *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women* who were willing to share their stories and expertise. The mutually respectful relationships and completion of this research are the result of the many hours shared. I look forward to continued partnerships with the community of immigrant women and cherish newfound friendships. Second, none of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of my mother, my husband and my brothers. Finally, I am forever blessed by my children, for their patience and understanding, their own dedication to their personal and academic growth and the boundless rewards of being their parent.

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Chapter 1: The Research

Introduction

Although attention has been given to Canada's immigration policy and Multiculturalism Act and increasing attention paid to the impact of both on women, little has been done to incorporate personal experiences into theories or analytical frameworks in order to understand the relationships between the many variables that impact the settlement experiences of immigrant women. While working with an Edmonton settlement agency, it has become apparent that the experiences of immigrant women, working towards the goals of settlement and integration, deserve attention. Furthermore, it is important to examine these stories within the context of Canada's immigration policy, multiculturalism act, and existing theoretical frameworks. The experiences of immigrant women at an Edmonton area settlement agency provide insight into the need for a review of policies and adult education initiatives in an increasingly multicultural society. Furthermore, these findings contribute to the development of an analytic model depicting the complex relationships between the personal, social, and institutional facets of immigrant women's settlement and integration.

Positioning Myself in the Research

Dei (2000) writes that critical cultural research begins when "individuals take stock of [their] relative positions of power, privilege and disadvantage" (p. 25) and their responsibility to use positions of differential locations in order to work for change. Spivak, Landry and MacLean (1996), writing of feminism and critical theory, emphasize the importance of unlearning privilege in order to gain knowledge of those who occupy

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spaces most closed to privilege. Spivak et. al. also allude to the skills of border crossing (see Kanpol below) in that unlearning privilege means attempting to relate to others so that we are taken seriously and share knowledge. Such is the beginning of an ethical relationship in which each learns from the other and each is able to make themselves heard. Therefore, it was critical that 1) I was aware of my position in the research process and attempted to unlearn my privilege and 2) I acknowledge my personal biases in order to do justice to the proposed research. And so, I reflect on both my motives and personal biases.

As a woman born and raised in Edmonton, a child when the federal government first announced its multiculturalism policy in 1971, I began to reflect critically on my understanding of multiculturalism and the history of multiculturalism. While I have always readily accepted the 'fact' that early explorers interpreted and misinterpreted cultures of 'new' people (those living in other parts of the world), I had been less aware of the more current role of interpreting culture in the *creation of a White identity.* Bedard (2000) writes that it is only through critical self-reflection that we begin to understand our own cultures and, in doing so, can recognize the creation of cultures for the purpose of power and position. Bhabha (1994) explains the use of culture in similar ways. While Bedard speaks of Whiteness and race as a means by which to differentiate and create power positions, Bhabha elaborates on the similar use of culture:

> To see the cultural not as the *source* of conflict – *different* cultures – but as the *effect* of discriminatory practices – the production of cultural *differentiation* as signs of authority changes its value and its rules of recognition. (p. 114, italics in original)

My recognition of the use of culture to position and construct membership in society first started during my work as an instructor in First Nations communities and

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continued throughout my work with immigrant women. "In Western dichotomous thinking, Whiteness needed an opposite against which to define itself; thus other bodies were racialised and defined as contrary to the White bourgeois vision" (Bedard, 2000, p. 46).

Working at a local immigrant centre for women, I began to focus on the ways in which signifiers such as race and gender have been used in the production of cultural differentiation and in the discourse of immigration and multiculturalism. The impact of race and gender on the lives of immigrant women remained abundantly clear as I continued to teach English as a Second Language (ESL), document the settlement stories of immigrant women, and assist with program development as well as grant and funding applications. Because of the opportunity to work with both clients and staff at the Centre, I came to know many immigrant women in the community, learned from their experiences, and had the opportunity to hear their stories. This inspired critical reflection on current policies and programs. Ultimately, these stories may be a source of inspiration and education for both immigrant and non-immigrant women in settlement agencies, and will document the accomplishments of partnerships between individuals and agencies/institutions. In this way, these stories will work to inform individuals, policy makers and educators in a multicultural society.

As immigration from foreign countries into Edmonton continues, it becomes increasingly apparent that we are a city of many cultures. While this diversity of cultures and nations has been a valued component of Edmonton's make-up, like diversity at a national level, it comes under increasing attack during economic downturns and in the light of events such as the bombing of the Trade Centre in the United States. Canadian

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policy makers are beginning to acknowledge the demographics; an aging population and a low birth rate, a shrinking workforce and the need to recognize immigrants' skills (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2001; Human Resources Development Canada, 2002). Still, it seems that little progress has been made in terms of breaking barriers to full participation in Canadian society. Immigrants, even if they are perceived as essential to economic growth and potential contributing citizens, are seldom given the opportunity to contribute by virtue of unrecognized credentials (Abu-Laban, 1998; Bannerji, 2000; Carty and Brand, 1993; Lee and Harrison, 1999; Wright, 2000). There is discrimination and racism at micro and macro levels reflected in individuals' words and actions as well as through Canada's immigration policy and the interpretation/application of multiculturalism, policies and programs. My commitment to this research and the women has been strengthened by the following personal assumptions.

1. That women's *ways* of integrating[1] are impacted by policies based on gendered conceptions of roles and responsibilities in family and community, and
2. That women's *ability* to integrate is made difficult due to systemic barriers, discrimination, and racism, and
3. That the process of cultural hybridity and subsequent integration of immigrant women is possible with the hope found at a settlement agency that encourages empowerment of many forms as women share life experiences across the boundaries of race and class.

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The Research Objectives and Questions

The Research Objective:

The objective of this research was to document the integration experiences of immigrant women and explore the possibility of border crossing and the existence of Bhabha's (1994) Third Space at an Edmonton settlement agency for immigrant women. I am building on Jones' (2000) conceptualization of agency in order to clarify my definition and use of the term integration. Marion Jones writes that being an agent means taking the constraints and possibilities that condition your life and making something of them in your own way. Many of the immigrant women I met conceive of integration as a positive term, stating that immigrant women, while facing many barriers, are also agents in their settlement in Canada, making the most of access to formal and informal opportunities. Rather than equating integration with assimilation, integration is the means by which women actualize their personal and professional membership in society.

The Research Questions:

1. How have the educational opportunities and integration experiences of women been structured by immigration policy and the multiculturalism act?
2. What are the experiences of immigrant women taking part in the programs at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women* and of the women involved in the administration and delivery of settlement programs?
3. Under what conditions might settlement agencies offer potential borderlands, where individual's participation in a community of women empowers them, enabling them to integrate and participate in Canadian society?

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Outcomes:

The outcomes of this research are (1) a record of the stories of individual immigrant and non-immigrant women's integration experiences, 2) a record of integration strategies and information to shape/reform current settlement programs for immigrant women, and 3) an analytic model that identifies relationships between the many variables that impact the settlement and integration strategies of immigrant women.

The Site

"Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women" (referred to throughout as *Changing Together* or *the Centre*) was an ongoing collaborative partner throughout the process of exploring possible research objectives and questions. *The Centre* was chosen as the site of the research because of the expertise of the staff and the access they provided in terms of meeting members of the community of immigrant women.

Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women was established in 1984. It is a non-profit, charitable organization whose mission is "to help immigrant women and their families overcome personal and systemic barriers that keep them from participating fully in Canadian society" (Changing Together, 2003a). The objectives of *Changing Together* are:

1. To provide a place for immigrant women to meet and work together to develop solutions to common problems and concerns,
2. To help immigrant women realize their full potential through active participation in Canadian life,

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3. To provide volunteer opportunities for immigrant women in order to acquire employment skills and work experience, and
4. To educate Canadian born people about immigrants as well as bring about systemic changes that will improve the lives of immigrant women and their families.

My first contact with *Changing Together* came as a result of an interview with the organization's Executive Director. Following that meeting, funding was secured for a project entitled 'Success Stories of Immigrant Women" (Fletcher and Gibson, 2003). The intent of the project was to document the stories of women in the immigrant community who were considered leaders and mentors. In order to do so, I entered the community as a researcher and remained there for two years on this project. During that time I remained on-site at the Centre, becoming more widely known to the community of immigrant women and settlement serving agencies and becoming more familiar with *Changing Together's* programs and struggles as well as the greater community of settlement serving agencies.

Since *the Centre* was established, their programs have continued to grow and reflect the needs of immigrant women. The following educational programs are currently offered at *Changing Together*: Multicultural Parenting, ESL, Conversation Classes, The Mentorship Program (matching immigrant women to Canadian-born and long-time immigrant women), and Pre-employment training. They have also been involved in numerous research projects including: Live-In Caregivers, Trafficking Women, Single Moms, and Leadership Skills for Immigrant Women.

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Organization of Dissertation

This chapter presented my position in the research, the research objective, and the research questions. Chapter two is a critical review of both immigration policy and multiculturalism, and concludes with a review of qualitative research that documents the settlement and integration experiences of immigrant women. In chapter three, I review critiques of previous research in the area and consider the approach taken in the design of this research. Both the critiques and the approach form the basis for the development of an analytic model. Chapter three concludes with a discussion of the contributions of this research to the body of literature on immigrant women. Chapter four presents a brief explanation of qualitative methodologies and then addresses specifically the choice to use ethnographic methods of data collection including interviews as well as participant observation. In the final section of chapter four, I describe the approach used for this qualitative data analysis. Because of the importance of setting the context of the research, chapter five is devoted to introducing readers to the women, their needs, their character and their attitude. Chapters six and seven present the findings and discussion. In chapter six, the focus is on the challenges to settlement and integration; in chapter seven the focus turns to possibilities and the existence of the Third Space. In chapter eight, the analytic model proposed in chapter three is re-visited and refined based on the findings. Key findings, their policy implications, and areas for future research are presented in chapter nine.

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[1] I chose to identify integration according to the interpretation shared by immigration women in the community. Integration is seen as a positive interaction, whereby individuals "meet in the middle" as opposed to having one change to accommodate the other. Integration is a means by which to become a full participant in society.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

The decision to engage in research on the impact of immigration policy and multiculturalism using qualitative research meant that there were three bodies of literature to review. First, in order to assess the impact of policy, I needed to review, at least briefly, immigration policy in Canada and then look more specifically at what has been written with regard to the impact of those policies on immigrant women.

Second, because I had started to question the way in which we, as a society, conceptualize multiculturalism and the impact of multiculturalism on the day-to-day lives of immigrants in Canada, I felt that I needed to review the tenets of multiculturalism and explore Canadians' understanding of and attitudes towards multiculturalism.

Finally, choosing to use qualitative methods in order to link the stories of immigrant women to a theoretical framework required that I become familiar with previous qualitative studies that document and analyze the settlement experiences of immigrant women.

Immigration Policy

Background and Overview

Today, more than 80% of all immigrants to Canada come from outside the traditional regions of Britain, Europe, and the U.S.A. (Avery, 2000). In fact, Dyer (2001) notes that the ethnic profile of Canada closely matches the global distribution of the human population[1]. The representation of diversity within Canada is due, in part, to the introduction of the point system in 1967. This diversity of representation was not to be the only long-term outcome of the point system.

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The point system[2] also created two streams of immigrants (Hiebert, 2001). One stream was allowed entry into Canada as independent immigrants (overwhelmingly men), the other as sponsored family members (women and children). Immigration status was qualified on the basis of three categories and eligibility for access was quantified according to the point system. The three categories of immigration were 1) independent immigrant (entry permitted according to a point system), 2) sponsored or family class immigrant (most often the category through which women gained entry into Canada), and 3) business class immigrants with capital to invest in Canadian industry and business. This policy remains in place and continues to have direct and significant impacts, most notably on immigrant women.

The conditions of immigration reflect the assumptions of Canadian policy makers - that of a patriarchal family in which the male supports the household and meets the needs of family members. Subsequent revisions to the Immigration Act in 1976 and Immigration Regulations in 1978 compromised further the position of immigrant women in Canadian society. Since 1978, sponsored immigrants (predominantly women) have fallen under the "designated relative" and "assisted relative" class, restricting their access to assistance and increasing obligations to their sponsors (Cote, Kerisit and Cote, 2001). Women have been, and continue to be, disadvantaged in terms of their ability to gain entry into Canada and their ability to adapt to Canadian life due to restrictions imposed on them by Canada's immigration policy.

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A Brief History of Immigration

Immigration has always been, and continues to be, a means of ensuring steady population growth as well as laborers for Canada. Immigration policy has been the means by which Canada's policy makers determine who will be allowed entry into the country and under what conditions.

At the time of Confederation in 1867, 60 percent of the Canadian population was of British origin and 30 percent French (Kalbach, 1990). During that time, the ethnic or racial composition of immigrants to Canada was predominantly British and French. Immigration patterns prior to 1945 show that the conscious choice for immigration was white only, British preferred (Dupont and Lemarchand, 2001). From the late 1800s until the mid-1960's, a significant number of German immigrants came to Canada. Since that time, declining fertility rates and the changing character of immigration to Canada have created a significantly different picture. Two aspects of immigration impact the nature of Canadian society - the number of immigrants as well as the ethnic or racial composition of the immigrant population. Both aspects of immigration are direct results of Canada's immigration policy. A number of significant changes to policy led to the diverse makeup of Canada, and Alberta, today.

Thobani (2000) states that immigration policy from Confederation until 1967 was discriminatory and served as a means by which Canadians could "reproduce the "nation's" population as white" (p.16). Historians of immigration policy agree that immigration policy up until 1967 was discriminatory. Although changes to immigration policy in 1967 and increased annual targets resulted in greater diversity and numbers of immigrants to Canada, many argue that immigration policy continues to be

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discriminatory in terms of race and gender (Abu-Laban, 1998; Avery, 2000; Dyer, 2001; Hiebert, 2001, Thobani, 2000; Wright, 2000).

Since 1967, the "measure" of potential immigrant's ability to contribute to Canada has been defined by the point system; a system believed to provide a universal set of criteria based on occupational skills, education, work experience and economic and social factors was used to assign points to potential immigrants. The intent of the point system was to remove racist bias and to facilitate the entry of skilled immigrants at a time when there was a shortage of labour. Many attribute the decline in proportions of British and French and the increasing proportions of other origins to this fundamental change in immigration policy.

By the 1980's, there was an increase in the annual target set for immigration from below 100,000 to a goal of well over 200,000. The change in the annual target of immigrants to Canada generated an increase of nearly 10% in the National population (Hiebert, 2000). One should not assume, however, that changes in ethnic representation and immigration numbers are the result of immigration policies that were less biased in terms of race or gender. The point system continued to be biased in terms of both race and gender as the measures continued to favour male applicants from relatively prosperous nations, those most educated and capable of providing Canada with income and skills. In time, policies would be required that would deal with the long-term outcomes of the point system; the ethnic diversity of Canada and the increased representation of immigrants in the general population.

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The 1990's: Attitudes Drive Immigration Policy

During the 1990's there was continued politicization of immigration and criticism of its value in Canada[3]. In recent years in particular, there has been a move away from a pre-existing consensus on policies of immigration and multiculturalism (Abu-Laban, 1998). This shift away from humanitarian ideals of equality and employment comes in an era of economic decline, a shift towards global economy, deficit reduction and neo-liberal agendas. Abu-Laban further states his concern that immigrants are no longer seen as potential contributing citizens, but as potential societal problems. This appears to be in conflict with federal and provincial documents (Human Resources Development Canada, 2002; Alberta Human Resources and Employment and Labour Force Planning Committee, 2001) that acknowledge the importance of immigrants as a source of qualified labour and a means of maintaining current population levels. In fact, Canada's fertility rate hit a record low in 1999 of 1.52 children per woman (Statistics Canada, 2003), a trend that will not sustain Canada's population. In order to maintain Canada's current programs and services[4], based on a fertility rate of 1.7, immigration levels must reach 400,000 in the year 2015 (Canadian Heritage, 1996). Despite the fact that immigrants are needed to populate Canada and provide skills and services, recognition of this fact remains at the policy level. As a result, the settlement and integration strategies of immigrants are hampered by the attitudes of the general public and their lack of awareness with regard to the skill levels of immigrants and their potential to contribute to Canadian society.

While globalization and movement of people across borders is on the rise, immigrants' successful settlement and integration in a new country are challenged by

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neo-liberal ideas and economic reform. Recent research by Neysmith and Chen (2002) into the impact of globalisation and restructuring on women's lives provides a clear, concise interpretation of the spread of neo-liberalism. "Three of the most visible [signs of neo-liberalism] are the cutting of public expenditure, encouraging foreign investment and privatizing public institutions and enterprises" (p. 244). Restructuring saw Canadian policy agendas intent on eliminating national and provincial deficits as well as decreasing and decentralizing the funding of social programs.

Cutbacks in government spending and an emphasis on individuals' ability to contribute to the economic climate are first and foremost in the reform of immigration policy when nations are driven by economic concerns. As a result, many of those who immigrate to Canada are highly skilled. According to a recent Statistics Canada (2000) publication, immigrant women tend to have higher levels of education than Canadian born women. Of immigrant women aged 25-44 years, 39% of recent immigrants had at least some university education, 17% had a bachelor's degree or first professional degree, and 9% had a masters or doctorate degree. Despite these credentials, recent immigrant women are less likely than Canadian born women to be employed. The problem is, in part, the absence of transition programs that allow women to develop skills and confidence within educational environments comparable to their education level. Despite the fact that policy acknowledges the need to recognize credentials, there continue to be many who have credentials yet to be recognized or yet to be employed. Does an individual's ability (or inability) to make use of education and skills result in a shared experience among immigrants regardless of race or class? If so, can this common experience contribute to the generation of the Third Space (Bhabha, 1994), wherein one

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comes to think and imagine possibilities as they come to know oneself in Canadian society, ultimately facilitating integration?

Immigration policy has historically reflected the economic situation of the country[5], but in the 1990's, immigration policy came under direct fire as social programs and humanitarian ideals came second to paying off debt and a drive to privatization (Dyer, 2000; Jones, 2000). For the first time in years, immigration policy is being redefined "in the context of a productivist emphasis on the "economic worth" and "self sufficiency" of immigrants, who must be able to pay the cost of their integration" (Abu-Laban, 1998). While still using the point system, biased in favour of the skills of patriarchal and/or developed countries, one's ability to immigrate to Canada (let alone integrate once immigrated) is affected by race, class, and gender. Independent class immigrants (employable males with money and/or education) are deemed "worthy", while sponsored or family immigrants (typically women and children) are "positioned as obstacles to collective efficiency and competitiveness in the global market" (Neysmith and Chen, 2002, p. 250). Recent proposals on immigration reform seek to strengthen the independent category by changing the emphasis on occupation to more generic attributes for potential success in the labour market. As Thobani (2000) notes, this directive would further disadvantage females, allow for extreme subjectivity and favour advanced capitalist and highly educated elite.

Immigration of Women to Canada

Numbers

In 1981, there were a total of 128,639 immigrants to Canada. Of those, 65,400 (or

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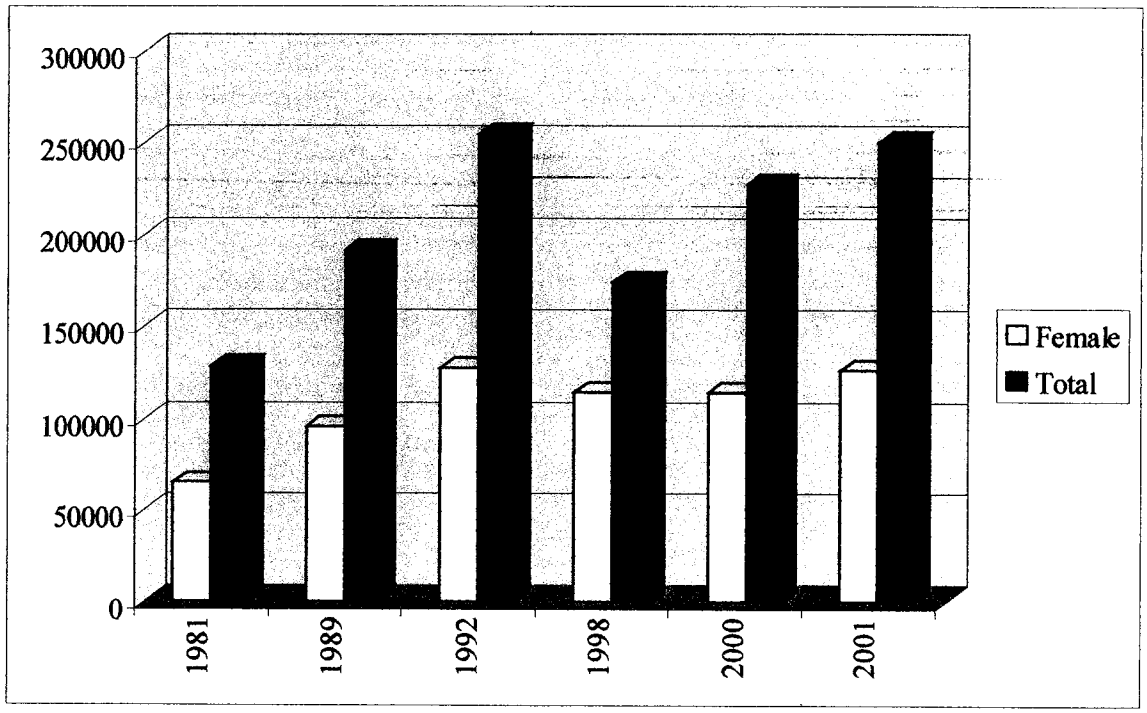
51%) were women. In 1993, there were a total of 254,817 immigrants to Canada of which 127,800 (51 %) were women. During 2000 and 2001, women continued to account for 51% of the total immigrant population (115,009 out of 227,313 and 126,830 out of 250,346 respectively) and that has remained relatively stable over the past three decades (Figure 1). Like the total number of immigrants to Canada, the total number of female immigrants to Canada has steadily increased since the mid 1980's, rising from 50,100 in 1986 to 127,800 in 1992, to 126,830 in 2001 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001).

Canadian trends reflect a growing representation of immigrant women across all provinces. In 1991, 15% of Alberta's female population and 18% of Edmonton's female population were immigrants.

Figure 1. Immigration Trends for Total Population and Female Population, 1981-2001 (Statistics Canada, 2000; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001)



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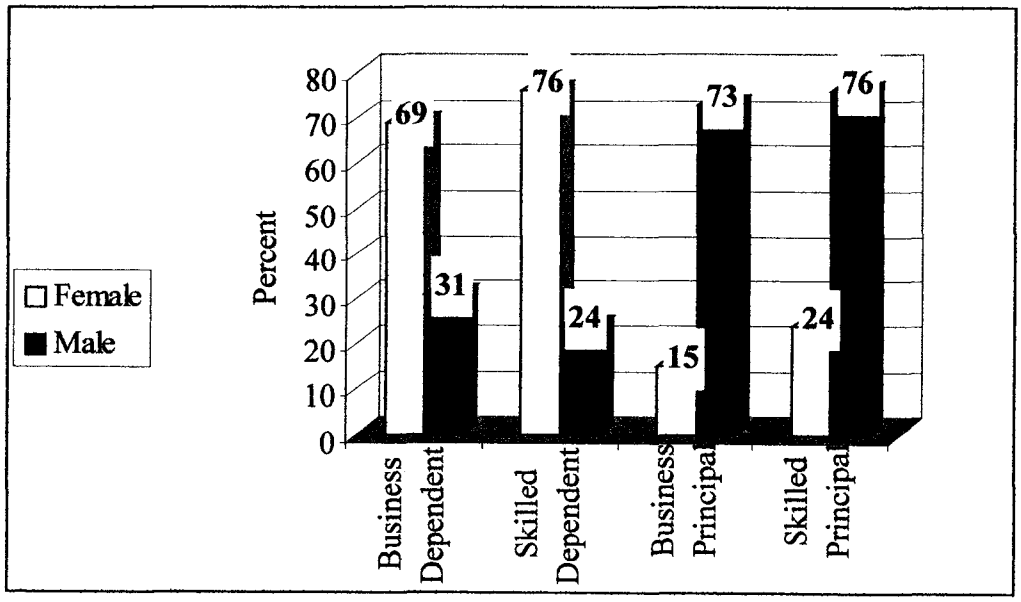
Immigration Status

The largest share of women immigrating to Canada enter as sponsored or dependent immigrants. In 1992, 45% of female immigrants to Canada came as sponsored, family class (Statistics Canada, 1995). Family class statistics, however, do not do justice to the inequities of immigration policy. In fact, it is more appropriate to look at the skilled class (independent) category. In general, a small percentage of female immigrants enter Canada as independents. Recent statistics show that immigrant women continue to be over-represented in the dependent category and under-represented in the independent category in those immigration classes determined by the point system (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Independent and Dependent Immigrants by Class and Gender (Citizenship and Immigration, 2001)



Immigration status is particularly relevant to the opportunities women can access that may assist with transition and integration in a new society. Classes in English as a

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second language, health care benefits, and access to transition programs are all highly dependent upon immigration status and conditions of sponsorship (Cote, Kerisit and Cote, 2001)

Country of Origin

There have been major shifts in the country of birth of female immigrants to Canada. Nine in 10 women living in Canada in 1996 who immigrated prior to 1961 were born in Europe (Statistics Canada, 2000). There has been a very significant increase in the number of immigrants from Asia and the Middle East. Of those females immigrating between 1991 and 1996, 57% were born in Asia or the Middle East, compared to 12% between 1961 and 1970 (Statistics Canada, 1995). There were significant decreases in the immigrant population from the United Kingdom (down to 19%) and other parts of Europe. Other countries represented include Central America, South America, the Caribbean or Bermuda, and Africa (see Table 3).

Variation in the representation of country of origin is of particular significance to the proposed research, as it becomes one of the many justifications for the use of a diverse sample population. While the countries of origin represented by immigrants will continue to depend on immigration policies, the experiences of those women who immigrate and the way in which the population of Canada is socially constructed deserves consideration.

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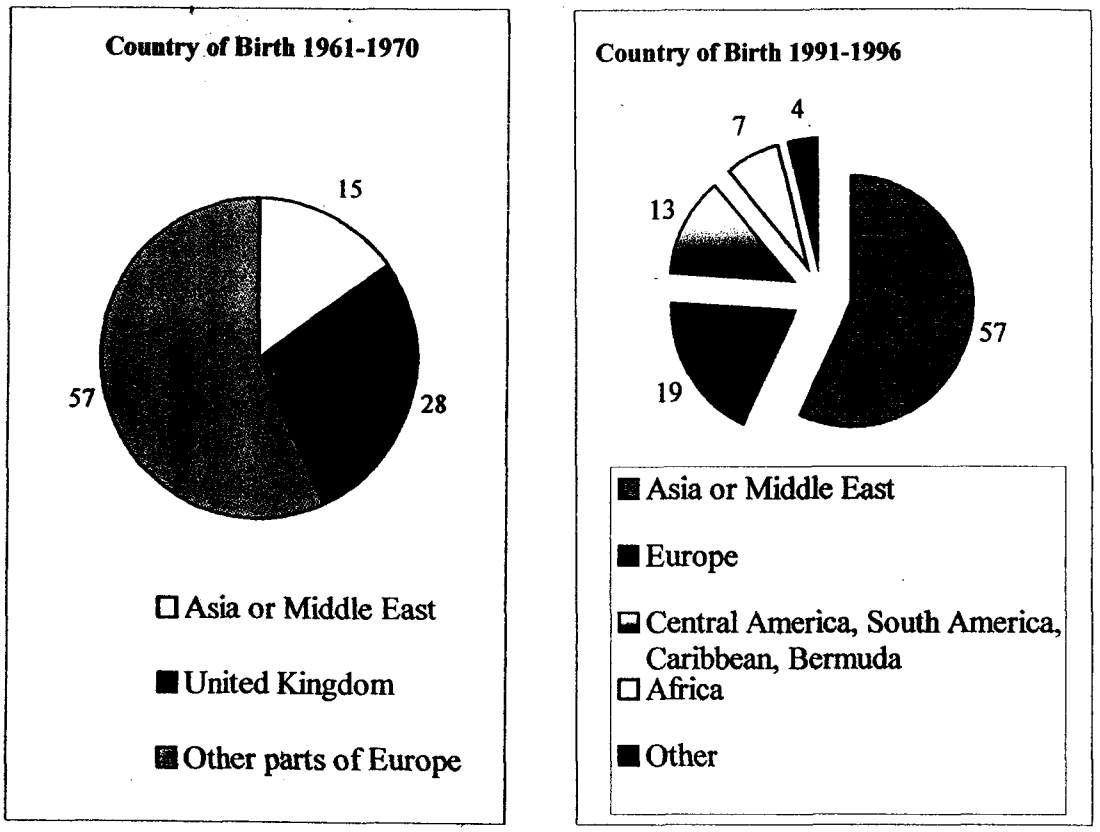
Figure 3. Changes in Country of Origin of Female Immigrants (Statistics Canada, 1995, 2000)



Gender Bias in Immigration Policy

Changes to immigration policy, under Federal jurisdiction, have affected the integration process for immigrant women across Canada. An understanding of the gender bias in immigration policy helps frame the research on immigrant women's experiences.

Women have been, and continue to be, disadvantaged in terms of their ability to gain entry into Canada and their ability to adapt to Canadian life due to restrictions imposed on them by Canada's immigration policy. As long as immigration policy and transition programs (affected by policy and funding) are so strictly tied to the economic

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climate and neo-liberal policies of economic reform, the power differential between men and women, and between women and the state will continue to widen under the impact of restructuring. As Neysmith and Chen (2002) found, "women's vulnerability increased as they lost jobs and incomes and were expected to shoulder increasing amounts and kinds of caring labour" (p. 250). In such an era of economic reform, immigrant women (even more than their native-born counterparts) find that their education and skills go unrecognized, their potential goes unrealized due to limited opportunities for language and skill development, and they remain isolated, unable to settle and integrate with Canadian society.

Women have historically faced personal and societal challenges in immigration (Status of Women Canada, 1998). Based on current proposals for amendments to immigration policy that would emphasize economic worth and self-sufficiency and the concurrent trend to devalue women's work (and worth), women will continue to be unfairly challenged when immigrating to and adapting in Canada. "In separating the independent and family categories on the basis of their "economic" contribution, a ranking of the worth of each of these categories became institutionalized..." (Ng, 1993, p.19). The ability of women to gain independence has been undermined by sponsorship regulations and the fact that contributions to society through unpaid labour fail to be recognized.

Women who are dependent on their sponsors (typically male partners), are vulnerable to domestic violence (Cote, Kerisit, & Cote, 2001), prey to deportation if deemed a "financial burden" to the state, are not entitled to assistance (welfare) or training subsidies (language and job training), and seldom have any alternative but to

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seek low paying and marginal jobs (Hiebert, 2001). Roxanna Ng (1981, 1988, 1993) has examined in great detail the discrimination women experience with regard to their ability to enter into and stay in the workforce. Beyond participation in the paid workforce, the point system is also set up in a way that devalues domestic work and implies that domestic work does not require skills (Abu-Laban, 1998). I would further add that current policies and programs reflect Canadian policy makers' ill-conceived ideas of women's roles in society. The fact that immigrant women most often enter Canada as sponsored or family class immigrants does one of two things. First, it reinforces the male dominated family form (Gupta, 1994) and perpetuates the oppression of women. Second, it ignores the fact that women, contrary to popular belief, are not always coming from less developed countries to more developed countries, but are often leaving behind middle class lives with status and income, having participated in the workforce as skilled professionals in their countries of origin (Ng, 1995).

Gupta (1994), in her historical survey of immigration policy in relation to the experiences of South Asian immigrant women, found that gender relations were reproduced by Canadian immigration policies as well as by the institution of the family, and that immigrant women's experience in paid workplaces illustrates the reproduction of both gender and race relations, aided once again by the Canadian state. Unfortunately, not much has changed since she made these statements.

Ralston (1999) also found that there has been "little recognition by policy makers or by researchers that immigration policies, regulations and practices have been consistently gender discriminatory, even when other discriminatory criteria, such as race, ethnic and national origin have been removed. With the explicit elimination of overt

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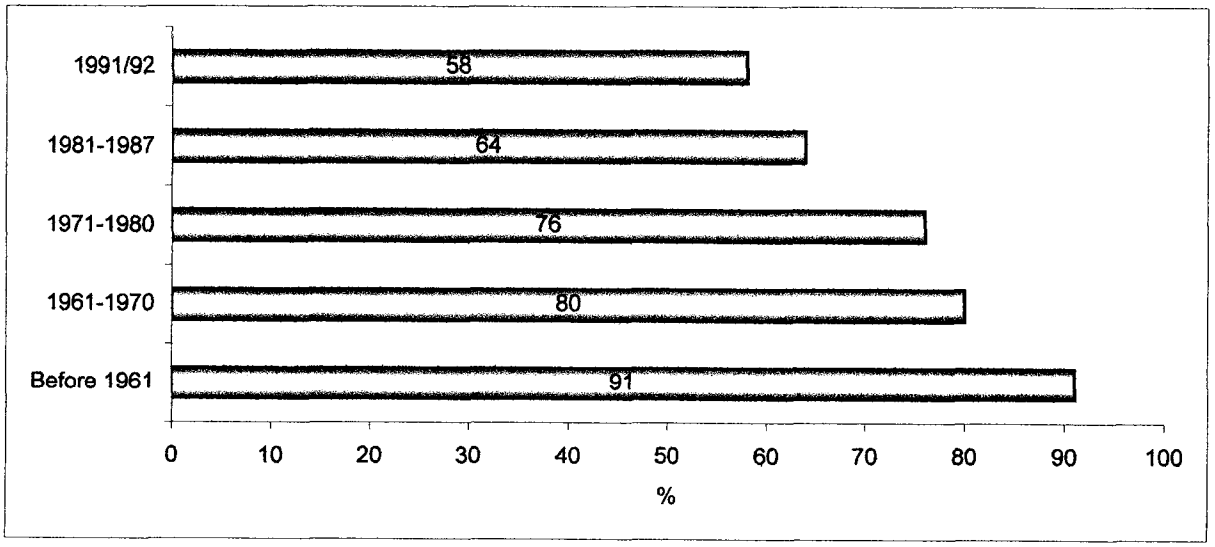
race and ethnic origin discrimination in 1967, gender discrimination persisted" (p. 35). Current policies and programs fail to provide adequate and appropriate opportunities to either break the male dominated pattern or facilitate continuity in women's lives through entry into the workforce and participation in mainstream organizations.

Extent of Integration with Canadian Society

Naturalisation

Most immigrant women living in Canada have become naturalized citizens[6]. Of those immigrating prior to 1961, 91% have become Canadian citizens; of those immigrating from 1961 -1970, 80%; of those immigrating between 1971 and 1980,76%; and of those immigration from 1981-1987, 64%. It is no surprise that the longer the time since immigration, the more likely they are to become Canadian citizens (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage of Immigrant Women With Canadian Citizenship, by Period of Immigration (Statistics Canada 1995, 2000)



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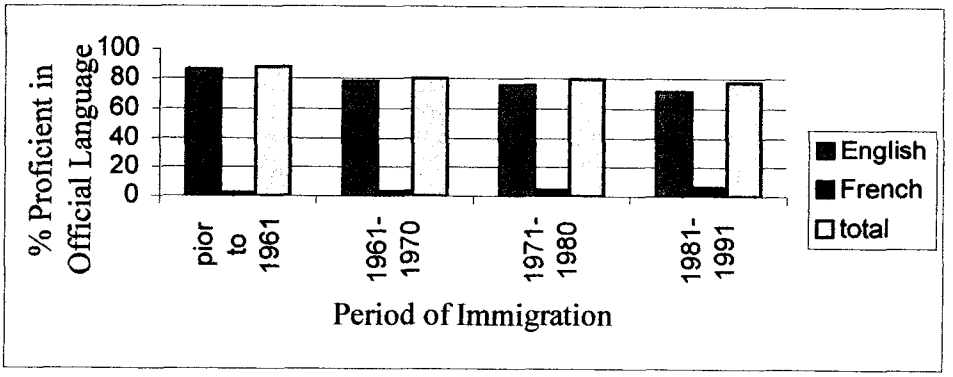
Official Language Use

According to statistics, most immigrant women speak one of Canada's two official languages[7]. In 1991, 78% of immigrant women could conduct a conversation in English, 4% in French and 11% spoke both official languages. Only 8% could not conduct a conversation in either official language. Women who immigrate to Canada readily gain skills in at least one of the two official languages (Figure 5). More recent immigrant women are more likely than other immigrant women *not* to speak an official language and less likely than immigrant men to speak an official language. In 1996, 9% of all immigrant women aged 15 and over compared to 5% of immigrant men could not conduct a conversation in either official language. Sixteen percent of females versus 11% of males were unable to speak either language. These differences are perpetuated, in part, by the rights accorded predominantly male immigrants of independent status versus sponsored status of women. In fact, immigrant women have repeatedly called for more opportunities to learn English, ways and means of attending available classes (whether it be subsidized child care or transportation), and more organized curriculum development.

Figure 5. Immigrant Women's Proficiency in Official Languages (Statistics Canada 1995, 2000)



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According to Canadian statistics on language and citizenship, immigrant women are integrating. Statistics alone, however, do not provide information on the *experience or processes* of integration. An exploration of immigrant women's experiences, through qualitative research methods, will provide insight into integration strategies and the role of public policy and transition programs (informal adult education) in that process.

Public policy and transition programs are the products of policy at the Federal and Provincial levels. Multiculturalism and the Multiculturalism Act have been driving forces in both the actions and attitudes of policy makers and the general public. The following literature review takes a brief look at the history of multiculturalism and the most recent polls of attitudes towards multiculturalism in Canada and Alberta. Has Canada's multiculturalism policy affected the immigration experiences of immigrant women as per the research objectives, and do their experiences reflect the attitudes reported in public opinion polls?

Multiculturalism

In 1971, the House of Commons declared Canada a multicultural society by virtue of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, guaranteeing equality of rights for all Canadians. The multicultural nature of Canada was rejuvenated in 1988 with the Canadian Multicultural Act.

The Multicultural Act affirmed two particularly important aspects of multiculturalism. First, that multiculturalism is a fundamental part of Canada's identity, and second, that members of culturally diverse communities should be recognized for their contributions to Canadian society. A closer look at the intentions of Canada's

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multiculturalism, the meaning of multiculturalism, and the possible impact of multiculturalism on immigrant women will enhance the focus of the proposed research.

Rex (1996) offers two options in terms of defining a multicultural society. First, a society may claim to be multicultural if the policies operate in such a way that, although immigrant communities and their cultures are seen as having the right to exist, they are not necessarily accorded equal rights and may be regarded as culturally inferior. Second, a more ideal form of an egalitarian multicultural society is based on some ideal of equal citizenship previously negotiated between the classes and status groups in the host society. This equality is extended to immigrant groups, even though their right to retain their own culture is recognized. Based on a closer examination of the Multiculturalism Act and the results of a poll of public opinion (Angus Reid Group, Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991), Canada's multiculturalism is *based on* the ideal of equal citizenship. This will be explored in detail below.

While Rex's (1996) differentiation of the qualities of multicultural societies, as treating immigrants as either "culturally" inferior or equal, the ways in which "culture" is both defined and used must be more clearly defined. The way in which I chose to define the term culture and the recognition of difference require further clarification. I have chosen to use Will Kymlicka's concept of societal cultures to refer to a group of individuals within a society who share similar lifestyles, social movements or voluntary organizations.

The works of Marion Iris Young and Homi Bhabha provided the basis upon which to begin an exploration of the use of culture as a basis for the recognition of

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difference, and tools for the critical examination of immigrant women's settlement experiences.

Bhabha (1997), speaking of issues of identity, encourages a shift in concern from defining *what identity is* to the more ethical and political question of *what identities are for and what can identities do*? Following his lead, I shift the focus from defining culture to the more ethical and political question of the ways in which cultures become defined and employed. As Bhabha (1994) writes, "discourse produces rather than reflects their objects of reference" (p. 21). And so, the discourse of culture and the recognition of difference as defined by culture, produce relationships between societal cultures. Societal cultures do not exist in some "primordial or naturalistic sense, they do not reflect some unitary or homogeneous political object" (p. 26). Furthermore, Bhabha states that:

> Colonial discourse is an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences. Its predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for subject peoples through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited.... The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. (p. 70)

Bhabha's approach influenced heavily my exploration of the content and impact of the multiculturalism act, immigration policy, and the construction of immigrant women. I explored each as a form of colonial discourse that serves at least two purposes: 1) creating a space in society for immigrant women, and 2) constructing the population of immigrant women in a way that allows for the justification of specific funding and program shortcomings. Bhabha (1994) writes that "Colonial discourse produces the

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colonized as a social reality which is at once an "Other" and yet entirely knowable and visible" (pp. 70-71). Have multiculturalism, immigration and the social construction of immigrant women served as the means to the same ends? Has this discourse, the politics of difference, constructed immigrant women as a 'population of degenerate types' on the basis of racial origin and gender? There are many benefits *and* dangers inherent in multiculturalism policy, immigration policy and the politics of difference.

Very briefly, previously cited dangers include further stereotyping and marginalisation of minority groups, the segregation of members within a single nation, and the ghettoization of minority populations. In contrast, Marion Iris Young and Will Kymlicka both support the recognition of difference and justify the rights of minority cultures in liberal democracies. Kymlicka (2001) writes that the absence of minority rights erodes the bonds of civic solidarity, as minorities feel excluded by difference-blind treatment and feel alienated from and distrustful of the political process. Young (2001) writes that ignoring difference has oppressive consequences in three respects:

1. Blindness to difference disadvantages groups whose experience, culture and socialized capacities differ from those of the privileged groups,
2. the ideal of universal humanity without social groups differences allows the privileged to ignore their own group's specificity, and
3. the denigration of groups that deviate from an allegedly natural standard produces internalized devaluation by members of those groups.

Kymlicka (2001) argues that it is not only detrimental to multicultural societies to ignore differences, but liberal democracy requires that we recognize and accommodate

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ethnocultural identities and practices. His three major arguments revolve around the following beliefs:

1. That it is important to respect ethnocultural identity of individuals as it fulfills the need for recognition,
2. That cultural membership plays an important role in promoting individual freedom or autonomy, and
3. That minority rights will preserve the intrinsic value of diverse cultures.

In order to achieve multiculturalism in a liberal democracy, it is important that all members of society accept that "non-national groups have a valid claim not only to tolerance and non-discrimination, but to explicit accommodation and representation" (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 41) and:

> to oversimplify, we can say that minority rights are consistent with liberal culturalism if (a) they protect the freedom of individuals within the groups and (b) they promote relations of equality (non-dominance) between groups. (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 23)

If one accepts multiculturalism that allows full participation in society, we must find ways in which *individuals*, within societal *cultures* can integrate *with each other*[8]. This is *not* to say that we must find ways in which immigrants will assimilate into Canada. Rather that we must find ways in which individuals within societal cultures may coexist and societal cultures may coexist with each other.

It appears that neither the policy makers nor the public fully understood the meaning or possible impact of the recognition of culture or the potential impact of multicultural policy in Canada. In hindsight, it is fair to say that issues of racism and

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racialisation, charges of discrimination, debates of group versus individual rights, integration, and nationhood were probable.

A Brief History of Multiculturalism in Canada

> In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt an official Multiculturalism Policy. This policy provided for programs and services that supported ethnocultural associations and helped individuals overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society. In 1982, the multicultural character of Canada gained constitutional recognition in Section 27 of the newly adopted Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It specified that the courts were to interpret the Charter "in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada". By virtue of this section of the Charter, Canada became a constitutional multicultural state.
>
> Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism, 1998

What was the intent and what is the meaning of multiculturalism? Is multiculturalism understood by policy makers and the public to be a means of facilitating integration and how is integration conceptualized?

In order to deal with an increasingly diverse population, Canada passed the Multiculturalism Act in 1971, a state policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. Multiculturalism and bilingualism were designed to be the cornerstone of a new symbolic order that aimed at pushing Canada away from its former essentialist conception of "Britishness". At that time, challenging multiculturalism meant taking the risk of being called racist, rightist, or speaking like an American Republican (Dupont and Lemarchand, 2001). The policy proclaimed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had four broad objectives; 1) to assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity, 2) to assist cultural groups to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society, 3) to promote creative exchanges and interchanges among all Canadian cultural groups, and 4)

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to assist immigrants in acquiring at least one of the official languages (Canadian Heritage, 1996).

Since that time, many critiques of multiculturalism have developed. Some see official multiculturalism as a policy that reflects *English* Canada's view of multiculturalism and of Canada, not one that reflects the Francophone community. Other critiques point out that when Canada adopted a multicultural policy, there was no philosophy or model of multiculturalism to follow. The philosophy came after and enabled the policy, leaving it susceptible to various interpretations and implementations. The following quote reflects the philosophy that followed the proclamation of the multiculturalism act. Other critics at the time stated that:

> The salad bowl approach to multiculturalism aims at defining unity though an open demonstration of cultural difference. The concept of mosaic pushed the pluralist idea even further through open celebrations of difference. "The mosaic pretends that in (English) Canada there is no set culture into which to integrate; cultural diversity is Canada's identity....In principle and not without contradictions, the more cultural diversity there is, the more unity there should be. Immigrants are accepted for what they are and valorized for their differences. They decide themselves how to integrate into the (English) Canadian society. ...What Canada seeks to celebrate is not the essence of each culture, which is impossible in the case of a transplanted culture, but aspects of ethnically defined cultures *within the parameters of Canadian society and its official multiculturalism policy.*
>
> Dupont and LeMarchand, 2001, p. 323

After a decade of celebrating cultural difference, Canadians started to worry about integration, claiming that multiculturalism was a waste of money and that the government should insist more on 'true' Canadian values (Dupont and LeMarchand, 2001), criticizing multiculturalism for increasing group identity at the expense of social cohesion. Other critics said that multiculturalism has been a way for political parties to win the support of

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immigrants by extending to them multicultural programs that were really designed to promote their assimilation or an attempt to reduce the French-English debate.

Some of the most controversial and politically heated debates have centered on the question of individual versus group rights by members of liberal democracies faced with the task of thriving in multination societies. According to Glazer (1995):

> [If] the model a society has for itself is that it is a confederation of groups, that group membership is central and permanent, and that the decisions among groups are such that it is unrealistic or unjust to envisage these group identities weakening in time to be replaced by a common citizenship, then it must take the path of determining what the rights of each group shall be. (p. 134)

I found the work of Will Kymlicka particularly useful in that he provides a clear definition of group membership and the importance of group membership in liberal democratic society. When making reference to a cultural group, Kymlicka (1995) refers to national and ethnic differences as opposed to differences in cultures or customs of a group of people which can be found in any modern society as people associate in groups that share similar lifestyles (e.g., lesbian culture), social movements or voluntary organizations. He refers to these groups as societal cultures. A societal culture is "a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres" (p. 76).

Societal cultures are valuable not in and of themselves, but because it is only through access to a societal cultural that people have access to a range of meaningful options (Kymlicka, 1995). Access to those things in life that are meaningful to us is a

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necessity if individuals are to experience freedom. Furthermore, what is meaningful may be in constant change as we take advantage of our freedom to investigate alternatives and change our opinions. In this regard, Kymlicka emphasized the fluidity or changing nature of societal cultures, the multiplicity of societal cultures in a single country, and cultural membership and the importance of minority group rights in the process of nation building. Kymlicka (2001) states that:

> Historically, nation building has been neither desirable nor feasible for immigrant groups. Instead, they have traditionally accepted the expectations that they will integrate into the larger societal culture. Few immigrant groups have objected to the requirement that they must learn an official language as an official condition of citizenship or that their children must learn the official language in school. They have accepted the assumption that their life-chances and the life-chances of their children will be bound up with participation in mainstream negotiations operating in the majority language. (p. 30)

Based on expectations of integration, Kymlicka (2001) goes on to say that it is only fair that the state minimize the costs involved in state-demanded integration. One way to achieve this objective is to take very seriously the rights of minority groups. But what about the fear that minority group rights will lead to segregation? It is a concern posited most vehemently by Neil Bisoondath, who is critical of granting of rights to minority groups. Kymlicka (2001) insightfully points out that multiculturalism policies are but one very small component of the government policies that affect the integration experiences of immigrants in Canada. Multiculturalism fits into a larger set of government policies regarding ethnocultural relations: policies of naturalization, job training, education, accreditation, health, and human rights to name a few. The most obvious example is the way in which participation and accreditation of both adults and children demand the learning of one of Canada's two official languages:

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> In a variety of ways, then, the government actively encourages and pressures immigrants to integrate into common educational, economic, and political institutions operating in the national language. (p. 155)

Based on language requirements alone, minorities have one of two choices (Kymlicka, 2001). They either choose to become isolated enclaves that do not participate in the larger society (and lack the public institutions to form their own societal cultures), or they integrate into the existing societal culture, seeking fairer terms of integration.

Contrary to the idea that minority group rights will lead to the erosion of 'civic virtues' and a healthy democracy, Kymlicka (2001) argues that the absence of minority rights threatens to compromise, even erode, civic solidarity. Without opportunities for integration (in the absence of minority group rights), "we might expect minorities to feel excluded from 'difference blind' mainstream institutions and to feel alienated from, and distrustful of, the political process" (p. 36).

Assuming that disadvantages (challenges and barriers) can be identified and resolved, Kymlicka goes on to suggest that such endeavors are fruitless if the real problem is not the willingness of immigrants to integrate, but the resistance to multiculturalism amongst native born Canadians, possibly feeling estranged from mainstream institutions as they become more pluralistic (Kymlicka, 1988). Kymlicka (2001) writes that:

> Multicultural accommodations operate within the context of an overarching commitment to linguistic integration, respect for individual rights and interethnic cooperation. And these limits are understood and accepted by immigrant groups. (p. 174)

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This research seeks to explore some of the common institutions to examine whether policies and programs disadvantage immigrant women and, if so, what changes are required to ensure fairer terms of integration. This research also explores Kymlicka's assertion that, despite efforts to make integration fairer, the response of native-born Canadians may impede integration strategies of immigrants. Do the experiences of immigrant women reflect resistance and unrest in the native-born Canadian population?

Gwynne Dyer (2001) chronicles the changing Canadian political environment and its impact on attitudes and policies within Canada. Canada is a country with a history of multiculturalism beginning with the French/English dichotomy (Dyer, 2001; Kymlicka, 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2001; Rex, 1996). Hence, there seemed to be in place a framework for multiculturalism. Dyer notes that Canada's Multicultural Act detracted from the French-English debates, as the emphasis was put on the many cultures that make up Canada. As a result, the debates were the result of the interface not of French/Anglo Canada, but of many cultural and political groups.

Multiculturalism, while particularly "marketable" when economic resources were plentiful and there was a consensus among Canada's leaders of the value of immigrants, became problematic when the social environment changed. "Minority groups, especially visible minorities, become easy targets for blame in cases of economic depression, [and] employment crisis..." (Jones, 2000, p. 18). Attempts have been made to temper the challenges posed by critiques of multiculturalism.

Government publications have attempted to clarify the meaning of multiculturalism (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1990; Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991; Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism, 1998) and government

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reports reiterate the intent of multiculturalism. For example, according to the recent Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada, "a policy of multiculturalism [is] designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of Canada" (Roberts and Clifton, 1999, p. 135). The following conceptions of multiculturalism are all taken from the Canadian Heritage Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Canada and Canadian Heritage 2000-2001).

- Today, multiculturalism remains central to how Canada defines itself as a country. Now as in the early seventies, the policy *promotes interchange* among groups and *helps members of ethnocultural communities overcome barriers to full participation in all aspects of Canadian life.*
- Connecting Canadians to one another means building bridges across differences and distances, and *deepening our understanding of each other and our shared values.* Multiculturalism contributes to social cohesion by creating a *climate of trust,* in which the multicultural heritage of Canadians is preserved as a richness they have in common, where *everyone is provided voice and opportunity to contribute* freely to our collective development.
- Canada's approach to diversity has evolved over time and is embedded within a broad framework of human rights, citizenship participation, and support of cultural diversity. Under the Multiculturalism Policy, all Canadians whether by

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birth or by choice, enjoy equal status, are entitled to the same rights, powers and privileges and are subject to the same obligations, duties and liabilities.

- Multiculturalism Policy is reflected in the current Program goals of civic participation, social justice and identity.
    - Civic participation involves developing Canada's diverse people into active citizens with the capacity and opportunity to participate in shaping the future of their communities and their country.
    - Social justice requires that we build a society that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that respects the dignity and accommodates the needs of Canadians of all ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and racial origins.
    - Identity means fostering a society that recognizes, respects and reflects a diversity of cultures such that citizens of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada.
- Canada's future depends on maintaining and strengthening its capacity to bring together peoples with many differences--even grievances--and building a peaceful society where no one's identity or cultural heritage should have to be compromised. Canada's approach to diversity is based on the belief that the common good is best served when everyone is accepted and respected for who they are, and that this ultimately makes for a resilient, more harmonious and more creative society. This faith in the value of diversity recognizes that respect for cultural distinctiveness is intrinsic to an individual's sense of self worth and identity, and a society that accommodates everyone equally is a society that

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encourages achievement, participation, attachment to country and a sense of belonging.

Despite these recently stated ideals regarding the intent of multiculturalism, a more critical analysis calls for a distinction between the ideas of cultural diversity (a society of many cultures) and multiculturalism (an adherence to a *system or theory* which values having many cultures within a society) (Roberts and Clifton, 1999). Cultural pluralism is a descriptive concept, simply accounting for the variety of cultures that reside in Canada. Multiculturalism, in contrast, is an evaluative concept that should reflects more than a mere coexistence. As an evaluative concept, one hopes that multiculturalism exists as a philosophy in action. Where the signs of ethnic diversity are to be found in empirical counts of the number and size of various ethnic groups, the referents of multiculturalism are ideological. This distinction reminds us that just because Canada is ethnically diverse, it does not follow that it is a multicultural society.

Government documents and public opinion polls seem to show that Canadians have embraced diversity or cultural pluralism as both policy and practice. It is often portrayed as one of Canada's most important attributes, socially and economically. Canadians value diversity for enriching cultural expression and making daily life more varied and interesting (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 2000). The next section presents the results of a public opinion poll. Public opinion on immigration, its value to Canadian society and Canadian's preparedness to live in a multicultural society indicate a greater acceptance than is reflected in the documented experiences of immigrant women or recommendations from multiple conferences hosted for and by immigrant women in Canada.

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What Canadians Say About Multiculturalism

A number of reports document Canadian's awareness and understanding of multiculturalism, and attitudes regarding multiculturalism, diversity and immigration (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991; Canadian Heritage, 1990-2000). The following section reviews findings of these reports that are particularly relevant to the experiences of settlement in Edmonton.

Awareness and Understanding of Multiculturalism - Canada

In a poll by The Angus Reid Group (Angus Reid Group, Canada, and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991), 62% of respondents reported that they were aware of the federal government's multiculturalism policy. Twenty-five percent indicated that they were not aware of the policy and 13% were uncertain. When asked to complete the sentence "When I hear people talking about multiculturalism, I think they are referring to...", the survey data indicates confusion as to who is included. According to the poll, 76% believe that multiculturalism refers to Canadians of every ancestry, yet 49-73% also responded that multiculturalism refers to particular subgroups of Canadian society (See Table 1). How is it that multiculturalism refers to Canadians of every ancestry *as well as identifiable* subgroups of Canadians? If respondents truly believe that multiculturalism refers to Canadians of every ancestry and that multiculturalism is a policy for *all* Canadians, the response rates for the other options should be significantly lower.

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Table 1: Multiculturalism Refers to...

Multiculturalism refers to:	% Response
Canadians of every ancestry	76
Immigrants regardless of colour	73
Cultural or racial minorities	67
Non-British and non-French origin	54
Aboriginal peoples	52
Non-white immigrants	49

These response rates imply that multicultural policy is seen to be of significance to the immigrant or marginalized groups in Canada as opposed to all Canadians regardless of ethnicity or race. How can multiculturalism policy be effective as a one-way street?

Clarification of Canadian's understanding and support for multiculturalism was measured based on their support of statements regarding elements of multiculturalism policy (Table 2) and their support of statements regarding multiculturalism (Table 3).

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Table 2: Percentage of respondents who strongly support (6 or 7 out of 7 point scale) elements of multiculturalism (Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991)

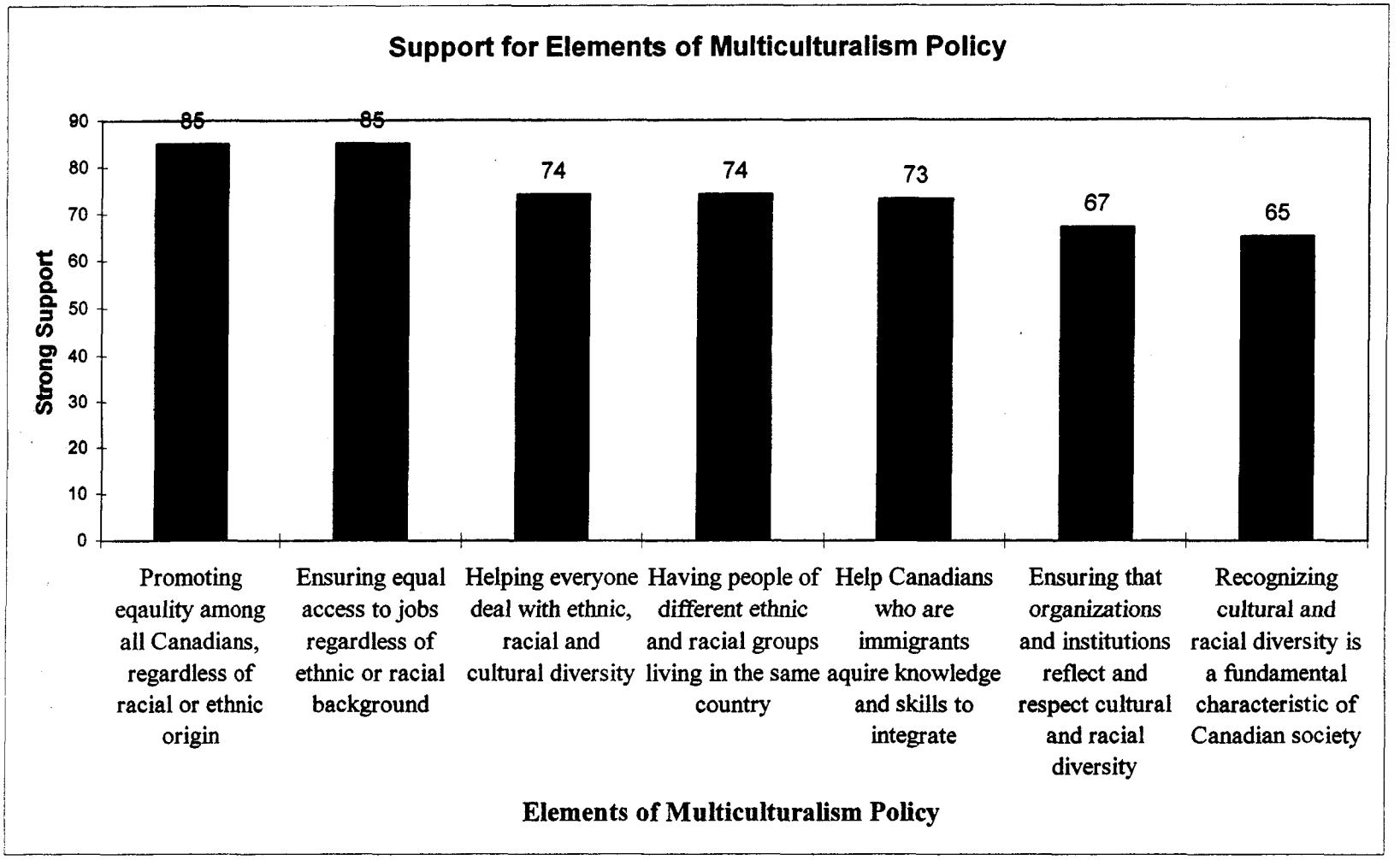

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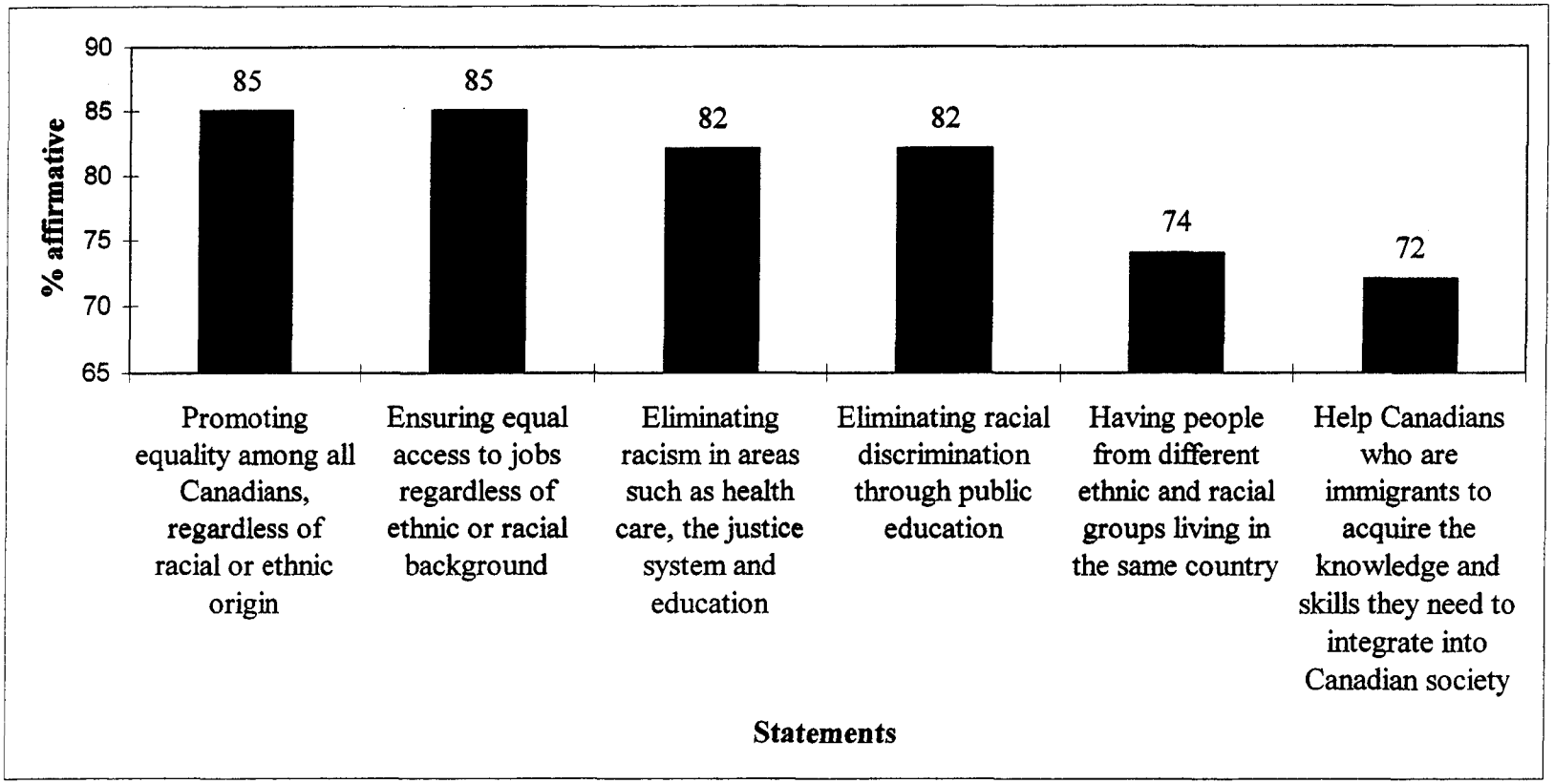
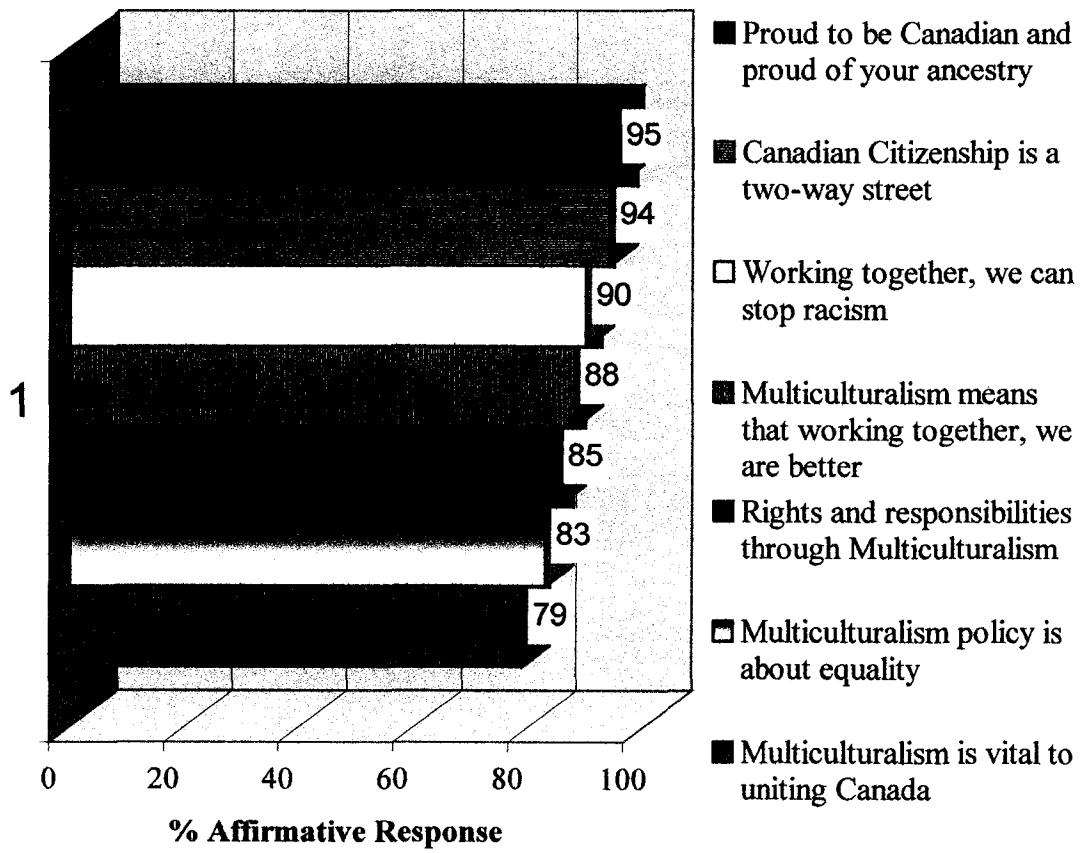
Table 3: Percentage of respondents who strongly support (6 or 7 on a 7 point scale) statements on multiculturalism (Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991)



At the federal level, The Angus Reid Poll (Angus Reid Group, Canada, and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991b) respondents were probed for their views on the believability of statements concerning multiculturalism. Their findings (see Table 4), like those of MAP, provide a basis upon which to compare the reality of multiculturalism and integration (through the stories of immigrant women) with the findings of public polls.

Table 4: Believability of Statements Regarding Multiculturalism (Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991b)



The same poll (Angus Reid Group Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991) also explored the impact of multiculturalism. Three positive and three

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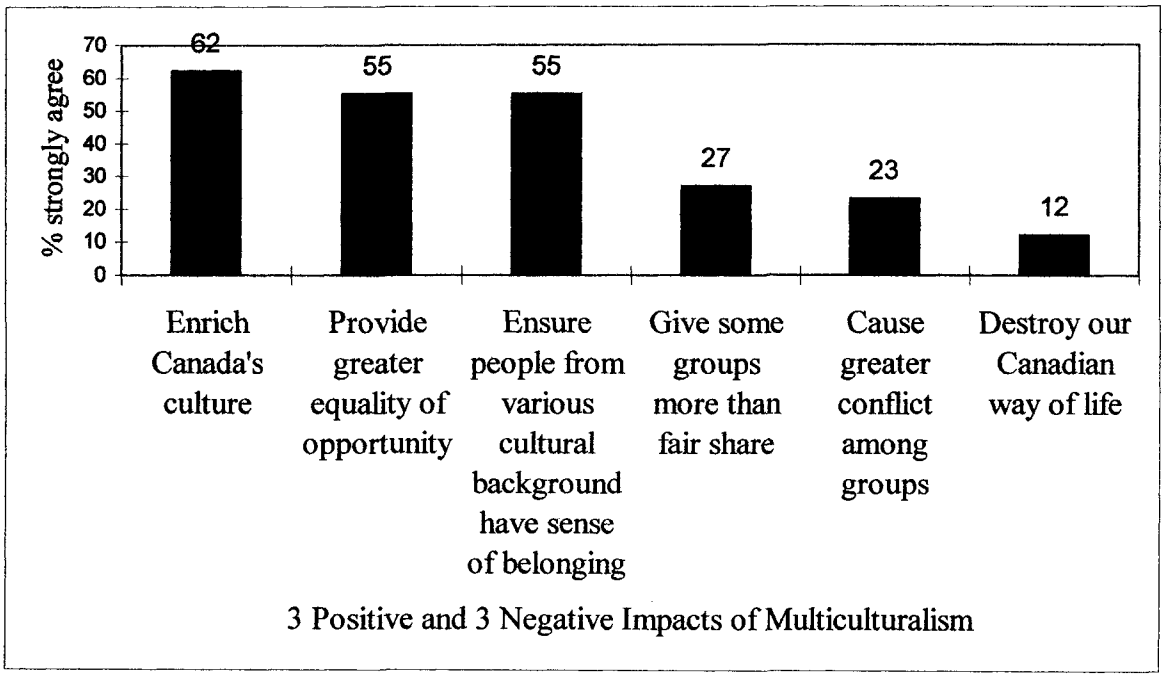
negative impacts of multiculturalism that may prove to be significant to integration stories of immigrant women are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: The Percentage of Respondents That Strongly Agree (6 or 7 out of a 7 point scale) with statements on Positive and Negative Impacts of Multiculturalism



According to government documents (Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991), the government is committed to full and active citizenship for all Canadians and will a) promote appreciation of Canadian citizenship as a focus for what binds us together b) encourage active and responsible participation in Canadian life, and c) break down the barriers to equal rights and responsibilities (including racism, illiteracy, integration problems, and disregard for the rights of others).

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Attitudes Regarding Multiculturalism, Diversity, and Immigration - Alberta

In 1988, Albertans told the Government of Alberta during a series of province-wide meetings that they wanted to live in a society that allowed citizens "to be true to themselves and their traditions" (Alberta Multiculturalism Commission, 1994, p.2). They said multiculturalism policy should encourage respect for, and integration of, all cultures. It should also ensure "every citizen has the same opportunities to achieve his or her hopes and dreams" - without racial or cultural prejudice. Such policy would bring about a harmonious, culturally diverse society and with it - significant economic and social benefits for the province" (Alberta Multiculturalism Commission, 1994). These comments and recommendations put forward by Albertans led to the enactment of the Alberta Multiculturalism Act in 1990.

The tenets of the Multiculturalism Act were (and continue to be): 1) to encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of Alberta, 2) promote an awareness and understanding of the multicultural heritage of Alberta, 3) foster an environment in which all Albertans can participate in and contribute to the cultural, social, economic, and political life of Alberta, and 4) encourage all sectors of Alberta society to provide access to services of equality of opportunity.

In 1991, a three-year Multiculturalism Action plan (MAP) was introduced with the 'blueprint' of how the Act's objective would be met. In 1993, a review, calling upon more that 500 people across Alberta, reviewed the success of MAP, issues of diversity considered of primary importance to Albertans, and the future focus of MAP. Although participants said programs to date had worked well, they stated the need for on-going educational initiatives that would "improve the awareness and understanding of the

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valuable contribution diversity makes to Alberta's economic, social and cultural well-being" (Alberta Multiculturalism Commission, 1994, p. 4).

Some of the key findings from the review of MAP (Alberta Community Development, 1994) that are particularly relevant to this exploration of immigrant women in Edmonton include:

- Some Albertans still hold negative attitudes towards people from different cultures and backgrounds[9]. In a poll conducted for MacLeans and CTV in 1993, 26% of Albertans considered themselves racially intolerant and surveys conducted in 1994 by Canada's immigrant department revealed that 50% of Canadians harbour intolerant or openly hostile views toward immigrants[10].
- diversity programs can and should be community- based, community-driven, and community supported;
- Many Albertans fear that economic uncertainty and social change will heighten racism and discrimination;
- Alberta will continue to grow more culturally diverse;
- Skill in managing diversity is an "Alberta advantage"[11].
- Issues raised during the review were, for the most part *seen* as symptomatic of a lack of knowledge concerning cultural diversity and its benefits. The possible maintenance of existing power relations is not mentioned.

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The objectives of MAP (Alberta Multiculturalism Commission, 1994) based on this review that are particularly relevant to this exploration of immigrant women in Edmonton are:

- to develop strategies to reduce barriers in both the public and private sectors;
- to create (by April 1996), a sustainable network of Albertans and Alberta organizations who can demonstrate and "champion" the value and benefits of cultural diversity to their peers within industry, institutions, and communities;
- to equip individuals and organizations in the community (by December 1996) with skills to develop and administer cultural diversity programs.

These objectives are used to inform the analysis of this research. The Alberta Community Development (1994) publication provides some insight into the state of Alberta's Multiculturalism Act, its interpretation and objectives. The interviews with immigrant women may provide qualitative insight into the success of these policies at the grass roots level. For example, do the stories of immigrant women in Alberta reflect key concerns identified in 1994 and are objectives of MAP accomplished and reflected in the personal experiences of immigrant women? The next section looks at research literature in order to examine whether the objectives of multiculturalism have been realized in the experiences of immigrant women and what recommendations they have made.

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Documenting the Impact of Multiculturalism and Immigration Policies on Immigrant Women

The literature review, to this point, has shown that the results of immigration policies, immigration status and access to educational opportunities upon immigration, have disadvantaged immigrant women in Canada despite the fact that the discourse of multiculturalism in government documents and public opinion polls implies equal representation and opportunities for all Canadians regardless of gender or race. In the following section, claims made by immigration and the Multiculturalism Act that Canada encourages full participation and integration of immigrants in Canadian society, are challenged.

A review of research on immigrant women's programs and experiences shows that many of the recommendations from the 1981 Toronto conference, "The Immigrant Woman in Canada: A Right To Recognition", are consistent with those in the 1985 report titled "Beyond Dialogue" and a 1996 report commissioned by the British Columbia government titled "Immigrant Settlement and Multiculturalism Programs for Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women: A Study of Outcomes, Best Practices and Issues".

These recommendations are summarized as follows and reflect inconsistencies between policy objectives, attitudes and experiences (full summary table Appendix 1). The following shortcomings of multiculturalism with regard to immigrant women and women's recommendations are cited, repeatedly, over a fifteen-year period.

- The positive role that women have played in the building and maintenance of this country has not received due recognition.
- Immigrant women face extraordinary challenges and experience difficulty

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and discrimination in all areas of their lives.

- Spoken and Written Language Skills: There is a need for government to support the provision of language training for all adult immigrants and that universal access should be guaranteed as well as the financial assistance to make English as A Second Language (ESL) training possible.
- Government Support: Quality day-care to facilitate employment, language training, and integration as well as financial support to community groups is needed. A lack of secure funding places severe limits on the activities of immigrant women's service organizations[12].
- Effective Delivery of Health and Social Services: Recognize the need to maximize participation of immigrant women through education and the dissemination of information, especially with regard to health care services and delivery.
- Stop the exploitation of immigrant women by recommending minimum employment standards. The issue arose in 1981, but continues to be an issue for immigrant women in childcare positions.
- Provide financial support to programs offering services to immigrant women. Provide for the initiatives of multiculturalism rather then relying on the volunteer sector (predominantly women) to fulfill the mandate of multicultural policies.
- Issues of Economic Self Reliance: On-going research into the unemployment status and un-employability of immigrant women, including the lack of recognition of professional skills and education from

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countries of origin.

- Issues of public education, including communication with schools and expectations of students and parents are noted.
- In 1985, women called for aggressive strategies to overcome discrimination, in particular, systemic discrimination. This continued into reports in 1996.
- Unique to reports of 1996 are issues of racialisation and feminisation and the intersections of race, class and gender. In addition, there is a new emphasis placed on the importance of collaborative and participatory research in future projects focused on the experiences of immigrant women.

Literature Review of Interviews with Immigrant Women

Based on the critiques of previous research and the absence of immigrant women's voices in immigration policy and multiculturalism, I chose to focus on the lived experiences of women using individual interviews and participant observation as the sources of data. The following review of literature informed the analysis of the data.

There is very little literature available that documents the experiences and stories of immigrant women in Canada. The most prolific writers in the area include Roxanna Ng, Evangelia Tastsoglou, Guida Man, Tanis Das Gupta and Baukje Miedema. Although some have chosen to explore a diverse 'sample' of immigrant women, the researchers often focus on immigrant women from specific countries of origin. For example, Guida Man and Josephine Fong focus on Chinese immigrant women, Tania Das Gupta and

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Helen Ralston on South Asian women. Regardless, researchers discuss experiences shared by all the women that warrant attention.

In this next section, I will review the most dominant themes found in the literature on immigrant women's stories as well as those findings unique to specific studies but worth consideration as I explored the settlement stories of immigrant women in Edmonton.

Employment

In 1989, Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989) found that immigrant women in Fredericton worked in low status jobs despite advanced educational qualifications; employers paid little for the services of highly qualified immigrant women workers. Since that time, many others have attempted to resolve the exploitive nature of immigrant women's work.

Man (1995), Elabor-Idemudia (1999), Salazar and Signs (2001), and Miedema and Nason-Clark (2000) all identify barriers to employment. Man (1995) explored the institutional and organizational processes that impact the settlement experiences of Chinese immigrant women. Like Man, Miedema and Tastsoglou (2000) found that many women were frustrated by their inability to move from short term, poor-paying contracts to more secure and better paying long term employment. Many of the women Man interviewed expressed their frustration with the fact that they were unable to secure employment because of a lack of Canadian experience. In fact, a few were so discouraged that they had decided to give up the idea of entering the workforce. Professionals who were able to find employment, were often underemployed. Elabor-

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Idemudia (1999) similarly found that African women coming to the prairie provinces experienced systemic and institutional discrimination seen in the lack of skill and experience recognition as well as racial and ethnic stereotyping and representation.

Gender places most women within the 'sexual ghetto' of the labour force, and race further orders the ghetto (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). Elabor-Idemudia found that Black women's work in Saskatoon often involved cleaning, housework, child care, caring for the elderly, washing dishes, restaurant work, making beds in hotels and sewing in garment industries. In other words, Black women in Saskatoon held traditionally female, low wage jobs in the service sector. This same employment pattern is seen in the work of Salazar and Signs (2001) in their study of Filipino domestic workers. Salazar and Signs (2001) and Mojab (1999) state that the feminization of the international labour is the result of global restructuring that responds to the demand throughout the world for migrant women to fill low-wage service work. Gupta (1994) has also documented the fact that South Asian immigrant women's experiences in the workforce illustrate the reproduction of gender and race relations aided by Canadian policy.

Elabor–Idemudia (1999) summarizes nicely the often-cited barriers to employment.

- Difficulty gaining recognition for education already obtained in county of origin
- Difficulty gaining access to institutions of higher learning to upgrade their education
- Lack of access to daycare to enable women to engage in gainful employment
- Accent and language seen by potential employers as problematic
- Lack of Canadian experience

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- Seen as overqualified for ESL classes
- Personal circumstances, social pressure to stay at home, cultural barriers
- Lack of support from employment agencies.
- Lack of knowledge of existing resources.

Despite the fact that they were forced into low paying jobs and lost the status they once had, the women rationalized what was happening, seeing it as a temporary situation (Elabor–Idemudia, 1999). Warren (1988) called this activity 'positive and pragmatic bridge building'. They saw these jobs as merely paving the way for the future. Since they were unable to transform the macrostructure (the systems and institutions), they resolved to change their own attitudes toward their situations.

English Language Proficiency

One of the most difficult aspects of women's daily life was their struggle with learning the English language. Gupta (1994) speaks about the importance of language for personal empowerment. In doing so, Gupta takes the discussion beyond one of language solely as a means of employment, placing language more appropriately into the day-to-day lives of immigrant women. "In order to participate effectively in larger political movements, women of colour and working-class women have to be personally empowered. Learning English or French is a very concrete way of achieving that goal" (Gupta, 1994, p. 11). Immigration policy and programs have never ensured access to or funding for women to take courses in English or French as a second language. This reflects an oversight on the part of policy makers of the role

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of language in empowerment and participation in daily living as well as an assumption that women are not seen as destined for the labour force (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). Warren (1988) also found that the availability of ESL programs was important to the women she interviewed.

Warren (1988) found that learning the new language becomes of major importance for the emergence of the new or revised self-image of the women for mental health reasons as well as language skills. An argument can be made that such programs are of special importance even when the women are in the unskilled labour force or unemployed: language is the only vehicle through which a new self-identity as Canadian is possible. Therefore, she concluded that, although the availability of ESL classes was important, the availability of social opportunities to practice English and gain a sense of rapport with others is of equal importance. The inability to participate with others on a daily basis and/or in the workforce has a negative impact on women's self-confidence and, in turn, increases the likelihood of isolation. Based on her findings, Warren (1988) recommended that 1) opportunities to access language classes should be at least as readily available to women as they are for men, and 2) that appropriate logistical consideration such as fees, day-care, location and time of classes all need to address the reality of the lives of women. Based on her findings, I would suggest that these two recommendations should apply also to classes that provide the opportunity, while using English, to build social skills and rapport with others. Perhaps this may also resolve another often-cited challenge to settlement, that of isolation.

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Isolation

Several of the authors refer to either the lack of a support system or the experience of isolation and loneliness. The earliest publications found on interviews with immigrant women document the experience of isolation (Warren, 1988; Miedema & Nason-Clark, 1989). Two possible solutions are employment and community activities.

Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989), in particular, note that employment serves not only as a source of income but is an important vehicle for avoiding isolation and loneliness. "Work, it must be remembered is not only related to income and status, but may mean the difference for an immigrant woman between being involved in Canadian society or isolated at home" (Miedema and Nason-Clark, 1989, p. 67). Miedema and Tastsoglou (2000) found that, for many women, "involvement in community activities had the simple goal of "getting out of the house" and breaking the isolation.... Organizing and involvement with organizations played an important role in alleviating the inevitable loneliness and isolation that is often part of immigrant women's lives" (p. 86). However, other facets of the women's lives create barriers to community participation.

Man (1995) found that women who are juggling paid work, housework and childcare are often too exhausted at the end of the day to have much of a social (or community) life. In contrast to their life in Hong Kong where they had both social networks and extended family, the women could no longer be involved in social extracurricular activities. The inability to build or access networks was seen as problematic in two ways. First, Elabor-Idemudia (1999) notes that networks may be effective means of finding employment. Some of the women who were able to secure

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jobs did so through information provided by their friends and network members. Second, Miedema and Tastsoglou (2000) found that making friends was a very important step towards integration. Unfortunately, Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989) found that many women felt that they were less active than in their country of origin. "Some women complained that Canadians keep so much to themselves that it is hard to get to know them" (p. 69). This particular aspect of networking and friendships warrants particular attention.

Warren (1988) makes the following recommendations based on her research. Each of these program recommendations addresses the importance of networks and the development of networking skills. She recommends:

- the presence of strong immigrant women in programs to contribute models of real strength and experience for younger women,
- programs including assertiveness and communication skills designed specifically to improve the self image of immigrant women, offered in tandem with language programs,
- more opportunities for new Canadian women to meet with other segments of the community whose positive non-discriminating attitudes could enrich the lives of all Canadians, and
- public relations endeavors to increase the public's awareness of the present as well as potential of recently immigrated Canadian women to contribute to the fabric of Canadian life.

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Elabor-Idemudia (1999) also found that the women were frustrated and suffered depression because of the lack of support of extended family, especially if they were mothers of young children. Common experiences of discrimination, ghettoization in the paid labour force and the double day duty of paid labour and domestic labour faced by all women in Canadian society are compounded for immigrant women by additional problems. Immigrant women are required to adapt to the new society, to learn a new language and to overcome isolation. The dependency of immigrant women is perpetuated by their isolation.

Partial Citizenship

Many authors speak about the partial citizenship accorded immigrant women. Salazar and Signs (2001) define partial citizenship as the stunted integration of migrants in receiving nation-states due to the fact that they have fewer rights than full citizens. For example, live-in caregivers live as partial citizens in Canada based on their temporary status. Gupta and Iacovetta (2000) similarly cite the plight of immigrant women who are slotted into dead-end jobs, denied basic human rights and made to feel less than human. Even when granted citizenship, immigrant women continue to live as partial citizens. Warren (1986), in one of the earliest accounts of immigrant women's stories, points out that the mere act of being a citizen in a country does not confer the *feeling* of citizenship.

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Discrimination

Warren (1988) found that immigrant women sensed discrimination and believed that, in order to succeed, they had to work harder than others; they had to overcompensate on the job. Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989) found that 15 of the 22 women they interviewed had experienced direct discrimination. "Despite the differences amongst immigrant women, in terms of their countries of origin, their ability to speak English, and the color of their skin, the interview data suggest that the biggest hurdle these women face is "being an immigrant. Overcoming this seems to be an almost insurmountable task" (p. 71). Warren suggested that: 1) more opportunities for new Canadian women to meet with other segments of the community with positive non-discriminating attitudes could enrich the lives of all Canadians and, 2) public relations endeavors to increase the public awareness of the present as well as the potential contributions of immigrant women to the fabric of Canadian life would help overcome discrimination.

Shared Experiences and Low Self Esteem

Immigrant women share common experiences (Miedema and Tastsoglou, 2000) and realization of this often comes through participation in ethnocultural groups. According to Miedema and Tastsoglou, women found that being involved in cultural organizations provided the opportunity to meet other people with similar backgrounds, break the isolation and find a venue for activism. Some said that their involvement had shaped the way they thought and that being involved with many diverse groups had broadened their perspectives on life. For many women,

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community involvement had been a positive experience that contributed to improved self-esteem as well as their sense of belonging. Community involvement appears to fill the void created by the government's position of subsidizing ESL and other programs only for the "head of the household". The direct result of such policy is that there are very few opportunities for females when it comes to improving skills, confidence, and self-image (Warren, 1988). Despite the inadequacy of program funding for female immigrants, Gupta (1994) found that South Asian women have made major contributions in the history of human rights, labour, and participation in community based service organizations in Canada. While her findings are limited to the population of South Asian women, the same may be found in research with a broader sample of immigrant women. In recent research by Fletcher and Gibson (2003), interviews with Lebanese, Filipino, Chinese, Indian and African women attest to the contributions that immigrant women have made to Canadian society as social service providers, community activists, bridge-builders between immigrant and non-immigrant women, professionals, and entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Interviews have documented the impact of policy and program development on the day-to-day lives of immigrant women. Many researchers examined the intersections of race, class and gender on immigration at the policy level; relatively few qualitative studies have used interviews to document the stories and experiences of immigrant women. Researchers who have explored women's experiences find that they face the following, sometimes overwhelming, challenges: difficulty accessing

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ESL and employment training, scarcity of opportunities to gain Canadian experience, ill-informed assumptions regarding their previous education and work experience as well as standard of living, lack of recognition of skills and experience, discrimination, isolation, and decreased self esteem.

Notes

[1] "About 25 % of Canada's immigrants come from East Asia, 25% from South and Southeast Asia, 10% from the Middle East, 10% from Africa and the Caribbean, 10% from Latin America, and about 20% from Europe and the United States" (Dyer, 2001, p. 3).

[2] The point system is a universal set of criteria used to assign points to potential immigrants based on their occupational skills, education, work experience and economic and social factors. It was said that the point system would remove the racist bias and facilitate the entry of skilled immigrants when there was a shortage of labour.

[3] Canadian Heritage (1996) cites two separate polls, done in 1991, showing that there are considerable feelings that immigration levels were too high. Forty-five percent of those taking part in a nation-wide poll by The Globe and Mail and CBC News believed that Canada should accept fewer immigrants. A subsequent poll by Longwoods reported that 43% believe that too many immigrants are coming to Canada.

[4] Statistics Canada sets an annual population growth of 1% per year as the minimum increase required to sustain the current level of services and programs in Canada.

[5] The earliest records on immigration show fluctuations in the number of immigrants. These fluctuations are highly dependent upon the economic conditions at the time. Challenges facing the Trudeau, Mulroney and Chretien governments included how to

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deal with cycles of unemployment while maintaining reasonable levels of immigration (Avery, 2000)

[6] Kymlicka (1998) proposes we consider naturalization as evidence of integration.

[7] Use of official language is an important characteristic of immigrant communities as it serves as a potential measure of integration in Canadian society (Kymlicka, 1998)

[8] I chose to use Will Kymlicka's concept of societal culture. A societal culture is a group of individuals that share similar lifestyles, social movements or voluntary organizations.

[9] In fact, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada (1991) found that survey respondents in Alberta were somewhat less likely than other regions of Canada to support multiculturalism. 54% support multiculturalism in Alberta compared to 59% in British Columbia, 61% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and a high of 68% in Quebec.

[10] In a survey by Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada (1991), 66% thought that discrimination against non-whites was a problem in Canada, 56% agree that it is more difficult for non-whites to be successful in Canada, and 68% think that problems of racism and prejudice will not solve themselves without government intervention.

[11] Federally, 95% of respondents (Angus Reid Poll, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991) believed "you can be proud of being Canadian and proud of your ancestry at the same time", 79% believed "multiculturalism is vital to uniting Canada".

[12] Sooknanan (2000) critiqued the ways in which the state constructs and orchestrates partnerships in the delivery of immigrant women's programs. "Gaps in service provision of mainstream institutions make community based organizations necessary" (p. 74).

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Chapter 3: Designing the Research

Marshall and Rossman (1999) write that any study requires a conceptual framework, because "by linking the specific research questions to larger theoretical constructs or to national policy issues, the writer shows that the particulars of the study serve to illuminate larger issues and, therefore, are of significance" (p. 7). This, in fact, is one critique of previous research using narratives or stories of immigrant women. In "The Treatment of Women in Immigration History: A Call for Change", Sydney Stahl Weinberg voices a fear common among historians of women - that women's experiences will remain "the subjects of isolated monographs without being incorporated into the analytic framework of ... research" (cited in Gabaccia, 1992, p. 47); that, without theory or a conceptual framework, they are nothing more than anecdotal stories. Based on this critique, I explored approaches to the design of the research and paid particular attention to theories or theoretical frameworks that would move the stories of immigrant women beyond isolated monographs, so as to illuminate larger societal issues of significance.

In this chapter, I will review critiques of previous research. Ultimately, these critiques led to the decision to take a critical cultural approach in the research design. I will also introduce the theories of border crossing and the Third Space. These two theories provide the foundation for the construction of the semi-structured interview questions and analysis. Finally, I propose an analytic model[1] that reflects my attempt to engage in critical cultural research, driven by theories of border crossing and the Third Space, and informed by my working knowledge of the community of immigrant women.

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Choosing To Take a Critical Cultural Approach to the Research

Roxanna Ng's work (1988) suggests that the state may provide the basis for an analytic model as the state facilitates class and gender differences through policy related to immigration, employment, and social programs. In her research on labour relations, Ng states that "[s]imply put, the state is .. composed of different apparatuses, which perform different functions for the dominant classes on behalf of capital. It is also the focus and embodiment of struggles between classes" (p. 22). Ng goes on to say that the purpose of her research is to discover how the state, in concrete ways, facilitates the hegemony of the dominant class. In this sense, my research questions, with their focus on the structuring of educational and integration opportunities through informal educational sites, may be further refined. Do multiculturalism and immigration policy reflect the hegemony of the dominant class, socially constructing the entity of 'immigrant women', thus impacting opportunities and programs and their possibilities for integration? In order to attend to the role of the state in setting social policy, and the social construction of women, I chose to use a critical cultural approach. My examination of policy and social construction (to be examined in terms of racialisation and feminisation) will be completed *within the conceptual framework of critical cultural studies*. I found the work of Barry Kanpol, Henry Giroux, George Dei, and Himani Bannerji particularly useful as I searched for exemplary uses of critical theoretical and research approaches to culture, race and gender; first, a look at critical cultural studies as an approach to research.

Giroux and Shannon (1997) present an argument in favour of cultural studies that is largely concerned with the relationship among culture, knowledge, and power[2]. The

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following list serves as a brief summary of Giroux's (1996, 2000) presentation of the assumptions and practices of cultural studies.

- Cultural studies is premised on the belief that multiple narratives and histories have typically been ignored, allowing for the subordination of racialised and feminised groups[3].
- Cultural studies requires that we study the full range of learning sites, *outside of schools as traditional sites of learning*, in order to understand the way in which the dynamics of power, privilege and social desire structure daily life. Cultural studies takes into account "the multiplicity of settings in which learning takes place as part of a broader struggle to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to participate effectively in the shaping of democratic public life" (Giroux and Shannon, 1997, p. 246). Giroux finds support from theorists such as Lawrence Grossberg (1996) and Stuart Hall, who believe that culture is a crucial site of power, best understood in the context of specific sites, practices, and public discourse (Giroux, 2000).
- Cultural studies rejects the alienating and elitist discourse of professionalism, arguing for a critical look at the dynamics of social power and production of knowledge. Central to this goal is an exploration of *the place where people live their lives*, where meaning is produced, assumed and contested and where unequal relations of power construct everyday lives.
- Cultural studies focuses learning on issues of *cultural difference, power and history*. Furthermore, such studies situate these issues as part of a wider struggle that goes beyond the individual and is inclusive of social systems and structures.

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With this critical cultural approach in mind, I began to read the works of anti-racist writers such as Himani Bannerji and George Sefa Dei. Bannerji (2000) and Lee and Harrison (1999) write that attending in more detail to the social construction of immigrant women, specifically the racialisation and feminisation of immigrant women, is a critical issue. In order to meet the objectives of critical cultural studies, the researcher places the population or issue within the broader context of society in order to explore ignored voices, the subordination of racialised and feminised groups, the range of sites where learning and/or oppression occur and to situate learning as only one aspect of the broader struggle for knowledge, skills and resources. I began to see *Changing Together* as a single site of struggle for a subordinated group whose position is defined by their social construction and the use of race and gender in creating existing power imbalances.

Attending to Social Construction

In terms of a legal definition, "immigrant woman" refers to any woman who is a landed immigrant in Canada (Ng, 1988). In the reality of everyday life, Ng points out that it would be naïve to ignore the significance of race and class in what she refers to as a "common sense" understanding of who is considered an immigrant woman in Canada. "The term conjures up the image of a woman who does not speak English or who speaks English with an accent; who is from the third world or a member of a visible minority group; and who has a certain type of job. Thus, "immigrant women" is a socially constructed category laden with assumptions about race/ethnicity, class, education, and roles, situated within Western institutions" (p. 15). In response to Ng's comments and because of my own experiences with the diversity of immigrant women, I was very

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concerned about including immigrant women in this research who would represent the diversity of race, class and education that exist in this heterogeneous group. I found support for this decision in the work of Chandra Mohanty.

Chandra Mohanty's (1994) work on feminist scholarship and colonial discourse examines the ways in which some Western feminist scholars have contributed to the production of "the third world woman" as a singular, monolithic subject. In producing and re-presenting "third" world women as a homogeneous group, such researchers, despite their good intentions, reiterate existing assumptions regarding education, roles, class, religion, and shared oppression. The same error could be made while entering into research with a similarly categorized group - that of immigrant women. For these reasons, the following recommendations by Mohanty are taken into consideration. First, although the group has been categorized by gender, it is important not to bypass the importance of country of origin, socioeconomic class or culture. Immigrant women do not have a coherent group identity across diverse countries, classes or cultures prior to their entry into social relationships upon immigration[4]. Marion Iris Young (1995) has also written extensively on the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of socially constructed groups and noted in particular the relational and interactive nature of social construction. Groups exist and are defined in specific ways only in relation to others. "Group identity is not a set of objective facts, but the product of experienced meanings" (Young, 1995, p. 161). Lee and Harrison (1999) also noted the importance of broadening the public perception of immigrant women. The way in which immigrant women are assigned to a universal category hides and obscures marked diversity. To this end, the participants represent a broad range of experiences, challenging the stereotypical, socially

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constructed image of immigrant women as domestics, overlooking other roles and identities of immigrant women.

Second, Mohanty (1994) calls for researchers to examine concepts within the existing political and social context and recognize the participation of the constructed group in the political and social context as well as their potential to impact both. In other words, Mohanty asks that researchers recognize the extent to which the work of Western feminist scholars takes place within a context of colonization in which there still exists a power imbalance that 1) needs to be defined, and 2) needs to recognize the role of all members of society in effecting change. This is particularly important due to the fact that, as a Western feminist scholar meeting the participants (in some cases for the first time) as an academic researcher, there was a power imbalance that I needed to be acutely aware of during the interview process. It was equally important not to forget that all members of society have a role in effecting change. In doing so, I acknowledge the potential impact of documenting and analyzing the women's stories and the role of all the participants in creating change. George Dei and Himani Bannerji suggest ways to dislocate or transform socially constructed groups.

George Dei (1996, 2000), in his work on race as a socially constructed category, notes the importance of considering the historical power of dominant groups in defining and categorizing humans. While most writers no longer write of identifiable races, Dei (1996) and Bannerji (2000) challenge us to consider the possibility that "scientific" racism, one aspect of categorization, has simply given way to "cultural" racism; racism born out of prejudice and discrimination based on difference of cultural beliefs and values as opposed to physical difference. In fact, embracing diversity (multiple cultures)

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may simply be a means by which to continue social construction of groups that may, by virtue of their difference, be racialised, allowing for power differentials to be maintained.

Without a close examination of the power dynamics (based on race, class and gender), one loses the opportunity for critical discussion of "human resistance and human agency" in integration and the impact of social constructs in resistance and agency. In fact, Dei (2000) proposes that by working with categories of race, class and gender in an integrative way (interpreted here as crossing the borders of race, class, religion, and age), we may help promote a community of cohesion, also destabilizing the politics of the status quo. In doing so, the roles and statuses of socially defined groups may be dislocated. These suggestions proved to be useful in my attempts to minimize the power differential between researcher/participant as well as the power differential between white/immigrant women.

An emphasis on the social construction of race, gender, and class acknowledges the influence of context on the social organization of Canadian culture. Such an emphasis also challenges the belief that cultural traits and the power attributed to those who have particular traits (related to gender, class or race) *are inherent or natural.* Himani Bannerji (2000), like George Sefa Dei, addresses at length the power imbalance that is allowed to exist and persist. She refers to the mechanism that perpetuates the imbalance as the discourse of social construction. The discourse of social construction refers to the intentional and power-laden descriptors and terminology that maintain the power imbalance. Bannerji (2000) writes that the officially formulated discourse of cultural permissiveness (multiculturalism, diversity, pluralism) "had or has the merit of deflecting critical attention from a constantly racialising Canadian political economy...[I]t

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is forgotten that these officially multicultural ethnicities, so embraced or rejected, are themselves the constructs of colonial - orientalist and racist – discourses" (p. 9). Bannerji argues that an expression (such as immigrant woman), "even when it seems innocuous and solitary, has to be treated as a bit of ideology, and as a part of a broader ideological semantics called discourse" (p. 33). Titles or social constructs based on race, gender and/or class legitimize political agency and, as such, we must examine their potential to both provide opportunities, and limit lives and organize power.

The challenge is to attend to the intersection of the many "isms" - sexism and other forms of gender oppression, racism and classism. Stasiulis (1999) provides a comprehensive review of various approaches taken in research on race and class. In particular, she reviews polarities of theoretical beliefs; at one end of the spectrum are theorists who believe in the study of race as an autonomous quality of social organization, separate from experiences of gender or class. In this case, strictly racist policies exist because of and allow for the exploitation of non-white immigrants (often in response to labour shortages), providing the means by which to create and maintain power imbalances based on race hierarchies. The other polar approach taken in research on class, race, and gender sees each inextricably intertwined and, in its most extreme form, sees *each individual experience* as unique and, therefore, impossible to study and generalize (a relativist approach to research). I believe that neither of these polarities will serve to facilitate an understanding of the ways in which women's experiences are both unique to individuals yet shared at some level as their experiences take place within shared social contexts. Rather, a position between the two allows for a study of individual experiences as well as an exploration of the ways in which the women share

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common experiences by virtue of similar locations in Canadian society. Roxanna Ng (1993) acknowledges the possibility that there *may* be some common experiences upon which we can base an examination of integration strategies:

> ...[W]hile these women may come from different social and cultural backgrounds, they face similar situations especially if they are non-white and non-English speaking. This commonality has to do with how their *experiences are shaped by the legal and economic, and social processes* in Canadian society regardless of their ethnic, racial, and sometimes class background. (p. 279, emphasis added)

The idea that race, class and gender intersect gained support due, in part, to recent anti-racist theorists like Dei and Bannerji. In order to understand human conditions, one must not conceive of race, class, and gender as mutually exclusive, absolute conceptions of difference (Dei, 2000). Furthermore, in support of my belief in societal impact on experience, Gabaccia (1992) writes that some common problems in research on immigrant women stem from the *lack of attention to the context of society or lack of attention to the similarities of women as individuals within a new country.* As a result, research is limited in terms of the integration of women's experiences into *general accounts* of immigration. In addition, an emphasis on the "bonds of ethnic solidarity" (read voluntary and involuntary segregation into ethnic groups) does not leave room for an examination of *similarities across (pre-determined, imposed, constructed) groups.* Gabaccia believes that research has become so entrenched in researching the experiences of particular groups, that we have forgotten to examine shared experiences of immigration, settlement, and integration that may serve to enlighten policy and program development. As noted earlier, narrative research with immigrant women most often focused on women from particular countries of origin. In this way, we create greater

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fragmentation; not only segregating women, but further segregating women into ethnic, racial, educational, class and age blocks within the female population.

Women's experiences will always vary according to the interplay of race and culture (and I would add class, religion, age). Is there, however, some way in which a community of women may participate in a space, though socially defined by race and culture, where they may go through a process of empowerment? In order to explore this possibility, I engage theories of hybridity, Third Space, and border crossing.

Possible Theories for the Exploration of Settlement

During the search for an appropriate theory upon which to base an exploration of shared experiences within a diverse group, two theories stood out. First, Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and spaces in between (referred to throughout as the Third Space) is useful since the women appeared to be going through a process of negotiating new meaning and representation. Second, Kanpol's theory of border crossing is important as the women participate in both formal and informal sites of education.

Hybridity and the Third Space

Homi Bhabha (1997) speaks about the possibility of assuming what he calls 'the moderate minority position'. In this moderate minority position, the individual exists neither as 1st person self-aware or 3rd person defensive. I have interpreted this to mean that to live in the moderate minority position, one makes a conscious decision to overcome the dichotomies of I/(s)he, us/them. In order to clarify, Bhabha offers the following example:

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> For example, in "What is a Muslim?" Akeel Bilgrami proposes the possibility of being the moderate Muslim – an emergent *minority* position between the fundamentalist and the purely secular – that rests on the possibility of a certain ambivalence and contingent double consciousness. The moderate Muslim must be able to switch from the defensive *third person* perspective – where recognizing oneself as a Muslim is a reaction to the histories of colonial oppression, Orientalist obloquy, and postcolonial/neo-imperialist racial discrimination - to the more active, *self-aware first* person perspective – a critical production of a depoliticized Islam that will not become the ploy of fundamentalist factions. (p. 434)

The possibility of living in the moderate minority position depends upon what Bhabha (1997) calls the interstitial space, interstices, spaces in-between or Third Space. For clarity, I chose to use Third Space. Bhabha (1994) makes reference to the Third Space throughout his book "The Location of Culture". The following points summarize his conception of the Third Space.

- An overlap and displacement of domains of difference
- This space of interstitial passage opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without imposing a presumed hierarchy
- The experience of the Third Space is one of displacement and disjunction. The result is that, increasingly, 'national' cultures are being produced out of the perspectives of disenfranchised minorities.
- "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (p. 37).

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- In the Third Space, individuals are now "free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities" (p. 38).
- The Third Space "makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (p. 39).
- The process of hybridity, fostered by the experience of the Third Space, "represents that ambivalent 'turn' of the discriminated subject into the terrifying exorbitant object of paranoid classification – a disturbing questioning of the images and presences of authority" (p. 113)

In this last point, Bhabha emphasized the fact that the Third Space is a site of turbulence as marginalized individuals begin to question dominant knowledges and privilege. In doing so, those in positions of power and/or privilege are made to consider 'other' knowledges and perhaps re-consider the 'facts'. For these reasons, Homi Bhabha (Rutherford, 1990) emphasizes that his conception of the Third Space is the product of his belief *that it is misleading to assume that different cultures can easily coexist.* In fact, it is very difficult and counterproductive to assume that diversity can be understood on the basis of any one particular universal concept, be it race, gender, age, or class. Instead, Bhabha proposed that there exists a Third Space. In this Third Space, individuals go through "a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness" (p. 211). This process of identification leads to a blending of individuals, the experience of hybridity. I chose to use the theory of the Third Space and cultural hybridity because I see it as a potential means of destabilizing the status quo, of a way to alter the outcome of

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the intersection between dominant and subordinate cultures. To this end, the experience of the Third Space may be laced with conflict and turbulence as multiple cultures redefine themselves and their relation to each other.

Hybridity brings together traces of feelings and practices and certain other meanings and discourses. Hybridity is that process of blending multiple 'original sources' (cultures, classes, ages, races) taking place in that Third Space:

> The importance of hybridity is not the two original sources, but that Third Space which enables other positions to emerge. This Third Space displaces the histories that constitute it, and set up new structures of authorities, new political initiatives.... The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, *a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation"* (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211, emphasis added).

Furthermore, hybridity is problematic as previously denied knowledges "enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition (Bhabha, 1994, p. 114). For this reason, though the Third Space may exist, the potential for participants in this space to foster social and political reform are stifled by those who do not enter into the Third Space; by those who fail or refuse to destabilize authority. As noted earlier, Bhabha also sees culture as a tool that has been used historically to produce rather than reflect objects of reference. In other words, culture has often been used to produce and maintain power imbalances and evaluative measures that justify and promote claims of 'inherent originality or purity'. If the process of hybridity has the power to disturb the systematic and systemic construction of discriminatory knowledges, the means by which to achieve these ends, the Third Space, if dependent upon the larger social and political institutions of a society, administered and regulated by the dominant societal culture(s) may be destined to fail. The question, then, is "Can that

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Third Space be fostered in such a way as to allow immigrant women to experience the process of hybridity, live as 'moderate minorities', and participate fully in Canadian society?"

And so, the proposed research set out to explore the possibility of the Third Space of being, from which emerges individual empowerment. Are immigrant women empowered, in part as a result of shared experiences and time within a new community (the Third Space created by participation at *Changing Together*)? And, does this empowerment, whether in the form of language skills, job skills, or the realization of support networks and rights, facilitate integration?

Borderlands and Border Crossing

In order to examine how the women shared their experiences through formal and informal educational opportunities, I turned to theories of border crossing and border pedagogy. The decision to explore the possibility of a borderland at *Changing Together* was prompted by 1) the philosophy of *the Centre*, and 2) witnessing the individual empowerment of women while working at a Centre that serves all immigrant women.

Ms. Bitar , the director of *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women*, has modeled many of *the Centre's* programs on the belief that focusing on all immigrant women as a group, while being sensitive to issues of race and class, allows for consideration of the variation in discrimination experienced by immigrant women at the societal and policy levels, and the benefits of women working together for women. Such an approach acknowledges and respects difference while building empathy for each other's experiences in the hope of building a community that empowers its members.

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Kanpol (1995) writes of an education that requires educators, and here I would add researchers, and students to join in unity in a mutual learning and teaching to find "terrains of similarity of solidarity". This border pedagogy, as he has called it, is unification between the centers and margins of power, involving the empathic incorporation of the "other's" voice. This does not mean that in seeking similarity we lose difference. Rather, a border pedagogy of multiculturalism identifies and empathizes with difference as well as unifies similarities across race, class, and culture. Kanpol (1995) writes:

> It seems to me that a border pedagogy of multiculturalism incorporating similarities within difference theme lends itself to a political expression of variance within and between individuals and groups that no longer views schools [and sites of informal learning] as innocent places, free from social and racial intrigue.... Multicultural border pedagogy calls on educators to consider the many and always varying and displaced differences of people (colour, gender, values, norms, beliefs) within a context of reconceptualizing similarities of power, domination, oppressive, joyful and spiritual forces that frame dominant and non-dominant. (p. 182)

Giroux (1996) asks that we consider schools *and other public sites of education* as border institutions, "institutions where teachers, students and others learn to think and imagine otherwise" (p. 110). He further proposes that, in so doing, we can begin to recognize and learn about sites where daily interactions foster cultural transition and negotiation, and the opportunity to become border crossers.

Border-crossers are individuals engaged in critical and ethical reflection about what it means to bring a wide variety of cultures into dialogue with each other. Border crossing requires that individuals explore cultural differences by moving in and out of histories, narratives, and experiences. "[S]tudents engage knowledge as border-crossers, as people moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and

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power" (Hicks, cited in Giroux, 1988, p. 136). In terms of multiculturalism and education, a theory of border crossing asks educators to develop a "unity-in-difference" perspective whereby we may create or recognize "unity without denying the particular, multiple, and the specific". Places where recognition of unity-in-difference (or similarities within differences) occurs are borderlands, sites of crossing, negotiation, translation, and dialogue. A key question in this research is "under what conditions do settlement agencies offer potential borderlands?"

Kanpol (1995) similarly calls on researchers to *enter into* sites where there exists the possibility of border crossing, and specifically the recognition of similarities within differences. *Border pedagogy* is a means of facilitating border crossing, providing individuals 1) the space to develop empathy and intersubjectiveness, and 2) the opportunity for unification between centers and margins of power and an "empathic incorporation of the Other's voice" (p. 178). Such a recognition of similarities is possible because "at the base of individual difference lie the commonalities or similarities of oppression, pain, and feelings, albeit in different forms" (Kanpol 1995, p. 179). Border pedagogy:

> moves away from the individual as the central figure (without losing sight of unique individual talents and creativities) and, rather, steers us to a direction of a connected individual within community relations that, in his or her construction, seriously considers the similarities within differences and empathy between individuals and groups, irrespective of colour, race, or gender. (Kanpol, 1995, p. 182)

By creating the grounds for empathy, one opens the possibility for tolerance of others, respect, and celebration of differences (Kanpol, 1995). Border crossing widens the boundaries of possibility and hope (border pedagogy coined the "pedagogy of hope")

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beyond older predetermined boundaries. Bridging the cultural struggles and resistance by different groups in order to find commonality, community and sharing leads to an emancipatory sense of unity in purpose; to end forms of alienation, oppression and subordination despite their difference in form and content. Again, is *Changing Together* (specific in locale and time) a site that fosters a unity of purpose that emerges out of the practice of border pedagogy and border crossing, where a voice of resistance may be heard above predetermined boundaries? Ultimately, cultural workers who engage in border crossing and border pedagogy are motivated by the desire to critique power differences and effect transformation:

> If both education theorists and teaching practitioners (in academe and at public school sites) can similarly agree that differences (in their multiple race, class, and gender configurations) are so different yet can concurrently be part of a binding form of opposition to ideologically oppressive forms (sex, race, and class stereotypes, for instance) then teacher and student group solidarity over these differences may similarly take place as a catalyst to change at either the school or higher education sites. (Kanpol, 1995, p. 190)

Central to a politics of similarity within differences is empathizing with the "other", transcending one's own ethnocentric view of what counts as correct culture, and instead, learning to understand, incorporate, and change oneself in light of the other culture in order to shape a common emancipatory and democratic purpose (Kanpol, 1992). Empathy is achieved when individuals in multicultural contexts:

> recount and/or recover lost moments in personal memories and histories so as to reconstruct them within a similarity within difference framework of mutuality, cooperation, connectedness, and care, despite the clear celebration of my whiteness, your blackness, and/or her femaleness, whatever color, gender or age. A border pedagogy considering the above begins to outline directions that we may see for a deeper multicultural society. (Kanpol, 1995, p. 181)

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If similarity within difference and the democratic imaginary are to thrive, we must "begin to foster a critical pedagogy that simultaneously seeks to understand particular social and cultural differences while concurrently etching out the similarities across these experiences" (Kanpol, 1992, p. 226).

Border crossing and border pedagogy serve to (1) open the interstitial spaces, creating the Third Space, and (2) enhance the objectives of critical social research and the unveiling of personal and systemic power imbalances that perpetuate barriers to integration and full participation in society. I entered into this research as a learner, not an expert, hoping to witness and document the existence of a borderland, border crossing, and cultural workers transforming policies and programs that impact women in Edmonton.

The theory of border crossing encourages researchers to ask whether there are cultural workers and border crossers who cross boundaries based on country of origin, social class, religion, politics and age to form a community or communities for empowerment. In choosing to explore the potential for individual or group empowerment, I recognize that the term empowerment has become laden with many interpretations. The discourse of empowerment tends to be problematic due to misconceptions regarding the ability of any one individual to "give" power to another. I have chosen to employ Ellsworth's concept of empowerment, cited in Gore (2003):

> As a given in any relation which aims at empowerment, the agent becomes problematic when the us/them relationship is conceived as requiring a focus on "them". When the agent of empowerment assumes to be already empowered, and so apart from those who are to be empowered, arrogance can underlie claims of "what we can do for you". In the focus on others there is a danger of forgetting to examine one's own (or one's group's) implication in the condition one seeks to affect. (Gore, 2003, p. 338)

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Like Ellsworth, I see empowerment as a tool for human betterment, an opportunity to expand the range of potential social identities, and the possibility of human agency.

The Analytic Model

There is concern among researchers that immigrant women's stories, without a theoretical model, will remain simply stories. If so, the potential impact on policy or program development would be lost. For this reason, I began to experiment with ways in which to frame the stories and experiences of the women so as to promote change and have some impact on future policy and program development.

It was suggested that I use *Changing Together* as a focal point, based on the fact that I was determined to include women from diverse backgrounds and countries of origin. Based on this recommendation, information that emerged from the literature review, the theories of the Third Space and border crossing, and my personal experiences with immigrant women at *Changing Together*, I included the following Figure 6 in the research proposal. During my time working at *the Centre*, I realized that the women came to *the Centre* with many different needs. Each of their needs was met, in varying degrees. Part of their experience hinted at the possibility that *Changing Together* may exist as the Third Space where women began to see themselves in new and different ways (hybridity); a borderland where dialogue promotes the recognition of similarities within difference. For some, their roles, responsibilities, rights, and expectations began to change. As I embarked on the analysis of my interviews, I found that this analytic model provided the tools I needed to organize my thoughts, while remaining focused on the

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research objectives. As I delved deeper and deeper into the analysis, a revised model emerged. This new model is presented in chapter 8. Despite its limitations, the original model provided a framework from which to begin an examination of the ways in which women's stories may have political and social impact.

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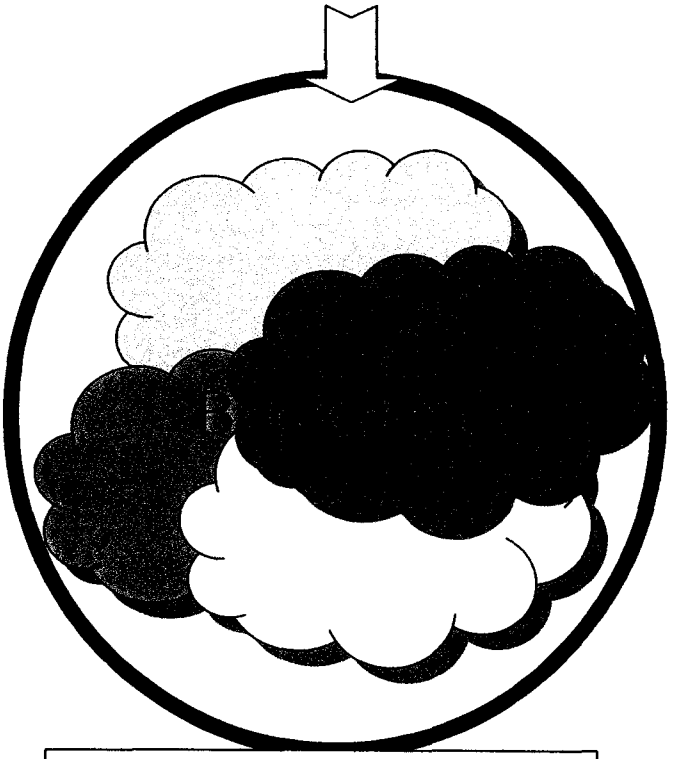
Figure 6. Analytic Model

Immigrant women, diverse in their histories, culture, education, class, race and age, come to *Changing Together* with these goals in mind:

- Better life,
- Equality,
- Full integration,

Border crossing? in and out of boundaries created by educational, race, class, culture, religion, age?



Changing Together, -a boundary produced by racialisation, feminisation, multiculturalism and immigration policy. - a site of oppression as well as a site of resistance

Third space destabilizes status quo and dislocates socially defined roles

Is *Changing Together* a borderland, where border pedagogy and crossing create the Third Space wherein the process of hybridity leads to negotiation and translation in a community that fosters individual empowerment?

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Contributions of This Research

While much of the literature identifies the need for further research into issues of immigrant women, Lee and Harrison (1999) make some concrete recommendations for future research. They note the need for policy-related research directly relevant to immigrant women and settlement services and grounded in the actual experiences of organizing within immigrant and refugee women's groups. Like the critical cultural and anti-racist theorists cited above, Lee and Harrison call for more research and education on how programs and policies contribute to a "narrow and conservative" view of immigrant women, emphasizing their roles as wives, daughter and mothers[5]. Finally, Lee and Harrison recommend that academic researchers establish partnerships with community organizations, ensure sensitivity to gender, and employ qualitative measures. Each of these recommendations was met in this study.

There are many government and research publications, documents and websites that speak of society's dedication to improving the state of multiculturalism in Canada. Many state or state-funded bodies, such as Human Resource and Development Committee, Status of Women[6], Canadian Heritage[7], Citizenship and Immigration Canada[8], and The Prairie Centre of Research Excellence on Immigration and Integration[9], may benefit from hearing of the day-to-day experiences of immigrant women in Canada. This exploration of day-to-day experiences will document the impact of multicultural initiatives at the grass roots level.

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Some of the specific needs and initiatives identified in the work of government papers and critical research theorists state that:

- We must improve our ability to measure how respect for ethnocultural diversity benefits Canada, both domestically and around the world. If we hope to effect permanent change, *we must have indicators that accurately and specifically describe how inclusive Canada really is*. It is our belief that to develop a meaningful set of such tools, our federal partners have an important role in sharing how their day-to-day activities have benefited [or not] from policies that promote inclusion and diversity. (13th Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 2000-2001 by Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism, italics added).
- We need to understand the workings of social institutions, such as those that channel job seeking and employee selection (or training) in order to highlight the complex processes which have helped shape racialised inequalities in institutional and everyday context (Solomos and Back, 1996, p. 67).

In addition, this research will add to the academic literature currently available on immigrant women, particularly qualitative research into the lived experiences of immigrant women in Canadian society. In doing so, readers will gain insight into and have some basis upon which to challenge and change the use of gender and culture in the production of inequities and existing social construction of immigrant women. This research will also challenge white feminist scholars to engage in promoting change for all women, and will challenge cultural workers in dominant power positions to consider

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engaging in active border crossing, dislocating power imbalances and opening or increasing access to opportunities.

Notes

[1] I have chosen to propose an analytic model as opposed to a conceptual framework due to the fact that this is an early exploratory study. Further study using the proposed model would be required in order for the model to be considered a conceptual framework.

[2] For this reason, many choose to ignore cultural studies, as it would demand that we attend to the fact that education (I use the term to refer to formal and informal forms of education) generates "a privileged narrative space for some students and a space that fosters inequality and subordination for others" (Giroux and Shannon, 1997, p. 233).

[3]Racialisation refers to "a concept that moves away from viewing people as belonging to natural or homogeneous 'races', referring instead to the social construction of 'races' as the consequence of historical and cultural processes. Racialisation, as a concept, draws attention to the way that people are classified as different, using phenotypical, cultural, and behavioural markers as signifiers and then treated as subordinate" (Lee and Harrison, 1999, p. 103). Feminisation refers to "social processes that undervalue activities, services and goods as feminine, female or women's work" (Lee and Harrison, 1999, p. 103).

[4] This is particularly relevant, as it allows for the possibility that there *may* be some form of coherent group identity following their entry into a borderland such as Changing Together.

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[5] Lee and Harrison (1999) found that most funded programs targeting immigrant women are designed to support and reinforce women's domestic and maternal roles in the family and parallel the gender assumptions of Canadian immigration policy, viewing them as dependents and limiting their ability to apply as independents for programs and/or support.

[6] Status of Women Canada (SWC) is the Federal government department which promotes gender equality, and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country. SWC focuses its work in three areas: improving women's economic autonomy and well-being, eliminating systemic violence against women and children, and advancing women's human rights (Status of Women Canada, 2004)

[7] Canadian Heritage is responsible for National policies and programs that promote Canadian content, foster cultural participation, active citizenship and participation in Canada's civic life, and strengthen connections among Canadians (Canadian Heritage, 2004)

[8] This Federal Department admits immigrants, foreign students, visitors and temporary workers who enhance Canada's social and economic growth; resettles, protects and provides a safe haven for refugees; helps newcomers adapt to Canadian society and become Canadian citizens; and manages access to Canada to protect the security and health of Canadians and the integrity of Canadian laws (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2004).

[9] The Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration is one of four research centres involved in immigration and integration research.

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Chapter 4: Methods

In this section, I will talk briefly about choosing qualitative methodology for the research and then focus more specifically on ethnographic methods. I have included a fairly in-depth look at ethnographic methods in general as they form the basis for the critical ethnographic methods used in this research. In closing, I discuss the analytical process used to identify emerging themes in the data. This analysis eventually led to revisions to the analytic model presented in the previous chapter.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Adler and Clark (1999) state that, although any research project may have several individually defined goals, the major purposes of social research include exploration, description, explanation, critique, and evaluation or action. Exploratory research is ground-breaking research on a relatively unstudied topic or in a new area. Descriptive research is "designed to describe groups, activities, situations, or events" (Adler and Clark, 1999, p. 9). Such research often attempts to focus on structures, attitudes, or behaviours of the group. Explanatory research is designed to "explain why subjects vary in one way or the other" (p.10). Explanatory research may focus on either a group or individuals. Critical research is "research with the goal of critically assessing some aspect of the social world" (p.11). Finally, applied research "aims to have practical results and produce work that is intended to be useful in the immediate future" (p.12).

While each of the purposes is distinct in terms of approach and outcomes, it is critical to note that any single piece of research is not restricted to a single purpose. In fact, many qualitative research projects strive, as does this one, to achieve many of these purposes.

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Denzin and Lincoln (1994) propose that any qualitative approach will have the following elements.

> Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. (p. 2)

There are a number of qualitative methodologies and no one is privileged over the others (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Each method has a history, various theoretical frameworks and represents a cross section of the social science disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and history. Various histories, evolving over many years, have led to the variety of traditions of qualitative research we see today. The following recommendations from previous research and theorists suggest that qualitative methods were not only appropriate, but essential to the proposed research.

Spivak, Landry and MacLean (1996) suggest that feminist critical theory requires that one works hard to gain knowledge of the others who occupy spaces most closed to the privileged view. Frankenburg (1993) wrote specifically about the approach she took during her interviews in order to minimize the power imbalance of researcher/participant and to position herself as explicitly involved in the questions. I also chose to enter into the qualitative research process as a learner, one with an ethical relation in which each learns from the other and together act as spokespersons for a community of people. Such an approach, however, is not intended to dismiss or ignore the differences or power imbalances that exist. It is the distance between two worlds of experience that is exactly the problem that ethnographic research is designed to locate and resolve (Agar, 1996, p. 31).

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Ethnography

In order to explore the distance between two worlds, the ethnographic research question must meet certain criteria.

> You have not posed an ethnographic question until it is clear what the ethnographer is to look at and look for, at least with sufficient clarity to get an inquiry underway. There is a narrow window between posing questions hopelessly broad to questions so specific that they can be investigated by quicker means. (Wolcott, 1999, p. 68-69)

In other words, although the approach appears somewhat unstructured and researchers believe in allowing the patterns and themes to emerge throughout the research process, this does not mean that the research lacks focus or clarity. To this end, the foci and rationale for the research are very clearly stated (chapters 1 through 3)

The foci of this research are to: 1) engage in a *critical* analysis of the structuring of informal education for immigrant women as a result of immigration policy and multiculturalism and 2) apply the theories of border crossing and border pedagogy to the informal education setting and integration strategies of women at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women.*

Traditional Ethnography

Various authors of ethnographic research and qualitative methods texts provide definitions of ethnography. Some of these include "the careful and usually long-term observation of a group of people to reveal the patterns of social life that are locally experienced" (Gubrium and Holstien, 1997, p. 561), or "the work of describing a culture. The essential core of this activity aims to understand another way of life from the native point of view" (Spradley, 1979, p. 3).

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According to Creswell (1998), ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system. The researcher examines the group's observable and learned patterns of behaviour, to see the culture "at work". As a process, ethnography involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the daily lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of the group. This design requires considerable time observing and interviewing, several meetings and recording of specific details, and exploring themes that emerge from studying human behaviours within a cultural group. Elements central to ethnography include:

- Description and a high level of detail throughout analysis and interpretation
- Informal story telling.
- Exploration of cultural themes of roles and behaviours.
- Description of the "everyday life" of persons.

Critical Ethnography

In order to meet the objective of applied research stated above, critical ethnography methodology was used to explore the historical, cultural, and material conditions of immigrant women's settlement experiences in Canada, particularly as they are impacted by their participation at *Changing Together.*

Critical ethnography "offers a more direct style of thinking about *relationships* among knowledge, society, and political action" (Thomas, 1993, italics added) than traditional ethnography. Quantz (1992) would further identify as themes of critical ethnography a focus on history, culture and values.

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Quantz (1992) chronicles the history of critical ethnography, citing the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham as, perhaps, the most influential source of development. "To those at the Centre, culture, while materially based, could not be simply or mechanically reduced to material relations. Culture, while necessarily located within material contexts, must also always be understood to form in complex relations" (Quantz, 1992, p. 455). Quantz notes, in particular, the work of David Robins and Philip Cohen, Peter Aggleton, Stuart Hall, and Paul Willis, all of whom placed their examination of subculture within the socioeconomic context of broader society.

It was not until the 1980's that critical ethnography developed a strong body of researchers in North America. North American scholars of note include McDermott, John Ogbu, and Michael Apple. One of the first sites promoting critical ethnography in Canada (in fact North America) was the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education (OISE); notably work by Roger Simon and Don Dippo, and Peter McLaren. By the late 1980's feminist scholars and researchers were making use of critical ethnography as well. Scholars of note include Kathleen Weiler, Angela McRobbie, Christine Griffin, and bell hooks. Weiler (1988) states the need for a theory that will recognize both human agency and the production of knowledge and culture that will also take into account the power of ideological structures. In so doing, critical theorists ground their work in a commitment to human betterment. McRobbie (2000), further states that we must be careful not to focus on major institutions at the expense of recognizing the impact of less obvious institutions (ideological structures). "The failure to recognize small spaces for opposition in cultural forms, as well as those areas of everyday life to which people are attracted, is a

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recipe for political and intellectual disaster" (p. 220-221). Critical ethnography emerged out of the blending of traditions of critical theories such as feminism and neo-Marxism and qualitative ethnographic methods aimed at incorporating experience into research.

The critical ethnographer asks, "What could be?" (Thomas, 1993). Through a process of critical reflection, the critical ethnographer uses research "to aid emancipatory goals or to negate the repressive influences that lead to unnecessary social domination[1]" (Thomas, p. 4). The approach is relevant to the proposed research as both a means to examine the ways in which policy has structured educational opportunities that may facilitate or impede integration, as a means to examine the way in which current solutions may further reinforce structures of oppression, and as a means to explore potential effective solutions. Although the possibility of border crossing may facilitate integration, allowing for some to overcome barriers to integration, there is also evidence of systemic racism and discrimination based on previous findings of research on immigrant women in Canada that may prove to be too overwhelming for the realization of the Third Space.

Elliot and Fleras (2003), in their interpretation of systemic racism, focus on the impact of actions that may or may not 1) be intentional and 2) reflect a value bias that is appropriate considering the devaluation of women's work. Elliot and Fleras' definition of systemic discrimination is:

> based on the principle that bias can be built into the institutional system in a way that hinders minorities without much awareness of any exclusionary process. It can be defined as any action that has the effect (rather than intent) of denying or excluding persons because of their membership in devalued groups. An action is systematically discriminatory if it indirectly impacts on some group because of inappropriate standards or tacit assumptions within the workplace. (p. 389)

Elliot and Fleras (2003) also say that systemic discrimination is a subtle form of discrimination that is entrenched in structures (through rules and in organizations),

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functions (such as norms - roles and statuses - and goals) and processes (procedures) of social institutions. It is made viable through institutional racism. Institutional racism refers to the rules and procedures, rewards and practices that have the intent (systematic) or effect (systemic) of fostering discriminatory practices. Institutional racism is manifested in rules that are universally applied and, hence, ostensibly colour-blind. Are there sites in Canada, which, through institutional racism, contribute to systemic discrimination?

With limited financial resources, roles and responsibilities based on long-standing stereotypes, and dependence on the volunteer sector, are immigrant women and those providing services through the settlement agency participating in the maintenance of social relations that perpetuate oppression? Could women at the centre, with a better understanding of each other's daily interactions and experiences, facilitate the restructuring of relations in broader society in order to increase financial resources, challenge the patriarchal stereotype of women's roles and responsibilities, and decrease dependence on the volunteer sector in a way that impacts policy and program development? Better yet, could *border crossers* and *cultural workers* in Canada, with a better understanding of *each other's* daily interactions and experiences, do the same?

Due to the nature of critical ethnography and the fact that researchers strive for emancipatory outcomes such as those stated above, writers of critical ethnography often note the place of values in research. Quantz (1992) writes that values "order and influence all research, ...[and that] the critical ethnographer's emphasis on openness and his/her conscious effort to serve an emancipatory interest should be praised rather than criticized" (p. 475). Similarly, Thomas (1993) writes that "the penetration of values is

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unavoidable, and the solution is not to try to expunge them from research, but rather to identify them and express their impact" (p. 21). And so, key assumptions, reflective of core values, are presented.

Quantz (1992), for example, identifies one of the key assumptions of any critical ethnography, one that is present and influences all critical ethnographies:

> The critical ethnographer assumes the integral formation of structure and culture....[t]he important question is not whether they are or are not marginal, and certainly not whether or not those who identify with the group perceive their marginality, but how has their political, social and material disempowerment been manifested in cultural formations. (p. 467)

What does the use of critical ethnography mean in terms of our approach to data collection? As Thomas (1993) notes, it is not so much the data gathering method, but whether the method is appropriate to the research question and employed with competence. It is equally important that critical ethnographers be prepared to add to the chosen methods if the practice of reflexive thinking throughout the research shows that the method or particulars about the method are inadequate for the task. Critical ethnography proved to be a very appropriate fit with the research question, my participation in the community, and my research objectives. Its fit was confirmed again when original interview questions were adapted as information was gathered and follow-up questions for second interviews were developed based on a preliminary analysis of the first round of interviews – a typical strategy in critical ethnography. Table 6 draws comparisons between characteristics and definitions of traditional ethnography and then contrasts these with qualities of critical ethnographic research.

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Table 6: Definitions and Characteristics of Traditional and Critical Ethnography

Traditional Ethnography		**Critical Ethnography**	
Denzin and Lincoln (1994)	**Creswell (1998)**	**Quantz (1992)**	**Thomas (1993)**
A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them	Explores themes that emerge while studying human behaviours within a cultural group.	Conscious political intentions that are oriented towards *emancipatory* and democratic goals.	Takes seemingly mundane events and reproduces them in such a way that *exposes broader processes of control and power imbalance.*
Tendency to work primarily with "unstructured" data; data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories.	Cultural themes of roles and behaviours are explored. Find stories, rituals, and myths, uncover cultural themes.	Researchers acknowledge their role in the production (versus collection) of data. The researcher brings a *theoretical focus to the research.*	Culture is studied as all learned social relations in a given group. Culture establishes the foundation and the ways for communicating, reproducing and transmitting meanings.
Investigation of a small number of cases perhaps just one case in detail	The study of people in interaction in ordinary settings.	Researcher utilizes field methods which place him/her on site.	Participant researchers opt for relevance and identify closely with the needs & concerns of the participants.
Analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions	Look for what people do (behaviours), what they say (language), and the tensions between what they do and ought to do.	The researcher attempts to re-present the culture of the lived experiences of people *living in asymetrical power relations.*	Driven by a broad socialist, humanist ethos.
Product mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most	Attempts to discern pervasive patterns such as life cycles, events, and cultural themes. Descriptive format, analysis, interpretation. The author tells the story informally, as a storyteller. Knowledge located in the interactive experiences of researcher & participants (Quantz, 1992)	The research is meant to produce action research, moving towards the transformation of people's lives. Knowledge arises not out of mere experience with others (symbolic interactionism), but as arising from transformation.	As social activity, critical thinking implies a call to action that includes political activism. As ideology, critical thinking is about a recognized relationship between knowledge and its consequences and scholars' obligation to society.

Ethnographic Methods

The integration experiences of women were explored using ethnographic methods of data collection[2]. A combination of interviews and participant observation provided a rich source of information about the integration experiences of clients and staff at a settlement agency for immigrant women.

Spradley (1979) said that the basic unit of all ethnographic inquiry is the *question-observation* and that neither exists in isolation from the other. While reviewing ethnographic methods, it was essential that Agar's (1996) statement on ethnography remained forefront. "Ethnography is not simply "data collection"; it is rich in implicit theories of culture, society, and the individual" (p. 75). Simply put, the methods must remain true to the ethnographic approach, retaining predominant assumptions of relationships between individuals, communities, society, history, values, and culture.

Engaging in Ethnographic Research

Ethnographic research requires that the researcher not only have access to the individuals and community, but also that the researcher develops a close relationship with the people. Bernard (1995, 2000) suggests using personal contacts to enter the field and to enter the field with plenty of written information about yourself and your project. Furthermore, Agar (1996) and others state the importance of a literature review before entering the field in order to learn what has been done in the area.

In terms of personal contacts within the field, Bernard (1995, 2000) makes the following suggestions. First, work from the top down, finding out the names of gatekeepers and seeing them first. Second, don't wing it. Think in advance what you

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will say when ordinary people (not just gatekeepers) ask you what you are doing. Be clear about who sent you, who is funding you, what good is your research to whom? Finally, realize that not everyone will be thrilled about your role as researcher. Agar (1996) suggests that the researcher locate a network path from self to group.

I gained entry into the field of research through my on-going presence at and participation in programs at *Changing Together*. I was welcomed by the director at *Changing Together* and introduced to the many clients and staff as the researcher doing the 'Success Stories of Immigrant Women" project. The staff and clients at *the Centre* also knew of my teaching position at the University of Alberta as well as my work at the Centre as an English as a Second Language instructor. To my knowledge, the women were, without exception, very pleased that someone was interested in hearing their stories and hoped that their participation, either as an interview participant or informant in any respect, may change the circumstances of all immigrant women. Contrary to my expectations, it was not access to the community that was problematic as much as difficulties regarding the accommodation of time and energy necessary to engage ethically in ethnographic research.

Ethics

An ethics application for the research was completed and approved by the University of Alberta. The participants were provided with information regarding the purpose of the research and the fact that this research would be used for my doctoral dissertation (Appendix 2). They were also told that their participation in the research was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and that the

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information would be kept confidential (accessed only by the researcher) and anonymous, but that individuals within the community of *Changing Together* may be aware of their participation in the research. Participants were asked to sign a consent form indicating that they understood the above (Appendix 3).

The issue of signed consent prevented me from reporting in more detail the participant observation data gathered throughout the duration of this research. Concerns were raised during the ethics review regarding the fact that I would need signed consent from each of the women present during participant observation. Because of my participation at conferences, in meetings and at informal gatherings with the community, this would be an impossible ethical requirement to fulfill. The decision was made to continue with the ethnographic approach and participant observation with an understanding that information gathered during participant observations would not be included in the form of data, but would be used to direct and inform my research questions and data analysis. I believe that my presence at the Centre and involvement in the community was far more valuable than the inclusion of participant observation data. My role as participating observer reduced reactivity, allowed me to formulate sensible questions, and increased my confidence with regard to my findings.

Aside from the institutional requirements of ethical research, I also gave a lot of thought to the personal ethics of this research. Beyond meeting the requirements of the degree, I kept in mind that 1) the community of immigrant women should benefit from this research and 2) that I am a welcomed participant in the community and, as such, have a personal responsibility to ensure that no harm comes to the community or any of the individuals within the community.

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In order to do justice to the research process and the community, I attended to the following guidelines by Nespor (2002).

1. "[C]ritical researchers run the risk of entering into a setting not to find out what informants think is there, but what researchers already know is there" (LeCompte, p. 13, cited in Nespor, 2002). Avoid entering into the research process with preconceptions of direction, causality, outcomes, or pre-ordained findings. In other words, remain open to what emerges despite any academic literature review or theoretical framework you may have chosen. In doing so, you protect the integrity of the research process. I remained true to this objective due to reminders by academic advisors and the fact that I engaged in a process of on-going, reflexive thinking throughout the interviews and analysis.

2. "[I]t's not uncommon, indeed it's probably the rule rather than the exception that certain issues fall away, others are added, and the focus of the study shifts" (Nespor, 2002, p. 5). I found that most of the interview data were very relevant to the research objectives and questions, though I thought at the time of the interviews, that I pursued more detail than necessary in some areas. In hindsight, I see that these details may have been the essential elements in the final outcomes and analytic model. I remained open to variations on the proposed model of integration and found a more complex interaction of elements in settlement and integration than I had anticipated based on my literature review.

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3. Consult with participants in designing the research. I believe that my work on-site and on-going presence at *Changing Together* (1) ensured consultation with the participants and (2) prompted on-going reflection on policies and programs aimed at achieving multiculturalism.

Participant Observation

Ethnography requires "the researcher to enter the natural settings for purposes of understanding the how, why, and what of human behaviours" (Shaffir, 1999). For this reason, I engaged in participant observation. Bernard (1995) writes that

> Participant observation involves establishing rapport in a new community; learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you show up; and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can intellectualize what you have learned, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly. (p. 136)

At first glance, this may appear to be a relatively simple endeavor. There is more to it than simply joining a community.

> The ethnographer also eats with the group, works with them, realizes with them, and hopefully comes to understand them. Meanwhile, he or she personally struggles with the interference from his or her ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Ethnography, whatever else it is, is an experientially rich social science. (Agar, 1996, p. 58)

This "intimacy" with the group is advantageous to the researcher and society in that "[it] could supply empirical findings about little known or stereotyped populations, particularly those outside the mainstream" (Gans, 1999, p. 540). Furthermore, participant observation is also scientific due to that fact that the researcher gets close enough to the people to observe what they do, while other empirical methods are limited to what people say that they do (Agar, 1996; Gans, 1999).

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In fact, Bernard (1995) claims that there are at least five reasons for insisting on participant observation in the conduct of scientific research about cultural groups.

1. Participant observation makes it possible to collect different kinds of data.
2. Participant observation reduces the problem of reactivity - people changing their behaviour because they know they are being studied. Lower reactivity means higher validity of data.
3. Participant observation helps you formulate sensible questions, in the native language.
4. Participant observation gives you an intuitive understanding of what's going on in a culture and allows you to speak with confidence about the meaning of data.
5. Many research problems cannot be addressed adequately by anything but participant observation.

I engaged in participant observation throughout the research as I continued my work at *Changing Together*. Through regular participation in Centre programs, staff meetings, lunches, and conferences I was able to reduce reactivity to my presence, formulate relevant and sensible research questions with regard to the community's needs and remain focused on these throughout the process of analysis. On-going participation throughout the interview and analysis phases of the research enabled me to explore various interpretations and to speak with confidence about the research and outcomes.

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Interviews

It is important to realize that there are similarities and distinctions between conversations, qualitative interviews, and ethnographic interviews (Kvale, 1996; Spradley, 1979). In any discussion, conventions of dialogue strongly influence the rhythm of the questions we ask and the kinds of responses we get (Agar, 2001; Freeman, 2000). "The speaker and the listener imagine the unfolding story even as it is unfolding and have learned to ask the questions that naturally flow, that make sense in the situation" (Freeman, 2000, p. 363). Once a research objective is set, while the conventions of dialogue may remain somewhat the same, the purpose for communicating is set.

When the research objective is to gain insight into some personal or cultural life experiences, it is important that the method facilitates open communication and respect for the interviewees' experiences. The purpose of a qualitative interview approach is to describe and understand the subjects' experience (Kvale, 1996; Bernard, 2000). "The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subjects, and to interpret the feeling and nuances of the experiences being expressed by the participant" (Kvale, p. 32).

Although the research interview is similar to the conversations of daily life, it is different in that it is a professional conversation that has a structure and a purpose. Two people talk together about a shared idea or theme (Kvale, 1996), while keeping in mind the plan or objective of the interview conversation. "The idea is to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms, and at their own pace" (Bernard, 2000, p. 191). The format of the semi-structured interview best facilitated the kind of

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open and flexible communication required for gathering the personal, reflective stories of women at *Changing Together*.

In the semi- structured interview, the researcher begins with a sense of what information is needed and develops an interview guide, a list of questions and topics that need to be covered. Because of the flexibility allowed by semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is free to follow the lead of the participant, encouraging their role in defining both the questions and the answers (Adler & Clark, 1999).

During the first interview with clients of *Changing Together*, the women were asked to speak about their experiences at the Centre and their experiences in Canada in general (Appendix 4). During the second interview, questions were developed based on a preliminary analysis of the first nine interviews. These questions focused on themes as well as inconsistencies that emerged from the preliminary analysis (Appendix 5). A separate interview guide was developed for the interviews with the staff of *Changing Together* as the focus here was to generate discussion about the impact of policy on the ability of *the Centre* to address the needs of immigrant women (Appendix 6).

The Participants

Thirteen women participated in a total of 19 individual interviews. Ten were women who took part in the *Making Changes*[3] Program at *Changing Together* and had immigrated to Canada within the last three years. Six of these ten were interviewed a second time. These ten participants were selected in conjunction with the instructor of the pre-employment program *Making Changes*. Factors that influenced the selection of participants included their county of origin (attempting as much as possible to have

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percentages reflective of immigration trends), their accessibility (in that they were still in Edmonton) and their willingness to participate.

Three women were fulltime staff at *Changing Together* and are responsible for the administration of the Centre and the delivery of the programs (primarily social services, family violence, bicultural parenting and pre-employment). A summary of the demographics and histories of the women is provided in Chapter 5: Introduction to the Women.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed for analysis purposes. I listened to the audio recordings repeatedly in order to attend to nuances of language that may reflect emotions such as hesitation or enthusiasm, and to avoid isolating words from emotion or misinterpretation when extracting quotes from the larger context.

Creswell (1998) writes that the analysis process conforms to a general contour, a spiral process of analytical circles. Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Creswell, 1998) suggest the following general data analysis strategies.

- Write margin notes in transcripts and field notes
- Write reflective passages in notes
- Draft a summary sheet on field notes
- Make metaphors, search for comparisons and contrasts
- Make codes, memos
- Note patterns and themes

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- Count frequency codes
- Note relations among variables, building a logical chain of evidence

At an early stage in the research process, the data were organized into files according to units (key words, phrases, paragraphs) for analysis. Key words in the early stages of analysis included attitude, solutions, acceptance, belonging, discrimination, employment, volunteering, first contacts, women's needs and education. The ongoing spiral of analysis required repeated readings of transcripts. Writing memos in the margins of both transcripts and field notes allowed for themes to emerge. For example, out of the key word employment came themes of challenges to employment and importance of employment. Out of the key word education came lack of recognition of credentials, access to education and importance of education. A closer look at acceptance and belonging led to the creation of a new category called network potential.

The ongoing reflection led to the identification of the following categories (Creswell suggests up to 10):

1. Background information: why Canada, knowledge about Canada, feelings about coming to Canada
2. Change of Feelings: First year, second year, now
3. Employment: importance, challenges
4. Education: importance, challenges
5. Value of *Making Changes* and *Changing Together* programs
6. Character/Attitude
7. Belonging: participation, acceptance, respect, future

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8. Advice/teach others
9. Network potential
10. Discrimination

Once the categories were identified, I returned to the data to find evidence that would support or contradict the prevalence of these themes throughout the women's stories. I also looked for multiple perspectives within each category. Having categorized and provided support for these categories, I began to interpret the data and do a first draft of the findings. At this point, I began looking for potential relationships and explanations of the relationships among the categories.

Throughout the process of interpretation, I returned to the literature and proposal that inspired the research. In doing so, I remained true to the methods of critical ethnography, iteratively reflecting upon and reassessing the proposed research questions and looking for possible explanations for the issues that emerged from the data. I also returned to the analytical model presented during candidacy (Figure 6) in order to explore its accuracy or inaccuracy. This served as a means of organizing the wealth of data and also provided a starting point for the more complex model that eventually emerged from the data and analysis. I realized that there were key aspects that appeared to be necessary for the women's settlement and integration. I began to look at the impact of each category in the settlement experience. Why had each category emerged as important? Why were they able to access some programs and not others? What were the personal and systemic explanations of why some women were more settled and integrated than others? What were the relationships between these various categories and

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how did each woman fit in? The final analytic model (Figure 10) reflects the final evolution of the analytical process.

Notes

[1] "Emancipation refers to the process of separation from constraining modes of thinking or acting that limit perception of and action toward realizing alternative possibility. Repression is the condition in which thought and action are constrained in ways that banish recognition of these alternatives" (Thomas, 1993, p. 4).

[2] Kanpol (1995) used ethnographic methods to understand/document border crossings.

[3] *Making Changes* is a pre-employment course with the objective to help immigrant women establish more meaningful lives in their new society by career planning, information gathering, gaining job search skills, learning assertiveness skills, understanding obstacles and developing language skills and meeting new friends (McCallum, 1977).

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Chapter 5: Introduction to the Women

Throughout the many interviews one of the pervading themes was the strength of character and attitude of the women. For this reason, I feel compelled to begin with a brief introduction to each of the women and, in doing so, begin to explore the character and attitude of the women, one critical aspect of settlement and integration. Women who were clients of *Changing Together* were interviewed in order to explore their experiences in Canada in terms of the impact of immigration policy, programs and multiculturalism. The reader will begin to know the women as individuals and become familiar with their thoughts and feelings on coming to Canada (the circumstances that brought them to Canada, their control over that decision, and what they knew about Canada). Many of the women came because of decisions or circumstances having to do with their husband or children. Many did not think of coming to Canada themselves. They knew very little about Canada and were apprehensive about the move.

Part of becoming familiar with the women and their lives includes a discussion of their needs upon immigration. Some of their most urgent needs included access to English as a Second Language, upgrading, recognition of skills and credentials, and some sense of community. Each of these needs will be discussed in detail following the introduction to the women.

In addition to clients of the Centre, three employees were interviewed in order to get their professional opinions on the impact policies have had on their ability to provide services and programs to the clients at the Centre. Two of the three women immigrated to Canada themselves 15-20 years ago. The third woman, Canadian born, is in charge of

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the pre-employment training program at the Centre. These interviews provided information about the impact of multiculturalism and immigration policy on the women's lives.

The Women

The ten women chosen for their participation at *Changing Together* had taken a pre-employment course called *Making Changes*. One criterion used in the selection of participants was their country of origin. An effort was made to represent the countries of origin of immigrant women based on Statistics Canada information. There was some compromise as the population was restricted by the representation of country of origin of those taking part in the program. At times, the two did not match. For example, although a large percentage of immigrant women come from the Philippines, it was difficult to match this representation as only one woman from the Philippines had taken the Making Changes course. This is due to the fact that most women from the Philippines come as live-in caregivers and are not looking for or do not have the time to take a pre-employment course. Participants included two women from India, four from China, one from Nicaragua, one from Japan, one from Africa, and one from the Philippines (See Table 7)

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Table7: The Participants

Name	Marital Status/ Children	Immigration Status	Education**	Employment Experience in Country of Origin	Influence of Family Members Work & Education	Current Work
[redacted]	Married+ 1 child 9 years	Sponsored	Bachelor of Administration	Accounting	Encouraged to pursue post secondary	Accounting Customer Service - Mall
[redacted]	Married* 1 (12/03)	Sponsored	Master of Commerce	Tutor Accounting	Encouraged to pursue post secondary	Maternity Leave
[redacted]	Married~ No children	Independent	1 yr of University (Hopes to complete degree here	Marketing/ Advertising	Management Positions University Educated	Accounting at College
[redacted]	Married~ 2 children (8 yrs/ 2 mos)	Sponsored	Medical Degree	Private Practice for 10 years	Encouraged to pursue post secondary/	Registered Nursing program at University (09/03)
[redacted]	Married~ 2 children (6 yrs/ 1 yr)	Sponsored	Bachelor of Social Work	Social Services in Refugee Camps	Encouraged to pursue post secondary/ family business / siblings educated in Canada	Stay at home mom
[redacted]	Married~	Refugee	High School	Work in Refugee Camp	Encouraged to pursue post secondary/ Father a Minister	Social Work

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Name	Marital Status/ Children	Immigration Status	Education**	Employment Experience in Country of Origin	Influence of Family Members Work & Education	Current Work
[redacted] Canada	Married~ 2 children (18 mos, 1 month)	Independent	Petroleum Engineer Degree	Petroleum Eng International Business	Parents: Engineer and Secretary Siblings: own business and computer job	Stay at home mom
[redacted] India	Married + No children	Sponsored	2 years of University	Accounting	Business owners	Upgrading
[redacted] Philippines	Married ~ 2 teenage children	Sponsored	Bachelor of Commerce	Executive Assistant, Manager of Coal Mine	Encouraged	Changing Together and Language Education
[redacted] Japan	Married + 2 children	Sponsored	2 years of tourism program	Tour guide		Acctng at College

**Equivalent to or similar degree. The only woman who spoke either of Canada's official language upon immigration was Disha. Some had elementary level English writing and reading skills but were very uncomfortable speaking English..

+Canadian

*Canadian of Indian origin

~In country of origin

Four of the ten women married Canadian men and then moved to Canada. The circumstances of each marriage were unique. Disha[1] came through an arranged marriage and remains with her partner today. They are expecting their first child. Yukiko met her husband while she was touring in Canada. They are married and have two children, ages one year and three years. Maggie[2] met her husband while he was working in her country. They married and returned to Canada with her young child, now nine years of age. They are currently separated. Manini met her husband on the Internet. They married in her country and returned to Canada. They divorced within the first two years. There were no children. Two of these four women stated directly, and the other two implied, that they never thought they would leave their home country and had reservations about doing so.

Three of the women are from China - Claire, Xiu, Susan. All three women were married in China and then moved to Canada with their husbands. Claire has one child 18 months old and is expecting a second. Xiu has no children. Susan has two children, ages 8 years and 1 year. Jasmine, married while in Hong Kong, has two children, ages 6 years and 11 months. All four remain married, although Susan lives as a single mom because her husband has taken work in another country, unable to acquire stable work in Canada, in order for her to pursue her education and return to a medical career.

Araba is a refugee from a camp in Africa. She arrived in Canada with her husband. She and her husband have since divorced. She is a single mom with two children, ages three and nine months. Fe is from the Philippines. She has a husband and two children, ages 17 and 20 years, who recently immigrated to Canada. After her first two years, having filed the paper work and paid the fees to sponsor her family members, she endured the threat of deportation due to complications regarding the working

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restrictions for live-in caregivers. I have learned that threats of deportation are not all that uncommon, an experience shared by many live-in caregivers and one that leaves them feeling particularly vulnerable. In the end, she returned to her county of origin and returned to Canada to begin her two-year temporary status prior to receiving permanent residency.

The immigration status of the women varied. The four women who married Canadian men, Jasmine, who came with her husband from China, and Fe were all sponsored. The other three women from China came as independents and Araba, from Africa, came as a refugee[3].

Six of the ten women have a university degree or some university education. This is consistent with the education levels of immigrant women to Canada. Recall that Statistics Canada (2000) reported that 39% of immigrant women had some university education and 17% had a bachelor's or professional degree (total of 54%) and 9% had a master's degree. One has completed a Masters in Commerce, one has a medical degree, and one has a petroleum engineering degree. None of their credentials are recognized in Canada. These three, the most highly educated, are currently unemployed and have not worked since coming to Canada with the exception of temporary, minimum wage jobs. The other women have all completed at least a high school diploma.

All of the women have work experience in their country of origin. Disha worked as a private high school tutor and did some accounting work; Yukiko was a tour guide; Claire worked for ten years as a petroleum engineer and in international business; Xiu worked in marketing and advertising; Susan worked as a medical doctor for ten years; Fe worked as a resident manager's executive assistant at a coal mine; and Jasmine worked in

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social services. Araba did extensive volunteer work in the refugee camp doing translation, education on violence against women and various refugee camp educational programs.

Each woman was encouraged by her parents to get an education and most came from homes where either one or both parents were highly educated. Disha, Manini, Jasmine, Susan and Araba, though their parents were not university educated, were encouraged by their parents to get a good education. For example, Disha's parents put five of eight children through post secondary education and Susan's siblings both completed university degrees. Manini, having completed 2 years of university is one of nine children who went through university in India. Both Araba and Xiu's parents were university educated. Each woman speaks of her parents' hard work. Often they are educated professionals, run private businesses or held what sound like senior positions in companies (sometimes it is difficult to discern equivalent positions in Canada and the country of origin).

Thoughts and Feelings on Coming to Canada

Each of the women was asked "Why Canada?" The majority of the women came to Canada because of a decision made by their husbands. Four married Canadians; one wanted to return to Canada after meeting his wife while living 15 years abroad, one brought his wife to join him in Canada through an arranged marriage and two wanted to remain in Canada, having met their wives without leaving Canada. Xiu and Jasmine came because their husbands felt that their job prospects and/or children's future would be better in Canada. Similarly, Fe came because she wanted to be able to eventually sponsor her family to come to Canada. Claire and her husband came to set up an

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international business. Araba had no choice as a refugee. Nine of the ten women had little control over the decision to move to Canada.

The women responded to the decision to move in many different ways. While some believed that the move would be "OK", others were quite overwhelmed with the prospect of a new country and a new language and never in their lives would have imagined leaving their country of origin. When asked how they felt about their husbands' suggestions to move to Canada, Maggie and Xiu responded:

> So that was scary. I'm still afraid because it is still new for me. Like, I never thought that in my life I would marry a guy from another country or going away from my country. So, ... I don't want to go. I didn't say to him, but, like, he was saying he really like Latin community and Latin life so I thought I could live longer in my country. So, I say OK, we can try.... So my parents they didn't agree with me, cause they didn't...So I say, anyhow, I talk to my older sisters and she said no because he is older than you and I don't think that is going to work. But after we talked too much, all the time, and I feel like we can get along, you know. So I said I want to try even if my family do not agree with me. I took the decision and I say OK and so he moved right away. (Maggie: 54-63)

> Hmm, that's a serious problem. At first, I feel excited, but then, when I really think, I think oh, I don't know anything about Canada and it is a different country. How can we live there? I think about that way. I told my husband, I don't want to be there. But my husband want to try. He urged me. (Xiu: 118-122)

Their knowledge of Canada was quite superficial. Araba, coming from the refugee camp knew nothing about Canada. Her only concern was whether or not people would be sold to the slave trade like in Sudan. Otherwise, the women described what they knew of Canada in the following ways; cold, snow, wonderful country, beautiful country, people are friendly, people are nice, lots of trees, blue sky, beautiful pictures, garage sales, and birthday parties at school for children.

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> Maybe I know a person who is a Canadian. He works in China in the war. So he is very famous. He is a doctor. He saved lots of Chinese peoples lives. He concentrated his life in China. So I don't know anything about this Canada but this person. Before we move to Canada, I bought some books to know something. From the very beautiful picture, oh, it is a beautiful country and so blue sky, lots of trees, and so beautiful....I know something Canada, one thing is garage sales, and maybe about schools, that the teacher always get the party to celebrate someone's birthday. So I thought, this country is good. (Xiu: 178-188)

> I read some books. I also go on the net to find some information about Canada. I know that Canada is a beautiful country, it has huge land, people are friendly, ...Canada is beautiful... (Susan: 46-48)

Manini was the only one to show some knowledge of Canada in terms of information relevant to life as an immigrant in Canada. Manini talks about reading a book that said that Vancouver was the top city of immigration. Manini, Yukiko (99-100) and Claire (111-112) all made comparisons between Canada and the United States, acknowledging that Canada has a reputation for not being racist compared to the United States.

Despite the very different circumstances of the women's immigration to Canada, their different education and work history, and their marital and family situations, these women all took part in the pre-employment program and agreed to take part in this exploration of women's settlement experiences. They came to *the Centrer* for many different reasons, looking for solutions to many different problems. In the next section, I look at the women's needs upon immigration.

Identifying Needs

There were three approaches taken to exploring the women's needs. First I wanted to explore what the women needed when they came to Canada. In order to do this, I asked them how they were feeling when they first arrived and where they went to

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get the help they needed. The women talked about the initial shock of being in a new country with a new language and different culture. The emotions range from excitement - about a new challenge or reunions with partners who came to Canada earlier - to tears and isolation, fears about going out alone, anxiety, homesickness, loss of status, lack of recognition of their education, and loss of confidence.

> Oh, of course it is happy because it is a family reunion. And I came here in autumn so it is still nice weather. And, you know, the first three months people were saying it is a honeymoon and it is really a honeymoon. I never thought about back home. ... My husband came here first. (How long were you apart?) Just 6 months. (So it was really nice to be back together?) Yea. (Jasmine: 289-309)

> At that time, we also had an apartment my friend rented for us. And when we set down, we looked around the street and I think, this is good, it is very neat street. Before, I know something about you come to a nice country, I think is very, very hard way. Maybe people live in dirty, more moisture in the basement. But, oh, when I look at my apartment, it was bright and clean with a carpet, all beautiful. (Xiu: 206-211)

> When I first came here to live, I found Canada very cold, negative. I couldn't find anything positive. Because I lost my whole status, education, everything. I felt myself such a small person, I couldn't do anything. Even getting on the bus, I was so afraid of talking to drivers; they looked so mean. (Yukiko: 77-80) I wasn't excited I guess. I was worried, sad, I missed my country, just very lonely. At that time, I was not working, I am very anxious about living here I guess. (Yukiko 2: 232-234)

> Oh frustrated...because I couldn't find a job and I couldn't speak English very well either....I also went to Catholic Social Services and asked them about the possibility to be medical doctor again in Canada and I got some information of course, and I knew that it was impossible to be a medical doctor again. (Susan: 202-215)

> It was strange. It was kind of like a culture shock and totally different. I did cry for a few weeks. What am I doing here? I couldn't talk; I couldn't explain things. Even I couldn't understand the time that they say, ten after five, I still don't understand those kind of things. And then I just say one thirty, something like that. And I didn't know the names of my foods in English. If I want to buy, how should I buy? And I was having a hard time explaining to my [Canadian-born] husband that I need that, I need that and, like, I didn't know the name and he would just say what do you mean? (Manini: 432-439)

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Many of the women realized that the first task in order to live here was to learn English. Although some had studied English in their country of origin, it was mostly written work. None of the women were comfortable with their communication skills. Without sufficient knowledge of English, they expressed feelings of isolation, frustration, and lack of support. Again, these comments support previous research that documents the importance of English in overcoming isolation and depression (Gupta, 1994; Warren, 1988).

> When I was in India I was confident that, you know, all that I want I have confidence that I can do. But when I came here, first I didn't. My problem was English, right? So I was thinking, what to do, what to do. But after, like, school and all Canadian people I told you about, they all, teacher, classmates, they all encourage me. So after I get confidence. (Disha: 177-181)

> What I thought was, what I had to learn, the language was the most important and I have to try to get in some job where I can do what I was doing in my country. That was on my mind, that was thinking I can do. But I don't know how long it's going to take me to learn the language. So I was kind of concerned about how long it's going to take to learn the language. I don't think it is going to be hard to find a job, because I thought I can do the job, it is in my background, so they are going to hire me. But the concern was how long it is going to take to learn the language. (Maggie: 8-15)

I also asked the women to consider what programs were missing that would help them settle more easily in Canada. Because the women were often not able to identify specific unmet needs, I asked them how their feelings changed over time (during the first year, second year, and now, into the third year). In so doing, I hoped to explore what needs were met over time and what needs were left unresolved.

During the following conversation, Jasmine speaks about the difficulty of raising a newborn in a new culture, a new climate, and the feelings of isolation. The feeling of isolation experienced by some of the women is the first yet unresolved challenge to settlement.

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J: [In year two], you begin to think about your family. And the weather makes me still uncomfortable.
F: So how is your attitude to Canada at that point, or your feelings about the decision you made?
J: A big worry. Oh, can't I get a job here, because I don't have the Canadian experience?
F: How about your confidence? Did it change?
J: Oh, up, down, up, down.
F: What makes it change?
J: Sometimes when people, you know, they speak very fast and then you cannot help it, you will feel, can I cope with this in the workplace? You know, not all people are willing to speak slowly. So, also, the way they do is different from the way back home.
F: OK. And today, right now, how are you feeling?
J: (laughter) OK. You know, it is sun out.
F: (laughter) Because we are in June and it is a sunny day.
J: And are in my home, I feel OK.
F: Day to day, right now, how are things, how are you feeling about your future?
J: Yes, still there sometimes. And, you know, when she gets, I don't know how to say, sometimes I also feel mad about the baby, when the baby is cranky, I say, I want to find a job, and go out of the house. I don't know whether it is an excuse or not. (Jasmine: 311-347)

Yukiko talks about the progress of her feelings over her three years in Canada. I begin to consider at this point that there may be a "window of opportunity" in the settlement process when the women must experience some success, both personally and professionally, as they begin to gain some confidence, a sense of determination and have a positive attitude about their future in Canada. In order to explore this possibility, I ask the women how their feelings changed over the time they had been in Canada, looking for signs of inaugural moments.

> I was isolated in my first year. In second year I was still feeling very negative and not open to anything, anyone. I was probably trying to create my own world. In third year, I started noticing that, hey, this is not going to work. This is what I decided to do and so I have to live here. And to live here what do I have to do? I have my second daughter already. I have to raise the little ones....I went through this kind of future plans and then I started going to school and right now I am still going to school. It took me three years. (Yukiko: 190-197)

Janmohamed (1993) writes that "it is [this] pure possibility, when linked with

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a sense of agential control, that becomes crucial for sustaining radial hope, which in turn becomes essential for sustaining the work required to achieve a new reality" (p. 116). There is a moment in time (Friere's inaugural moment) when possibility and agency meet. Throughout the interviews with these women, I hoped that policies and programs might be changed in ways that foster those moments.

Character and Attitude

> Maybe I didn't know what kind of job I will do, but I did know that I won't do this job, I will do better than this.(Manini 2: 256-266)

How do they settle despite the challenges? In the course of the interviews, I found that the women's sense of settlement was often affected by personal attitudes, networking skills and the ways they chose to perceive their situation. The following quotes demonstrate their flexibility, stamina, patience, endurance and perseverance.

> One, I know that I do not have a degree, but I have so much knowledge. But if I get offered something different, I can do, especially in social ... My first job that I did was cleaning. It was so hard the first day. It was so hard when they were telling me how to clean the toilet and how to vacuum. It was a job that I have never done at home. And I didn't dream in my life that I was going to do it. It took me time to go and do it. The first week when I was doing it, I was crying, especially when I was pushing the cart, where they put all the stuff. When someone was watching me pushing and I was pushing, it was so painful. But I had this idea, that, you know what, this is just temporary. I can proceed, because if I did not work I couldn't have brought my sisters here. If I couldn't have worked, how could I support them in Uganda? (Araba: 368-384)

> Sometimes you feel frustrated because you make difficult. If you try a lot of stuff maybe you cannot do or it is not time to do. Or you need to study something or you need to do something else to try that. But some people make hard. And maybe because they don't want to accept change. You know, it is really hard for them to change. And maybe that is in their mind, if they don't get that, they don't want nothing else. And that has become really hard and frustrating for those people. (Maggie 2: 558-567)

> I think it is when you want to get to the society, you have to participate. It's the one way to get to know the people and to get information about many things you

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> can do. Because if you are staying home, even if you are studying English, you are staying home, you do not know what is going on around you. Because many people do that. They stay home and they watch TV in their own language or just read book in their own language. They don't want to know about. So I think those people, they never know anything about what is going on. And if you want to know, you have to go out and try to get information, to talk, and to know. Because you can get easy many things in that way done. (Maggie: 327-334)

It became clear through the course of the interviews that some women are more comfortable than others when it comes to creating opportunities through networks. Li (forthcoming) discusses the concept of social capital, one aspect of which is social ties (networks), in relation to economic outcomes for immigrants and ethnic minorities. According to Li, social capital "represents a form of resource which an individual may mobilize as a result of being attached to a social group" (p. 6). The women's comfort or discomfort, ability or inability to attach to a social group is worth consideration. Maggie and Araba have begun to make social connections across culture:

> I never went to places and they, I feel like they don't want to answer me or they don't want to talk to me. Whatever I need to, I got. If they don't, I feel like I need to go another place. But I never feel like they, because me, they don't say it because I look like a Filipino or Chinese (laughter). That's what people say (lots of laughter). I just never see that. Maybe because, even if those people mean that, I don't see it. I don't see it, just, maybe it's just me. Maybe they do something but just I don't care or I don't see. (Maggie 2: 516-527)

> You know, all I get this information here. And, again, by Nancy knowing me in her class, by the way I appreciated her class, I volunteered with her. Whenever I share with her, she began to know me more. And I think she kept talking about me to others like Sonia and Alia. So Alia invite me for conference and workshops. So, the more I got in touch with people, the more people pay attention to me and the more people know me. Once when I applied for work in Catholic Social Services they already know me from public speaking. So the more you keep yourself inside, the more you just want to keep yourself in your community, the less information you get and the more harder and challenging the life is going to be. (Araba: 453-462)

Araba's final comment on the danger of 'keeping yourself inside' refers to an

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individual's decision to access only those resources available within their ethnic community. Li (in press) says that social capital within ethnic groups is potentially limited as the effectiveness of a social contact is dependent upon the resources available to that social group. Araba, in her decision to network outside her own ethnic group, acknowledges that, otherwise, you access less information and face greater challenges. She echoes previous research (Reitz and Sklar, cited in Li, in press) that found that the maintenance of ethnic identities and social networks comes with a cost of lost opportunities in jobs and earnings.

The critical value of their ability to network, to access social capital, and the skill set to do so is apparent as women talk about the lack of opportunities while trying to settle in Canada. In the absence of formal resources, the women become creative in their solutions to learn the English language and Canadian culture. Yukiko searched for other immigrants who could help her understand Canadian culture; Manini searched for Canadian friends through her employment to learn both culture and language. When asked how they learned about Canada or English, Yukiko and Manini replied:

> I would say immigrant people who were actually going to practice and to establish their own businesses and get work here. From those who are in the same situation. Not from my husband, to be honest, he is a Canadian and he did not understand. He will never be able to understand how it is to come to a new country. (Yukiko: 234-246)

> OK, I told you I was a telephone solicitor, I talk to people. And also friends. I, after my first job, I thought about that, who can I talk to, and then I started to make Canadian friends. If I would make friends from my country, then I would talk in my language. And because I didn't know, at that time I didn't know... I didn't have friends, so I made friends from work. And I started to go out with them, with her, with shopping, and that is how I started to talk. (Manini 2: 189-194)

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Manini spoke at length about the benefits of creating networks, or what she coined "becoming famous". The impact that contacts in communities and work has had is obvious in the pleasure she gets out of telling me about her two "Canadian moms", women who invite Manini for dinners in their homes and are protective of her. She considers them good friends and they offer advice on education and relationships:

> I just started doing that, now I got famous. That's all I can say. I got another mom at work. When she knows about me, she talk. I was just doing a good job. I never was dealing with her. And then she said, you are so sweet. And then she start asking and then she said wow, I want to adopt you. (Manini: 759-762).

For others, the prospect of initiating communication so that they may create networks is daunting. For Yukiko and Xiu, it is difficult to find the opportunities and/or take the initiative. I asked Yukiko if she had increased the number of people that she knew since coming to Canada.

> (laughter) Not very much, maybe some friends. It is amazing how people say, I met someone, I got a job, that's all there is. But how do you meet someone? How do you call them, how do you start talking? Do you start talking about weather? You need to find something in common; you need that foundation. (Yukiko 2: 378-382)

Xiu feels she has not had the opportunity to do so. Although she and her husband have some contact with Canadian born friends, it is mostly through his work (579-599). They would both like to have more contact but find there are few opportunities and it is difficult to find opportunities. Similarly, Jasmine (460-480) talks about her husband's employment as the single source of contact with Canadian born friends.

Summary

Based on the women's experiences in their first three years, the following needs were identified. There is a lack of recognition for skills and education, difficulties in

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securing employment or appropriate educational opportunities, discrimination and feelings of invisibility and isolation. Much of what the women said revealed their personal attitudes and skills as well as their tendency to focus much more on their individual role in settlement (presented later in the findings) rather than the role of racialisation, feminisation, or the availability of formal resources.

The women make sacrifices in their personal relationships and forego the overwhelming struggle for credential recognition, choosing instead to further their education and work multiple jobs at minimum wage. In one situation, the husband and wife live in separate countries in order to meet the demands of childcare, educational upgrading and financial viability. In another case, the child returned to live with grandparents in the country of origin while the mother works multiple jobs to make ends meet. None of the women complain about expectations to upgrade or attend post secondary education, about working menial jobs to learn English language and Canadian customs. When the system fails the women, they compensate with personal commitment and perseverance.

Throughout the many interviews three themes pervade. First, the strength of character and attitude of the women; second, the ongoing need for determination and perseverance in the face of discriminatory practices and constructed membership in society and third, the inadequacy of formal resources to meet their needs.

Notes

[1] Participants' actual names have been replaced by pseudonyms unless stated otherwise, as per the participant's request.

[2] Maggie chose not to use a pseudonym.

[3] Although Claire came as a refugee it was decided to include her in the sample due to the wealth of information she provided regarding her experiences in Canada. Her situation is unique yet there are similarities that are worth noting throughout the analysis.

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Chapter 6: Challenges to Integration

One of the pervasive themes throughout the interviews was the ongoing need for determination and perseverance in the face of challenges to integration, particularly challenges that result from discriminatory practices and constructed membership in society.

In this section, I focus on the obstacles created by societal attitudes and immigration policy, specifically how they impact programs available through settlement agencies and opportunities for education and employment. First, I look at the day-to-day experiences of discrimination. Contrary to societal attitudes as reported in recent publications (Angus Reid Group, Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1999), women often get contradictory or mixed messages about societal attitudes towards their membership in Canada.

In order to understand the impact of immigration policy on settlement experiences, I decided to examine, as a quasi case study, the information provided by the employees of *Changing Together*. Their knowledge and experience with both the women and the policies give them insight into the barriers caused by current policies and program funding. Women also face barriers during their attempts to access education and gain employment. These include recognition of skills and credentials, expense and English language skills.

I also look at how the ways in which policy is based on and perpetuates a social construct of immigrant women that is incongruent with their lives before immigration and disrespectful of their potential as women living in Canada. An exploration of this social construction is all the more relevant as the women

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themselves both perpetuate and disrupt the construct of immigrant women. In some cases, the lack of choices forced them to become participants in perpetuating the constructs and stereotypes. Fortunately, other stories demonstrate the ways in which immigrant women dislocate social constructs. Finally, I explore some of the personal life circumstances that hinder their attempts at settlement and immigration.

Discrimination

As the women talk about their day-to–day experiences, I begin to see the barriers created by experiences of discrimination in their day-to-day lives. When I ask Xiu about how life has been since her arrival in Canada, I am faced with the stark reality of discrimination. In this first conversation I cite with Xiu, the suffering she experienced endures as she struggles with tears, apologizing for her emotions. Despite this experience, when asked if there is discrimination against minority groups in Canada, Xiu replied 'no'.

F: I would like you to remember those first few weeks or months that you were in Canada and tell me how it felt to you to be in Canada.
X: I think not clear. My English, unsure. I found, like, apply for job and I think, oh, I can make life.
F: So you did feel that you could make a life in Canada?
X: Yes.
F: How about the way people treat you when you first came?
X: (long pause) Most people were kind, some people showed something, especially one lady.
F: You are thinking of a specific story right? Can you tell me the story? Long pause
X: I will tell you one thing. The first time I want to take a computing class, I want to register. I tell the person, this class, this class I want to register. But I said one, zero, six, and she couldn't understand. And she look ***so*** cold. Because, you know, I feel so nervous, practically I couldn't speak. And then I went to the cashier and suddenly and I am registered for wrong course, this is different, this is not what I want. So I was struggling about handing in

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money. So I come back to the registry, the same lady, and she is talking to another student. And I was ***very*** nervous and panicked and I walked across and said to her, oh you put me in the wrong course. She looks at me and says "you stand there, there!" loud and pointing finger. "You stand there!" So I tried to stand where she told me and she said "There, there, there!" Oh, I almost teared. (During the interview, she begins to tear and apologizes)...

X: When this happens, the people look at me.
F: You mean the other people in the line up?
X: Yes, because she said, you stand here, here! They are just in line. There is just one lady and I don't need to stand way back in line. I want to fix it that is all.
F: How does that make you feel?
X: I feel I need to be strong. (Xiu 2: 253-292)

As I reviewed the interviews, taking into consideration Xiu's experience and her continued denial of discrimination, I find great variation in the women's experiences and attitudes towards discriminatory interactions. Three of the nine women label discriminatory practices as such and identified discrimination as a barrier to their settlement. Yukiko and Susan were certain in their belief that there is discrimination against minority groups.

> I can't say exactly what it is and why it is. I don't feel, I do feel some from some people, when I go for shopping, when I go somewhere for coffee, it happens everywhere almost. But I can't take that personally. When it comes to looking for work, I would say me working for Telus, me working in West Jet, it is not going to happen. Me working there is not going to happen. People there, because I don't look Caucasian, but there must be something going around in those things. There must be some kind of white values behind it. And people, I think, sensitivity to extra or higher, way higher up [speaking of management/human resources], they don't want to change their white values, their Canadian values. Like, they see some people from India or Thai, Japan, Asian values and they don't want to change them.(Yukiko 2: 483-493)

As the discussion progressed, I learn that Yukiko has applied for a job as an airline steward, a job that she may not have the credentials for (having never taken a course or having certification as a steward in Japan). She applies for stewarding based on the fact that she worked in the tourism industry in Japan. It is unclear to me

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whether she is applying for work beyond her credentials or whether she is not given the opportunity to explore the transfer of skills based on discriminatory practices. In the following conversation, Susan talks about similar experiences to those that Yukiko shared above. Here I explore whether Susan's perception or experience of discrimination is a function of the type of work sought, I follow up on her comment that "it doesn't matter if you have [professional] interview skills or not".

S So, actually, it doesn't matter if you have interview skills or not, they will not hire you.
F: Because why?
S I don't know.
F: So you have been actively out seeking and going to interviews? (Yes) and you are not getting the jobs? (Yes). And you don't know why?
S I don't know why.
F: Do you have some suspicions; do you have any guesses why that might be?
S I don't know. You know. Some of my friends told me that they just don't want to hire some people who have language problem, or they just don't want to hire Asia people, they just want to hire white people.
F: What kind of jobs did you have interviews for?
S: Very basic jobs. (Susan: 254-275)

Finally, Manini speaks of discrimination experienced early in her settlement here. It is interesting here to note that Manini wants to make it clear that the discrimination is from other immigrants as opposed to white Canadians. The employer was neither Canadian born nor from Manini's country of origin.

M: Just because I didn't know the English and I didn't know the rights. And that guy, he was saying do this, do this, do that, do that. And other people were talking just because I am not talking because....first, I don't like talking at work and second, I didn't know English, that is why I wasn't talking. Third, I am really fast worker. I do things fast. So, because I finish my job and I am just doing nothing. So they see I am doing nothing and then they give me more stuff to do. So I was doing other people's jobs too.
F: OK, so you were being mistreated.
M: Yes. And, if I was doing little mistakes, then I would get bigger lectures than other people.

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F: And you think it was because you did not speak very much and because you did not have the language?
M: Yes.
F: So, you stayed there until you realized that you had rights, that you could leave that job?
M: Yes. First I thought that maybe this is the way they do it. And then when I stopped and thought, the employees when they started job like me, and they were getting raise before me, bigger than I. Then I started to feel, then I didn't stay. Manini: 267-289)
M: Because all of the staff from same country and I was the only one. And because she wanted to bring her cousin and she couldn't and I got the job. So she was treating me like that, and that I thought. I left the job and the second day her cousin was working there.
F: And they were not Canadian?
M: They were from another country. (Manini 2: 475-480)

Four of the women are more reluctant to refer to experiences as discriminatory[1]. Despite the fact that they have experienced discrimination, and respond that there is discrimination in Canada, women often see the discrimination as something experienced by others, or have made a conscious decision not to attend to those experiences and, rather, dismiss them as specific events with individuals rather than a systemic problem or societal norm.

> I just never see that. Maybe because, even if those people mean that, I don't see it. I don't see it, just, maybe it's just me. Maybe they do something but just I don't care or I don't see. So I say, don't cry and worry about that, she did that, I never have been doing that or feeling that. (Maggie 2: 519-527) Because, again, not with me, because I still don't feel that. But I find in a lot of people, even if they have the education and experience, even the language, they still being rejected. So I feel that in some way, it is discrimination. (584-587)

> I don't focus on it so I don't realize if it is happening there or not. I even think that in that class, because I was.... If someone is racist because of my skin, they are wasting the time on my skin. That's what I am and I thought to myself I am a human being. I believe in myself, I don't believe in others. So, I don't plan to get challenged for what I can't change. So if I get challenged for what I can change, then I can focus very much what can I do to make this look good, or look something. I am an African, I am black, I am a woman. I am proud of it so I don't have to change it and I can't change it. (Araba: 688-696)

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> Sometimes when you are in the supermarket and you are buying things. And if you talk to your daughter in another language, it immediately come out in your mother tongue. So people on the other side listen, and then they are not so nice.... I don't know. I don't want to be too sensitive myself. So, you think about it always in your mind, then you think everybody is bad. So, I don't... (Jasmine: 392-415)

Perhaps the fact that some experience more overt discrimination than others and in different amounts reflects the findings of the Attitudes and Tolerance Survey by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Palmer, 1999). According to this survey, 43% of Albertans say there are too many immigrants and 18% say that immigration has a negative effect. In contrast, 7% say there are too few immigrants and 45% say that immigration has a positive effect on the region.

Every experience of discrimination demands that the women find the courage to continue. Xiu, Maggie, Araba and Susan all talk about the ongoing need for determination and perseverance in the face of discriminatory practices and constructed membership in society.

> Try and try, don't give up. (F: are there ever days that you felt like giving up?) Sometimes.... I always struggle. (Xiu: 463-471)

> I think the most important, is try, you know. Just try. The most you try, the most you will know and you will learn. Because if you don't try even to talk to strangers or to try to do something, you will never know if you can do or if they are going to get the job or talk to you. You have to try. Break that window and just go and talk and try. If the first time, they don't go, you have to try again. (Have you ever tried and tried and tried and got so frustrated that you thought, this is never going to work?) Not really. Because I did not try enough. I got frustrated in the middle, I told you, when I didn't get the job. But after I realized I didn't try enough. And I say, why I feeling this or why I doing this. And the first time I try a job I did not go because the language. And I thought it is going to be hard for me and I didn't try. Because even I had not been trying a lot of jobs, I did try some, but not a lot. So I say why am I complaining. When I find out my friends, they try a lot of jobs. Even they count the resumes they send. (Maggie: 538-556)

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> So I hope your paper can tell more people or tell the public to give immigrants equal chance or, if I say more chance then it is not fair for Canadians, to let them get education to let them to get a job. (Susan 2: 476-479)

Manini talks about the intensity of the struggle when I ask her what she would like non-immigrant women to learn from this research.

> Just put yourself into their situation and think about if you were that place what would you do and how would you feel? So you will learn more.... (pause) it feels bad. You can explain through, you know, like, I have seen some people, they don't have any kind of emotion, they don't have... inside, they don't use soft words. I think you can explain the way you feel, it is not a language, it is just the way you feel. It is kind of like, if I am in pain, and I want to say, like how pain is it. It is pain, it is pain, like very painful. I feel like my heart is kind of like pain. I am feeling like you are quiet, it is like blood is coming through my eyes, and my tears are warm, I can feel it is burning my cheek. Something like that,...deep, deep inside and you will feel the pain if it is coming deep inside and your tear will be like burning.... It is kind of like, if I am in pain, and I want to say, like how pain is it. It is pain, it is pain, like very painful. I feel like my heart is kind of like pain. I am feeling like you are quiet, it is like blood is coming through my eyes, and my tears are warm, I can feel it is burning my cheek. (Manini 2: 633-646)

As I read Manini's graphic description of the intensity of her struggle, I realized that her "feeling like you are quiet" refers, perhaps, to her sense of invisibility or inability to be heard. Yukiko talks about the struggle in being recognized in Canada. First, Yukiko's response to the question, "Would you encourage others to come to Canada?"

> Wow, that is a really hard question. In some respects, I wouldn't, because I know how hard it is. *Only if they stay at home.* If they are going to stay at home here and *not bothering anyone*. That is a pretty tough thing to do. (long pause) Overall, coming to a new country, it is challenging ...this is hard. (Yukiko2: 335-344)

Yukiko's advice to stay at home and not bother anyone prompted me to ask the women about feeling invisible in Canada. Jasmine's response to the same question demonstrates the kind of isolation experienced on a daily basis when the change seems overwhelming. I asked about the challenges since coming to Canada.

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J: Homesick. Even, because even we cannot have the cable TV and watch the news, anything. So I just can go to the internet. Now, since she was born, I cannot sit in front of the computer.
F: So it is harder to find that time?
J: For myself, yes.
F: Do you get out to visit other people?
J: Before she was born, yes. Since she was born, no. Before, I always take my eldest one to go around to Changing Together, to volunteer, or to some other Chinese Community and the Family Centre.
F: So you went out and had a lot of connections with people before Sally was born. Do you think it is just because Sally is so young? Do you think that you will start doing that again now?
J: I think when she is around one or two. I think maybe next summer.
F: So you have a whole year before you will start?
J: Yes, winter, I don't have a driving license, I don't know how to drive. And also, she is a bit cranky so it is difficult.
F: It would be hard to take the bus?
J: Yes.
F: Where is your elder daughter? Where is she?
J: She is now 5, she is in kindergarten.
F: till what time? What time do you have to pick her up?
J: Twelve o'clock. And they will come here,
F: So would it be hard to take Sally out somewhere when she is at kindergarten?
J: Yes. In winter we are stuck here. Now, it is getting better. I can take her for a walk, just along here (in the block) and then [older daughter] will come back. And she is up usually and has an afternoon nap, upset, play for a while, and then we walk again.
F: Do you miss being able to get out and see those people.
J: Yes, but most of the time I am too tired. You know, and I hope, yea, to get out. (Jasmine: 75-121)

Despite, or in spite of, discrimination, the women look for resources to overcome their isolation. In doing so, they hope to increase their understanding of Canadian culture, their English language skills, and their contact with people. These findings support the work of Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989), Miedema and Tastsoglou (2000), and Warren (1988) who cite women's attempts to overcome the isolation through employment and community service

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Barriers Experienced by Settlement Agencies

In this section, I look at the ways in which formal resources such as settlement agencies and educational opportunities and employment, structured by societal attitudes and policy, create barriers for some immigrant women. Often, the inadequacy of these formal resources is the result of restrictions imposed by policies and social constructions of immigrant women.

The women looked for solutions through formal resources such as settlement agencies, educational opportunities and employment. Based on the success of some women to access all three and the inability of others to do the same, it seems that each of these exist as potential resources while at the same time presenting some women with barriers to settlement. In this section, the problems posed by each of these potential resources will be explored as the women reflect on their experiences as clients at *Changing Together*, as students in upgrading and post secondary education, and as potential employees.

First, the various settlement agencies that the women identified will be noted. In order to explore the potential for agencies to play a role in settlement, a closer exploration of *Changing Together* serves as a "case study" of a settlement agency for women. How did the women find out about *Changing Together*, what did they find there, and how did it contribute to their settlement experience? In this section, the interviews with the three staff of the Centre will serve as a way to also consider ways in which immigration policy restricts the role of individuals and the Centre to the detriment of immigrant women's settlement experiences.

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Each woman was asked where she went for information when she first arrived in Canada and what she was looking for. Apart from *Changing Together*, other settlement agencies frequently cited by the women include the Mennonite Centre, Catholic Social Services, church, and cultural communities (Chinese and Japanese). They often found out about Catholic Social Services and the Mennonite Centre from information received upon immigration. They accessed these first services for English language education. These first sources often became the link to *Changing Together* as women searched for volunteer opportunities, pre-employment education and assistance regarding domestic violence and emotional support[2].

A Case Study of the Barriers Faced by Changing Together...

A Centre for Immigrant Women

In order to explore the impact of policy on a settlement agency, I chose to focus on *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women.* Three fulltime staff members, whose day-to-day work is affected by policies, shared their experiences.

When I spoke to the women at *Changing Together*, I wanted to document the challenges that may be the result of Federal policies such as immigration and multiculturalism, provincial funding and partnerships – financial, academic and social. Findings show that one aspect was the challenge posed by the conditions of immigration, namely sponsorships and Visitor Visas. A second aspect was the restrictions and barriers imposed by funding bodies, directly impacting settlement agency program development and delivery. Finally, there was discussion regarding the slow response of policy and program development to the changing face of immigrant women in Canada.

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Sponsorship Status

The women repeatedly spoke about the difficulties created by the condition of sponsorship when immigrating to Canada. As was noted in the literature review, this has been and continues to be a source of vulnerability for immigrant women. Previous research and conference proceedings document the need for government support in the provision of language training for all adult immigrants. Immigrant women have repeatedly called for more opportunities to learn English and many complain that ESL classes provided by Federal government money are elementary and do not facilitate entry into the workforce (Ng, 1993). The eligibility of women continues to depend upon their immigration status. Furthermore, the language skills they have developed through those programs continue to be inadequate for job interview and placements as evidenced by their difficulty in telephone and in-person interview experiences. Interestingly, one of the few alternatives available for the study and practice of English is the *Making Changes Program.* Not intended to be a tool for ESL, *Making Changes* is the only pre-employment course available to women only. The existence of such a program is one of few responses to previous research that recognized the importance of employment in integration and settlement. Ng (1993) states that men integrate relatively quickly through paid work. In contrast, many women become marginal members of society, especially if they do not speak English. Unfortunately, the success of the program is hindered by assumptions and expectations of immigrant women's roles (discussed in detail in the social construction of immigrant women).

> Immigrant categories are not merely legal definitions. They have real social and economic consequences for people's lives. For example, family class immigrants

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> are to provide emotional and other support to the wage earners and are not destined for the labour market. (Ng, 1988, p. 16)

Alia shares her experiences and opinions on the sponsorship status of immigrant women. Here, she talks about the way in which sponsorship status sets the women's expectations:

> [T]he whole business of sponsorship and immigration sets a lot of women up. Even if it is not in reality, legally, but even in their minds. Like, before you come here, you are told you are being sponsored, someone will take care of you financially, the government washes their hands of you. (11-14). At the onset, before they even come, they are told don't even dare to ask for anything from the government because you are sponsored by your husband and he is responsible for you. And if it is a husband who wants a little bit more control, well, he will just reiterate that fact that, don't even bother to ask for help, I am responsible and so on. So there is that preconceived thing at the onset that makes the one extremely dependent and controllable. (26-31)

Cote, Kerisit and Cote (2001) document the fact that, since 1978, sponsored immigrants are restricted in terms of their access to assistance and increased obligations to their sponsors. This has not changed and may, in fact, be complicated by the introduction of the visitors visa program[3]. Alia shares her perception of the introduction of the sponsorship program, backed by Abu Laban's (1998) concern that immigrants are no longer seen as potential contributing citizens but as potential societal problems. The impact of sponsorship on women's lives is a daily experience in Alia's life as a social worker. The stories she hears are like many of the stories that have been around since 1978; a woman sponsored by her husband, is dependent on his goodwill or a victim of his ill will. Women still live with the (false) threat of deportation as cited in Cote, Kerisit and Cote (2001).

Alia talks further about the fact that even when policy is in place, it may or may not have the intended impact dependent upon the service provider. The fact that a

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woman is sponsored may close doors of communication. "The standard question is: Have you been sponsored? Yes I have been sponsored. End of discussion." (Alia: 60-61). As we continued to discuss the challenges faced by women, Alia returned to the impact of sponsorship and her perception of its origins.

> I don't like sponsorship to start with. I know it is something that the government invented so that the government is not responsible for people that are being brought to this country. But it is a crock really. Most of these people have never been on assistance. Their intention to come here is not to be on assistance. So I don't think we need any big deterrence. (Alia: 273-288)

A more recent immigration policy that impacts the women is the use of a visitor visa to sponsor women who are coming to Canada to join their husband or future husband. In the past, women and children were often separated from their husband/father when immigrating to Canada. The man would immigrate to Canada and then sponsor their spouse and children. This could mean a 12 to 24 month separation while the paperwork was processed. In order to avoid this separation, the government now issues visitor visas so that the man and woman/child(ren) can move to Canada together. Alia says that she does not want to change the policy, "It is good." However, there are ways in which this policy is, like sponsorship, detrimental to some women. While this changes the waiting period, it does not alter the conditions of their immigration.

> But what ended up happening is.. now if you are a decent man and you get a visitor visa and this woman comes here and she lives with you, you actually have to start the paperwork which ... if people are not decent, not a nice person will not do it. And it gives you good trial period if you don't like this person you can just send them back. So then it ranges by husband. And I am saying husband. I am sure that there are women that do these things, but I only see the women. There is a whole range of husbands. There is the one who is absolutely ignorant and lazy and just doesn't do the papers (F: and then it runs out?) yea. And then she is in trouble. And then there is the absolute ignorant, lazy and mean, covering up, telling her oh, actually you don't need any papers, you are my wife. And then in a few years, she cannot work or do anything else here apart from being a prisoner. She realizes she is here illegally. And the truth is, in a lot of other countries, after

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> being married, you are allowed to stay. But it is not an unusually big lie. And there are those who absolutely know what they are doing and don't bother to do it or use it as something over their head. So first of all they hold it over their heads, saying if you don't do that I will not process your papers. The other thing is I have found papers and I can use them anytime. And the other thing is I might or might not file the papers. It is a good, good, good abusive tool to hold over their heads. And then once the VISA expires, now the woman is here illegally, they have another one up on them. They say I will report you, you are here illegally.(Alia: 231-249).... But again, they are only here, the crux of the whole problem is they are only here as visitor, they can't go to school, they can't work, nothing, so they are totally dependent, worse than sponsorship, yea? (254-258)

Alia's experience with the effects of sponsorship echoes the work of Josephine Fong (1999) who found that Chinese immigrant women who were married with small children were very likely to experience difficulties with resettlement. In some cases, husbands, after migrating to Canada with their wives, continue a career or business in the country of origin. In other cases the women migrate to Canada many years after their husband has settled here. And in others, overseas brides barely know their husbands and others struggle to settle in a new country with ruthless husbands.

The entrenchment of the policy system is further reflected in Alia's story of women looking for assistance. Asked if she is sponsored, the woman replied 'yes'. According to Alia, the power of that statement, without critical application of policy and deeper interrogation into day-to-day circumstances, means 'end of story'. In other words, if you are sponsored, you are not the responsibility of the state, but must depend on the assistance of your sponsor. And so, the woman's belief that once sponsored she is on her own and dependent on the will of her husband, is reinforced by the system.

Funding and Program Development

Sonia speaks about an apparent value hierarchy and where immigrant women fit

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in that hierarchy. This directly affects their ability to secure funding for *the Centre* as a whole:

> I'll tell you why it is a problem. Because majority of the women will come sponsored by their husband or their family sponsor. The priority will be to one. Let's say if they come to Canada as landed immigrant and the husband is the one who is screened to be here as professional, even if her education is higher than him, so the money is put to serve people who came first. So the women are not receiving same kind of equal. And we are center for women, so the funding is not equal to other agencies who are giving programs for men. (Why isn't it equal to those that are receiving programs for men?) Why? Because the men are considered to be the breadwinners of the family, so more sophisticated programs for men than for women. (Sonia: 84-95).... So that is why I am saying it depends on the priority and how the government will look into that. Is program for immigrant women important or not important? But not only programs for immigrant women, for women in general it's not really as important as other programs. Second, will be seniors, and you have the youth. (370-377)

This position of male immigrants as the breadwinners is reinforced in the development and provision of programs as well as the social construction of women. Alia, Nancy, and Sonia share their experiences with immigrant women in their search for training and education. In order to pay the bills, the women are more likely than the men to take menial jobs at minimum wage. In addition, the men tend to have access to pre-employment training opportunities over a longer period of time than the women. These two factors combined have two effects on *the Centre's* ability to be funded and meet the needs of immigrant women. First, the number of women who walk through the doors of the Centre is compromised due to their re-entry into underemployment. As a result, viable programs are cut due to low enrolment[4]. Second, the challenges to participation are greater for the women as they continue to put family first and lose the confidence to re-enter the workforce. The staff of *Changing Together,* with their history of working with immigrant women, understand the unusual conditions of settlement and integration.

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Hence, the value of a women's only Centre. Ironically, the fact that they are providing a unique service also jeopardizes their funding in that they are a relatively small agency (if measured by clientele only).

However, the women also speak about the importance and uniqueness of a women's settlement agency. While the funding is compromised by the fact that there are no programs for men, the fact that their sole focus is to serve women is the very reason the women benefit from *Changing Together*. I asked Alia if *Changing Together* simply duplicated services available at other agencies. She spoke eloquently about the value of a women's only center:

> First of all, it just makes it very, very acceptable, just the fact that there is place where any woman can go, regardless of background, how long she has been here, just the fact that she was not born here, just the fact that she can go to a place where she can access expertise. Whether the services are here or not, it is just an easy one-place shopping stop. And also, the fact that we concentrate on women, we know what affects women more. In all these examples I have given, you would not have this kind of discussion in a mixed group or just males. We would have long discussions about professional agencies, getting jobs. A place where women can go learn, get the confidence. You know, ... it is very important for women to come to a place where they already think or feel that they are understood, that they can come, also that they can come and be role models. A lot of women, especially even myself, I have never been a client here, I have worked as a volunteer, but the biggest thing for me is being able to know that women of all backgrounds can support each other, or go out together, be happy, be smart, dream, and actually go and achieve those dreams, get help achieving those dreams, not being put down for dreaming the impossible. And that is what this center provides.... And also, just seeing people who are at different stages. It helps them to see people who are further ahead [in their settlement and integration].(Alia: 396-415)

The funding restrictions and expectations also impact the delivery of *Making Changes*, the pre-employment course offered through *Changing Together*. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, funders of the pre-employment program, set very specific restrictions regarding participating in *Making Changes*. In order to take

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the pre-employment course, the woman must be a landed immigrant, have a certain level of proficiency in English and must have immigrated within the past three years. Nancy talks about the incongruity of these restrictions in relation to the lives of immigrant women. First, the condition that the women must take the course within their first three years in Canada:

> It's not very long. And what I find is a lot of the students, a lot of the old students say they wish they could take it again now, because now they have more life experience of being able to relate to it. And also, in the first year, when an immigrant comes to a new culture, they have the language, the housing, the whole getting their family settled, all these other things that are causing stress that don't help their learning curve. (Nancy: 62-66)

Such program restrictions also adhere to the belief that all immigrant women are the same. In fact, the time needed for transition varies greatly. Nancy comments on the different needs of immigrant women that are not considered in this time restriction:

> For instance, when we have, when the refugees are say from some of the African countries, their transition to the Canadian lifestyle takes longer, so the likelihood that they are going to enroll in this kind of a program in their first two to three years is less likely than when we had women from Kosovo and Bosnia and whatever who the actual cultural transition is not so, even though the language barriers were all there, they live in similar communities like houses and they went to similar type of school system. (Nancy: 29-34)

Finally, the reality that these are women who are at the stage of life where establishing families is a priority:

> Instead of making it 1 to 3 years, make it 2 to whatever. Because there are a lot of women that have, for whatever reason, especially lots of cultures, they stay home with their children....The women will take the program, and I find that a lot of the women are pretty young women, so then they have babies. And some of them are even pregnant when they take the program. And then they are not able to hit the market for another year at least or two years. (Nancy: 143-156)

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The very conferences cited in the literature review and the accompanying lack of response, in terms of policy review or program development, support Carty and Brand's (1993) comment that multiculturalism has been more about winning the political support of immigrants through their financial backing of conferences than truly offering strategies or support for integration. During my two years on site, I was able to attend two conferences hosted by *Changing Together*, supported by Provincial and National funding (Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship; Immigration Canada; Canadian Race Relations Foundation; Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism). These conferences never failed to bring local and National political delegates who were pleased to provide the opening address. While I believe that their support and enthusiasm for the work of *Changing Together* and similar settlement organizations is sincere, this has not changed the central issues of insufficient program funding and core support.

Despite the fact that Multiculturalism is a federal policy, there is very little core funding provided to ensure the delivery of programs that would improve the participation of immigrant w omen in Canadian society. The only secure, on-going funding received from Citizenship and Immigration Canada is $12,500.00/year for the staff position responsible for the Making Changes program. Alberta Learning provides the other $12, 500.00. Other federal funds are one-time grants, applied for by the Centre to run pilot projects and research grants. The funding for key staff positions rely on contributions from the United Way (one full time volunteer coordinator) and Family and Community Social Services (one full time and one part time social worker). All of these funds are also dependent upon the existing political climate and representatives. For example, the executive director states repeatedly the importance of being politically

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aware and advocating for candidates, as new representatives may be advantageous or disadvantageous (with regard to their public and financial support of the Centre). The executive director, accounting and reception positions are all self funded as is their facility rental and administrative expenses.

Changing Together continues to be critically under-funded. Critiques in 1983 and 1991 stated the negative impact of short term program funding. Sonia spoke similarly about programs that were funded within the last two years in order to develop resources and run pilots. Upon their completion, successful programs are dropped when attempts to secure on-going funding fail.

Sonia notes, in particular, the Mentorship Program. This program would fill the gap in many facets of immigrant women's settlement. The women spoke about the gap between mainstream women or white women and the community of immigrant women. The women also spoke about the lack of opportunities to learn and practice ESL and get accustomed to Canadian culture. The mentorship program was (and is) designed to link recently immigrated women with long-time immigrant and Canadian-born women[5]. Although the resources were developed with resources from Canadian Heritage, support for the on-going provision of the mentorship program cannot be secured. Funding was received in spring 2003 and the manuals were updated. Revisions were based on the recommendations of past participants as well as a committee of community leaders. During the course of those reviews, it was acknowledged that, in order for the program to run at maximum effectiveness, it would be important to have a coordinator to ensure that the mentor-protégé relationships are satisfactory to all involved and to organize on-going and consistent support. At this point, the only alternative is to secure a volunteer to

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commit the hours and to take on those responsibilities. This supports previous research and conference proceedings cited throughout the literature review that cite the detrimental effects of long-standing reliance on volunteers (predominantly women) for the delivery of multicultural initiatives and programs.

Barriers Created by Immigration Policies and Multiculturalism

Research question one asked, "How have the educational opportunities and integration experiences of women been structured by immigration policy and the multiculturalism act?" The literature review showed that the educational opportunities and settlement experiences of women have been structured by immigration policy and the discourse of multiculturalism. The question, more accurately, is whether they continue to be structured and, if so, how? The findings show that the educational opportunities continue to be structured by immigration policy and multiculturalism due, in part, to the fact that policies have not responded to the changing face of immigrant women. Even though we see more highly educated, independent women immigrating to Canada, the policies and programs do not allow these women to pursue equitable careers or retain similar status in Canada.

> If you notice immigration trends change from 1990 to now, you see more educated women coming. In our volunteering program we know the changes. We used to have outside, in our volunteer program, retired women or somebody who does not have kids or work; they will come and do volunteer work. Now we have most qualified people. We have people with PhD, Masters programs, people who are specialists in computers or designing worksite and so on. (Sonia: 108-113)

In conclusion, the women were asked to reflect on whether multiculturalism is a working policy and whether, in their opinion, multiculturalism promotes inclusion in

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Canadian society:

> I think that we have a really good multicultural act in place. But it's not implemented and it's not monitored. So, if people don't respect that kind of act, it's OK at this time (meaning that ignoring tenets of m/c seems to be acceptable at this time). Since September 11, I don't think we have the multiculturalism. We continue talking about diversity, about acceptance, about belonging, and still words. I don't see it in action. So I don't think multiculturalism is enforced to the fullest of what we have in the act. If you read the act it is so beautiful. But it's not respected. And not only people in the community, even politicians don't follow the document. So, I think it's still a problem, but I don't see any proactive approach to correct things. (Sonia: 188-196)

The women all believe that the intent of the policy is 'great', but that it is not happening. In their opinion, based on their experiences, the expectations are still for immigrant women to fit into Canadian ways as opposed to the realization of a multicultural society that strives for the integration of all people within all societal cultures. Furthermore, each of the women have a rationale for their opinions and each is a reflection of their job at *Changing Together*. The pre-employment educator cites the following example:

> The intent is great. The reality is it is not happening. (Nancy: 257) If we just go back to Making Changes program again, like, it's not, it's the Canadian way or no way. There is no acknowledgement that you may come from this country and the way you do it is different, we're open to talk about how that can be used in a Canadian context and how you can integrate your whatever, your cultural skills, knowledge, beliefs, whatever, in an employment situation. It doesn't happen. This is the way they do it in Canada, you better learn it if you want to get a job. (241-247)

Alia speaks from her experiences trying to help women settle and access assistance to leave abusive relationships:

> There are women who should not be in these abusive relationships, but the hurdles we have put up are so horrendous that most women don't leave. And those are not even the ones they put up themselves, like the beliefs and their own

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> fears and struggles. That is after they have actually overcome all their own barriers to actually seek help and want to get out. So it puts them in a horrible situation. You don't have to live with this in Canada. Yea, right. And then when, sometimes, the position I find myself in I have to tell them the truth. Like, they say yea OK. So the basic thing is that you do not have to live with this in Canada, this government will help you. And then when they say OK I am ready. Ok the truth is, the government will help you *this much.* A lot of times when they hear the actual amount, they just go right back. (Alia: 131-141) And we are so nice we tell them that they don't have to live with that, you have rights. And the truth is, when it comes to actually supporting them leaving, it is breaking down. I have been three years working with clients and I have seen it just going down hill. (167-170)

Sonia[6], administrator of *the Centre* immigrated to Canada over 20 years ago and reflects, here, on multiculturalism:

> If we have vision and we have good policies in place to implement everybody, to give chance to everybody, we don't need too much on-going funding. And you see lots of organizations disappearing. Why? Always I say, as long as we have women shelter, we have food bank, and we have special funding for homeless or funding, it means that we are lacking so much in the society. Same way, if you have good programs and good policies in place, you don't need settlement agencies. Maybe you need them only to do interpreting and language and so on. (Sonia: 255-261).

I also asked Sonia how she would define integration. Her response not only defines integration in a multicultural society but speaks to the importance of integration in terms of settlement.

> For me, integration is when we expect to change, not only other people to change. We are the host country, and we are welcoming newcomers if they are refugees or immigrant. Because refugees they become landed immigrant after everything is OK. So, we expect them to change, but we are not expecting ourselves to change to meet them half way. So, for me, integration is both parties coming to meet in the middle and work together. I found anytime you feel you belong, you are welcome, you do so much. If you are going to be isolated and no one will pay attention to you, how can you integrate? (Sonia: 200-206)

Sonia also begins to touch on the impact of socioeconomic status in one's ability

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to integrate. The following quote speaks to the question "Is Canada's success in fulfilling the goals of multiculturalism *dependent* on gender, age, race, and, most importantly, class?":

> When they come and they have the money they are welcome all over. But people who don't have the money, they're not welcome. I see it again and again. In a way, they are OK to be with accent. It's like they are invisible with that. They are visible if they have the money. They are invisible if they don't have the money. You'll see people attending, let's say, ceremonies and so on. And it seems nobody sees them. So how do you expect them to integrate to the society if they feel they are left out? So when you say welcome it is different than saying I don't care. So the word welcome is really important. Welcome in all aspects, you know. (Sonia: 218-227)

Despite their intentions, workers and administrators of this settlement agency have difficulty providing appropriate and/or adequate programs due to policy and funding restrictions. What is in place is invaluable, and their ability to identify the needs of immigrant women is admirable, but program restrictions (such as 3 year criterion for participation in Making Changes), funding shortages (such as the absence of support for key administrative positions or program delivery), and the uncertainty of their future (dependent upon the political climate and individuals who hold office) compromise their expertise.

Barriers to Educational Opportunities

It is well known that immigration policy, through the point system, values formal education. However, according to the women, the more educated you are, the more difficult it is to settle in Canada. As mentioned earlier, six of the women came with some post secondary education, five of those six with a post secondary degree. Yukiko, Araba and Manini, coming with no post secondary education, talk about the fact that they have witnessed more difficulty in settlement for women with post secondary education.

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> And I know that others were going through much harder situations here. They had degree or whatever education and they can't go back into their field. In some respects, I am lucky because I can go to school. I may not have any education, but that means that I can start anything new. (Yukiko: 292-295).... There is always discrimination against women. In Canada not very much, especially compared to where I am from. For some people, for sure, if they are educated, they have career, then life is very difficult. There are some kind of barriers. They are some kind of ego thing. Even the man makes mistakes, the man is still on top. (521-525)

> For my experience with some of my friends who have come here with their Masters or degrees, I think it is *more* painful for them. And it is more harder for them to get jobs.... Yes, because they want to be accepted the way they wanted to be. They wanted to do jobs that they are meant to do. They don't want to go to cleaning, they don't want to go to do any other jobs that can help them for the pay. And then by rejecting that, you allow the situation to overcome you. But if you try to overcome the situation and then plan on other things, then life becomes easier. (Araba: 410-422)

Xiu, acknowledging the difficulty educated women have, says that she urged her friend from China *not* to come to Canada because her friend has a very good job, a good life and career and a Masters degree. Her decision to discourage her friend reflects her belief that an education and accompanying expectations will result in disappointment here.

Lack of Recognition of Credentials

The fact that women continue to be admitted more often as dependents than independents, the subsequent impact on their ability to access relevant programs, and the absence of timely or adequate pre-employment training, all have direct impact on their ability to settle in Canada:

> We know what immigration is trying to do, with new policies and so on, to bring more educated people. But we see lots of depression with women, especially

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> professional women who expect they can come and continue their career. Their credentials are not recognized here. We know there are lots of researchers in the community, lots of initiatives starting towards foreign qualification. But still the ratio is very low, so it's not meeting everybody's (needs). (Sonia: 135-140)

A closer look at the women with post secondary education further exemplifies the challenges of transferring professional skills due to lack of recognition of education or credentials, the acquisition of adequate English skills and the difficulties faced in gaining access to upgrading or post secondary education. Consider the following conversation with Susan, a medical doctor with her own practice for ten years before coming to Canada:

> S: I just really need a job opportunity and getting into the, some program or work again.
> F: So if you could have gotten into some programs at the university sooner, that would have helped.
> S: Yes, that would have totally changed my life.
> F: So, how long have you been trying to get access to university courses? You have been here since 1999?
> S: You know, two years ago, I applied for the after degree, but I needed to take time to prepare for the TOEFL and also the TSE. And also three courses prerequisite.
> F: So it has taken you two years to meet those criteria. (yes) OK, it sounds, and this has come up before a little bit, that it's sometimes easier if you immigrate without high education because then you haven't already got credentials that are not recognized. So you are choosing a career, and working to get access and training. But when you have done that at home and then you come because they are looking for people with those qualifications, it is more frustrating to come with those kind of skills and not have them recognized than if you had not had those skills at all. Would you say that is right?
> S: yes

During the second interview with Susan, I follow up on this conversation for clarification and confirmation. I ask Susan if she would like to continue as a medical doctor. Her response is simply "that is my dream" (Susan 2: 194). However, she is quick

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to realize the challenge that dream presents and explores her alternatives.

S: Yes. Even though, too, I also like to get some information to which area or which career I would be able to get into. So, maybe in the future I would have a good chance to find a job. So, at that time, I find very little room to have a, to find a good job.
F: Small chance?
S: Small chance, yes.
F: When you asked where could I go from here, what did they tell you? Did they tell you to do the RN?
S: Oh no. They told me if you like to go to the university, first you have to pass the TOEFL test. So at that time I want to improve my English first. It is the first step and also it is the most important thing for me to do. (Susan 2: 223-237)

Claire also came to Canada with a university degree. She completed her bachelor degree in petroleum engineering. Despite her ten years of experience in China, she has yet to find work related to her education or even recognition for her education in Canada. Her future at this point is based on her plans to set up an international business in Edmonton. At this point, she has complete faith in the fact that this will happen. In the following conversation, I try to comprehend the *lack* of frustration despite the lack of recognition for credentials that Claire and her husband experience.

F: Have you gone to the University at all to see if your credentials are recognized? Does the University recognize your engineering degree?
C: My husband want to
F: And what did the university say? Do they say that Yes, your engineering degree is good in Canada?
C: No, they didn't accept it. It is difficult.
F: When you left China and came here did you think that he would still be an engineer?
C: Yes. Because we translated into English certificate. But here, no, they didn't accept it.
F: So that must have been a little bit disappointing.
C: They told my husband you have to go to NAIT or U of A. to study some courses.
F: How does he feel about that?
C: We don't want to study because it takes many time and money. But we have to.

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F: So you will be?
C: I think that after, maybe, a couple years I will go. But my husband want to this year or next year. After he finish the program of engineer, he doesn't know the Norquest...
F: So, if he goes to Norquest and gets a job?
C: If he finish the program and he can find a job it's OK. If he won't find a job, he has to go to U of A or NAIT.
F: And he will do that if he has to?
C: Yes. But I want to have another baby, so maybe later.
F: I think that's most of the questions. One of the things that still surprises me is that you are so positive, you have such a good attitude. Before you came to Canada, did you see Canada ...you say it as very accepting of different people and friendly. That was the impression that you got before you came to Canada – that people would be friendly and that you would not experience racism. And since you have come to Canada, that seems to be your experience here?
C: Yea
F: The only problem that you had was that your credential were not recognized, they don't take your engineering degree
C: Yea
F: But even though they say that, you are willing to just go to school and do whatever you have to.
C: My husband?
F: Or both of you, eventually. Even if it is 2 or 3 years, you will go to school if that is what you have to do.
C: I think..., here everything is good. I never think of bad things. (Claire 2: 307-366)

Finally, I ask the women what advice they would give others immigrating to Canada. The women spoke again about the difficulty of having their credentials recognized and finding jobs or accessing educational opportunities. The prospects for others immigrating are best if they do not have post secondary education, if they want a challenge, are willing to work hard, and willing to compromise their status and confidence:

> She has good English, but you know accent and the way we talk. Like, ...she is not as bright and then she has to find time to do that. She cannot get job right away, the same job she is doing over there. She will get lower position. Or maybe she cannot get in the same field. So she has to work in the restaurant or somewhere else because she might need money for living. And then, she can get

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> depressed and because she lives like a princess back home, she never cook, she never did anything. She has to do everything here. (Manini: 82-86)
>
> Once, my brother asked me, how about I go to Canada? I said, you will be very disappointed. And I told him, you are not young anymore. My oldest brother is 22 years older than me, so right now he is not young anymore. He needs to spend time working on English, also civil engineer.... When you apply for immigrant, your education is recognized. But when you try to find a job it does not count anymore. (Susan: 453-461)

In her article on the internationalization of professionals, Robyn Iredale (2002) does a comparative analysis of skills assessment of immigrants in Australia, Canada, and the United States. With regard to Canada in particular, she writes:

> Permanent professional immigrants have frequently been excluded from their occupations in the major immigrant-receiving countries. Unemployment and under-employment have led to under-utilization of their skills, even during skill shortages. A surplus in a profession usually meant increased difficulty for immigrants wishing to enter the occupations for which they had been trained. (p. 813)

Based on Neysmith and Chen's (2002) acknowledgement of the increased educational credentials of Canadian born citizens, it follows that immigrants to Canada have increased difficulties accessing their chosen occupations. In fact, Basran and Zong (1998) document the experiences of foreign trained visible minority professionals in Canada who have experienced downward social mobility and an under-utilization of their skills.

Expense

One of the barriers to educational resources is expense. For those who *are* attending paid programs (such as ESL, upgrading, or post secondary credit courses), the

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expenses are covered by loans or affordable only because of money available to them from family members.

Yukiko talks about the expense and her fortunate circumstances. She is the second of the nine women to comment on the support of family.

> Oh, it is quite expensive getting more expensive, $25 each semester I think. When my father passed away three years ago he gave me a sum amount of money for tuition fee or for whatever I would like to do for myself or my family. So I am depending on that now. (Yukiko 2: 215-221)

English as a Second Language

All of the women realized fairly quickly the importance of learning English. " I know, no matter what, I have to learn the language because that is the most important thing" (Maggie 2: 243). Xiu, despite her difficulties also talks about the necessity of English language skills.

> at that time, my teacher can't understand my speaking. And I'm .... I still also can't understand others, I have a hard time, but I try because I know I want to learn something, I want to live in this country. So I try to learn just to speak (Xiu: 254-257)

For many, overcoming the challenge of ESL is difficult. Further, when attempting to engage in post secondary and professional jobs, the language is even more foreboding.

I found, while doing the analysis, that it is almost impossible to consider the challenges of access to education separate from the challenges posed by the difficulties of learning English. For Susan, Xiu and Yukiko, their choices are affected, at least in part, by their ability (or inability) to master the English language at a level that is adequate for their educational aspirations. First, Susan talks about the commitment required to gain

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admission to the registered nursing (RN) program at the University of Alberta. Although her medical degree qualified her for admission to the RN program, the language requirements were rigorous with little formal assistance.

S: Actually, I applied for the after degree for registered nursing program so that will be just for two years.
F: And they have said that your medical degree will give you? That is enough, it is a bachelor degree so they will let you into the after degree program?
S: Yes.
F: So that is a for sure?
S: No, I am not for sure. First I needed to pass the TOEFL. So I already passed the TOEFL and it is OK, I think so. The total score is 300, I got 257, so yes. I should be OK. And then now I am working on my course descriptions. In order to send my course description to the registrar office in order to validate my course to say I can. Some courses maybe I don't need to get again. (Susan: 103-117)

In Xiu's case, her ability to master the English language is becoming somewhat overwhelming with life circumstances and the necessity for income. When I asked her whether she had considered the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) as an alternative post secondary education, this was her response.

X: No, when I finish my LINC class I did not have any opportunity to learn more about English. So, all I really hungry to learn, English. But, you know, my husband has a job, he has to pay the one high. For me, for us, it is a problem. We borrowed a lot of money in China we have to return. Although my husband had a job, we can't pay ...I think I couldn't stay at home, I need to learn more. And to work as a janitor again, that is not my dream. So, I want to pass TOEFL, that is like, oh, it is like a mountain. Not the right time. So, I got some information from my friends and classmates which career is right. What one I can learn because of my education background. They said you can try to learn accounting.
F: So you did not need TOEFL for the accounting?
X: No, if, for the part time you can just join. If you can pass the course. I think after 6 courses, they ask. If you can pass, you can transfer to full time.
F: So how many courses have you done now?
X: I am done the certificate.
F: Oh, good.
X: But I am taking the diploma courses now. Maybe in September I will transfer to the full time class

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F: OK, but you could any time now. You have the six courses so you could transfer any time?
X: Yes, (laughter). But the accounting class is not so hard for me. I learn, because when I choose to study at NAIT, the thing I want to learn, the first thing is English. I can study to listen to the teacher and to talk and to read the book. And also, I can learn the technology, so that is good.
F: So you are actually learning English as part of going to accounting, listening to the teacher, reading the books is your way to improve your English (yes) because other ways are expensive (yes). (Xiu: 303-339)

Yukiko also makes her choice of post secondary education based not on her work skills or experience, but on her (in)ability to master the English language. When I asked her if she liked accounting, she responded, "It's okay. I have some paperwork from Japan, even though I don't have any work experience. That is why I am taking accounting. *And I thought that would be the fastest way to get a job.* And my goal is to get a job and get paid and feed my children, to live my life" (Yukiko: 299-306)

Even with a basic understanding and use of the language, the women remark on their difficulty understanding or in being understood.

X: Maybe the problem is still my English. Sometimes, for example, one day, I received a phone call from a company. The lady who interviewed, she was speaking SO fast, and become faster and faster. I can't catch.
F: And this was over the telephone (yes), not going into her office to meet with her?
X: Yes. I think it surprised my husband when he was interviewed. Because when my husband got his first interview it was a telephone interview. The person says the first word was, my husband did not understand. It was, the person asked him What's new, no, What's up? What's up? That, I think is an idiom.
F: Yes, so your husband did not know what to respond?
X: No. But for me the lady asked me just one sentence I did not understand because it was so fast, so I lost an opportunity. (Xiu: 413-430)

But also, I was kind of afraid for my language, because I don't speak the language. And, I got many interviews, like people phone me, but when I was in

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> the interview I was not able to communicate. So I understand the work, that's all, I get frustrated with that. Because maybe I can help out and do the work, but I couldn't talk, I couldn't explain, I couldn't answer any questions they ask. So I become kind of mad because I couldn't talk. Not because I couldn't get the job, because I think that I could talk maybe I could get the job. (Maggie: 306-211)

As time goes by, though the women are feeling more competent, they are still unsure of their English:

> Like, before I was nervous, right. I want to talk, big time, but I was afraid. How can I think, how do I explain? But now I have, like, a little bit courage. (Disha 2: 104-105)

I begin to wonder what is available for these women, so that they may gain confidence with the English language and find sources appropriate to their English language needs. I soon learn that there are few if any formal sources for learning more than basic English and few opportunities to practice.

> F: You are getting into, while at NAIT, a technical skill. But I do not know where people go to get help with higher-level education.
> M: That is what I am thinking too. I am still thinking, but I don't know how. But I don't want to stop just because I don't know how. (Manini: 807-812)

> I would like to have enough English in writing and computer skills. Like, writing essays, you know, having those vocabulary. So I still feel like I need to take some programs in computer and English so that I have enough knowledge to get to what I wanted. So that I am able to take notes, write essays, and go to the library, all those kind of things. (Do you know where you can find training like that?) No. (Araba: 626-634)

Acknowledging the lack of formal opportunities, the women seek practice. Claire, a petroleum engineer with ten years experience in International business works as a dishwasher:

> English is very important, we have to talk much, but I think my English is not good enough now. So, I want to improve my oral English. This is one

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> reason Nancy wants me to go to a restaurant to do a job. Because there are many Canadians that work there, not a Chinese restaurant. So I must speak English at work. (Claire: 184-188)

Xiu, in her attempts to improve her English, takes two courses (Pre-employment and NAIT) that are beyond her language skills and uses them to improve her English:

> I think that, I want to tell you, the first thing that I chose to study, to take *Making Changes* course, really thing was I want to learn English. That is why I choose it. But, at that time, when I read the book, although the instructor speak so slowly, I still need to try the dictionary. (Xiu: 439-442) I think I really improve now. Because when I join, in the beginning when I take a course at NAIT, the first course I cannot understand what my teacher is talking about. I think that self study, when I went to school I just listen to know what is the homework. And after school I read and write down some things and so. After the first semester, I know I have improved. (Xiu: 345-350)

Barriers to Employment

One of the most frustrating and possibly most detrimental aspects to settlement is the lack of employment. Having overcome hurdles regarding ESL and education, the women still express reservations regarding their ability to enter the job market. In addition to the experiences of discrimination explored above, the women return to the lack of opportunity when speaking about barriers to education and employment.

Yukiko in particular notes the importance of being connected, or having social capital. First, she expresses her frustration with working to attain the necessary credentials and her doubts regarding whether or not credentials will make any difference. Then she expressed her commitment to performing well, given the opportunity:

> Y: This way, the way I have lived, going to school and trying to get good marks. One day I am going to be .... I wonder if that is worthwhile. It is very worthwhile. Unless you know someone it is hard. And if you can make couple of jokes out of something then it is funny and you get a job.
> F: In the time that you go from here to here (hand low, hand high) don't just study during that time, study, but meet every person you can along the way.

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And when you reach here, you have a huge network. Then you can be the one who makes a couple of jokes and get the job because of all the people that you met.

Y: There are some people from down here, getting jobs right up here by making a couple of jokes and great humour (laughter)

F: And you know of some cases where that happens.

Y: I did not meet that person, but I just heard about them. I just overheard them. Everyone, a lot of people at school.... one husband work especially, cause he works in a government department, this person's wife works here, and their niece works here...

F: That does happen. Especially when it is a niece and a cousin and nephew...

Y: And I think, wow, there is no way I can break that wall. So I .... But is it worthwhile. It is a long way. (Yukiko 2: 638-663)

For me, if there is a job, if there is a job available for me, I know this is a job of fair opportunities is very difficult, very precious for me and I will do my best to do the work. It is very hard for me to have an opportunity to have a job. (Yukiko: 515-527)

Although the women recognized the difficulties of this last hurdle, the opportunity for employment, they express a belief in the education system and their potential:

I think part of it, the main part of it, is that people listen to me and see me doing things. Because when I was working at Catholic Social Services, gives me three months of probation to see if I can do this job. If you don't like me because of my accent, I can't change it. That is what I am. But if I am not hired because of my education, I will agree with people who don't hire me because of my education, I don't have it. But I know I will have it. I have this belief, like, nobody was born educated. All of us, we get education out here, so why not me. If I find educated people at the university and I look at myself at this age, still I can do it. There are lots of people who got to school before they have kids and then after school they can have kids. So I am studying the opposite way – having kids and then going to school to get a degree. (Araba: 700-711)

Conceptions of Constructed Positions

Previous research by Elabor-Idemudia (1999), Carty and Brand (1993), and Cote Kerisit and Cote (2001), identified the responsibility placed on immigrant women to be the caregiver and the assumptions made by policy makers that women would not enter the workforce. Women who enter Canada, most often sponsored by their husbands, often

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relinquish their roles as primary or secondary earners. All of the women who participated in this research were employed full time in their country of origin. Since immigration, most have struggled to find employment.

As stated earlier, in order to take part in Making Changes, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Alberta Learning state that the women must have immigrated to Canada in the last three years. Those women who fulfill the obligation and responsibility of staying home and caring for young children so the husband may receive government funded ESL and employment training, no longer qualify when it is 'their turn' five to seven years later. There are many adjustments to make in terms of running the household and helping the children settle into new school systems and social environments. Again, this supports previous comments by Ng (1993) regarding the fact that women's work within the family is taken for granted in program development (specifically pre-employment programs) and that there is not time allowed for women to meet the responsibilities and obligations to take care of family needs prior to considering their own. Twenty years later, women still are not provided the programs necessary for settlement. When they work in the home for too long, they no longer qualify for access or assistance to adequate or appropriate programs. This is also seen by the presence of women who immigrated 15 to 20 years ago registering in ESL level one, two, and three. Policy makers assume that women will be caretakers, covering costs of restructuring in a global economy as is discussed by Neysmith and Chen (2002). However, there is no compensation or recognition of these care-taking responsibilities.

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Furthermore, this 'one policy applies to all' mentality reflects the homogenizing of immigrant women (Bannerji, 2000). Not all women have histories that allow for adjustment within a three-year period. Consider the following conversation with Nancy:

> F: What kind of criteria do you have to meet in order to get funded?
> N: There is a quota. You determine ahead of time.... The number of people attending will affect the amount of money that you going to be given.
> F: How do you decide on that?
> N: Now it's based on experience. Realistically, how many women are going to come in here and how many will respond in any given year?
> F: How predictable is that?
> N: Not very, it 's subject to the immigration patterns, for instance, and the different cultures. And this is my interpretation of the cultures that are immigrating at a specific time.... Depending on what the world situation is, we may see a big influx of refugees and maybe less immigrants and depending where the refugees come from the challenges of enrolment are different. (Nancy: 19-28)

The age at immigration is also not homogeneous to the group of immigrant women. Many of the young women find themselves in a difficult position. On the one hand, their desire to build their future with a family means that they want to have their children soon after immigrating. On the other hand, they realize that there is a small window of opportunity for pre-employment (often only two years by the time they find out about the course). As a result, many of the women take the course knowing that they will not be actively seeking employment until they have had at least one baby. Although most women take the course knowing that there is no guarantee of employment, some are disappointed by the fact that they were not able to secure employment. Most participants, by the time they have completed the course, realize that they need to improve their English and often require further education. The course encourages the women to consider how their education and skills may be transferred according to the realities of the Canadian job market. Many would like to see *Making Changes* or a similar course

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available to them *when they are ready to enter the labour market*, having completed upgrading, improved their English or their children are school age.

Finally, such program policies and programs reflect ill-conceived ideas of women's roles in society and underestimate education levels. This is demonstrated by the fact that the language skills programs meet the most basic needs (as stated above) and by the very absence of programs to assist in the acquisition of post-secondary written and verbal skills. Such program deficiency reflects a denial of the education levels many of the women attain prior to coming to Canada. These women were not stay-home moms and did not rely on their husbands for financial support. They were financially independent, confident women employed full time and living comfortably among the middle class[7]. Again, what existed ten years ago continues to thrive in today's policies. Ng (1993) wrote that immigration classification systems ignore the fact that wives may have comparable education and work experience to their husband and may have made essential contributions to family income before immigration. In 2003, each woman, when asked why work was important echoed previous research findings regarding the importance of work in building self-esteem, self-confidence and the potential to regain their independence. Dependence, rooted in the institutional practices of legal systems, has tremendous implications for women's status and self concept. Their search for independence is made most difficult by their sponsorship status. Fe, for example, came to Canada as a live in caregiver because it was the only way to open doors to a future in Canada for her husband and children. Despite her education level, this was the only way for her to be sure of her success in immigrating to Canada. Career choices are limited by sponsorship status and recognition of skills. However, opportunities to fulfill the

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traditional women's roles of caregiver, domestic worker and service provider are abundant.

The second research question was "What are the experiences of immigrant women taking part in the programs at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women*? In order to discuss the findings, I move beyond simply describing or reiterating the experiences to critically deconstructing 1) how the women currently conceive their role in Canadian society based on the reality of their day-to-day lives and 2) the gap between this constructed position and their potential roles in Canadian society. This gap, produced by gender and cultural differences, results in barriers to personal agency and program development, due to the fact that policies and programs continue to be based on a social construct of immigrant women that neither acknowledges their value nor addresses their needs. Bhabha (1997) writes, "It is not what minority *is* but what minority does, or what is done in its name that is of political and cultural significance" (p. 437).

Bannerji (2000) and Lee and Harrison (1999), like Bhabha, ask that researchers attend to the social construction of immigrant women, specifically, the racialisation and feminisation of immigrant women to Canada (what minority does, or what is done in its name). In the previous section, the extent to which policies racialise and feminise immigrant women was discussed. Here, in looking at the experiences of the women taking part in *Making Changes,* I explore an even more critical aspect of social construction, the tendency for the women who participate to accept these constructs and their position or role in Canadian society. Janmohamed (1991), writing about Freire's literacy project and the implications of border pedagogy, states that

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> To the extent that the peasants must understand that their situation is not preordained but a product of specific circumstances that can be changed, their freedom depends as much on the recognition of the contingency as of the necessity that constitutes their history (P. 111)

Similarly, in order to experience integration and settlement in Canada, the women must understand that their situation is a product of specific circumstances and construction of membership within Canadian society. Only in so doing can circumstances change. Women must begin to see the ways in which 'natural' may be constructed and reconstructed. Deconstructing the natural requires a critical examination of everyday lives.

Again, I draw on the earlier works of Roxanna Ng. Ng (1981) set out to 1) study the perspectives of immigrant women and to describe their experiences in Canada as they see it and 2) to explain the socially organized character of immigrant women's experiences in Canada. Ng found that "ethnicity is enacted and recreated for immigrant women by members of society at every moment of the everyday life when they come into contact with the larger society (p. 105). As I listened to the experiences of the women, I found support for this. The women have day-to-day experiences that constantly remind them of the fact that they are from foreign countries and will 'always' be different than their Canadian-born counterparts. Bannerji (2000) writes, "the concept of diversity simultaneously allows for an emptying out of actual social relations and suggests a concreteness of cultural description, and through this process obscures any understanding of difference as a *construction of power*" (p. 37, italics added). Whether it was being frowned upon for using their mother tongue, discouraged about pursuing education or publicly embarrassed, the women were reminded that they were new to this country and should not assume they are welcome. Convinced of this preordained or natural status as

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newcomers in Canada, they appear to expect very little from society in general, but expect very much of themselves.

So, how does this social construct come to be so strong? Why do these women have a shared or common understanding of their role in society? I propose that this is the result of (1) the way in which their experiences are shaped by the legal, economic, and social processes in Canadian society, and (2) an inability to articulate the existence and possible role of cultural difference in oppression and discrimination[8]. Ng (1993) writes that immigration has a homogenizing effect (and is implemented based on a homogenized view of immigrant women). The legal and institutional processes of Canada create certain common, shared experiences. These experiences reinforce, normalize, rationalise and confirm roles and statuses. Unfortunately, these roles and statuses are further confirmed by the lack of opportunity afforded immigrant women by mainstream women.

Apart from the opportunity offered by a locale like *Changing Together* for immigrant women to cross boundaries, there is a lack of border crossing between mainstream white Canadian women and immigrant Canadian women. Araba notes the lack of connection between "white" women and the immigrant settlement community.

> I think there is a big gap here in my opinion. There is a big gap between the women of Canada and the women of the immigrant. You have just so many things for immigrant people, but *we don't come together* with the mainstream. And of this point, when you say I need, I think that is the biggest thing that I feel in that conference. There is no network.... There is this gap. Back home, since I was working gender program in the refugee camp, I was the voice for the women in ALL the camp. But if there is a conference I have to go and speak on behalf of these women. Women's International Day, the March for AIDS, is the biggest day in Africa. But when I came here, I get homesick, because in Nairobi, it was so good. It was, like, *in Nairobi, there was a connection of the refugee women with the national women, they don't just exclude us*. But if there are national things, we come and participate with them so that we know what is happening in that country. (Araba: 758-771)

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Araba's experience reiterates research findings of Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989) that "[s]ome women complained that Canadians keeps so much to themselves that it is hard to get to know them" (p. 69). The challenge of uniting with women from mainstream culture brings into question, yet again, the reproduction of power differentials.

Dei (1996) writes that differential power relations are maintained and produced through the systemic silencing of oppositional bodies that challenge the dominant status quo. Have the women at *Changing Together* been silenced as a result of their segregation from mainstream women's organizations? Do the programs and services made available to them serve to pacify and legitimize their treatment based on the fact that they are immigrant women in Canada? Dei (2000) states that the recognition of difference is not a problem, but the interpretation of difference is. If recognition as immigrant women means that women immigrating to Canada are recognized for their diversity in terms of age, race, skills and class, and deserving of training and opportunities based on their needs, recognition of difference serves them well. However, if recognition of difference is simply a means by which to oppress and discriminate, it serves only the needs of the powerful. Paul Abbot (cited in Bhabha, 1994) writes:

> Whereas repression banishes its object into the unconscious, forgets and attempts to forget the forgetting, discrimination must constantly invite its representations into consciousness, reinforcing the crucial difference which they embody and revitalizing them for the perception on which its effectivity depends...It must sustain itself on the presence of the very difference which is also its object. (p. 79)

As stated earlier, the state provides minimal funds to offset staffing expenses associated with the delivery of programs. Furthermore, the funds that are provided are sporadic. Canadian Heritage and Status of Women Canada are seen as two 'friends' of

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Changing Together due to the fact that they do provide funds to support program development. Unfortunately, despite successful pilot projects such as Mentorship for Immigrant Women and Leadership Skills for Immigrant Women, there is no stable, on-going support for their continued delivery. This, even though funding proposals that secured initial funding, provided a solid rationale for their development. To this end, the recognition of difference appears to be a tool to maintain and reproduce the status quo. A child of multiculturalism policy, *Changing Together* has the potential to reinforce differences in negative ways or to fulfill the *ideals* of the Act for the Protection and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada.

> Multiculturalism is designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada (Roberts and Clifton, 1999, p. 135)

Family

One of the most challenging aspects to accessing any of the formal resources discussed above (apart from mastering the English language) was the personal life circumstance of the women. While I present these as personal challenges, one must take into consideration the extent to which these personal challenges are shaped by recognition of differences (gender and culture) and impacted by policies and programs available to immigrant women. My thoughts on these issues will be presented in the discussion.

Some of the personal life circumstances that impact access to education also impact the women's employability. For this reason, personal life circumstances presented here also apply to challenges in seeking employment.

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Parenting

One of the greatest challenges for the women in this study was parenting in Canada. Jasmine, Maggie, Yukiko and Araba spoke about the lack of support brought on by the absence of family and the often unrecognized hours put into unpaid labour.

F: In a typical week, how much time do you spend looking after the children?
Y: I go to school 3 times a week, 3 hours a day = 9 hours. So, 24 X 7 minus 9 hours.
F: Okay, so the rest of the time is looking after children
Y: laughter
F: Does your husband share in the childcare?
Y: Oh yes, he helps me a lot. When I work at school
F: So he covers the school hours for you and the rest is yours pretty much
Y: Yes, because he needs his own time as well
F: And do you get your own time?
Y: Just when I go to school. After I finish my class I spend a couple hours studying on my own, have a cup of coffee.
F: So that is your only time. You consider that your time to do what you want to do, your schooling and study time. How much time in a typical week do you spend shopping, cleaning, cooking.
Y: I cook almost every day.
F: How about house cleaning; is that a shared job?
Y: I do about 90%. My husband is very messy.
F: OK. And shopping?
Y: He helps me shop. I am planning on going shopping after this. So 90%(Yukiko 2: 144-179)

When it comes to childcare, Yukiko goes on to say that she is not comfortable with daycare and would not leave her children there in order to go to school. She says "...I wouldn't, definitely wouldn't feel comfortable with sending the children to a day home, those are scary places, even though they are cheaper" (Yukiko 2: 193-194). Maggie shares the same concern over the care of her daughter. In both cases, the women assume primary responsibility of childcare.

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> And also because of my daughter. The time for her. Usually in my country we have half day school, here it is full time. So that is good for me because I can do a lot of stuff in one day. I say OK that's fine, but I have to pick her up because my husband is working. He was kind of free, but he could not take me to this place and where I need to work. He helped a lot, but not everyday. (Maggie: 259-263)

During the follow up interview, I learn that Maggie is also experimenting with the possibility of making it on her own as a single mom. Here she faces the challenge of childcare while juggling two jobs in order to be able to afford the living expenses of two on minimum wage with no financial support. Five of the nine women interviewed were either single or single parents, financially responsible for themselves and their children.

> F: At the kiosk job, do you get paid very well?
> M: It's $7.50. I don't think it's,...for the kind of job I do, ok. And it is part time job.
> F: 20 hours a week?
> M: Now I have 20 hours, but I am going to get a little more time. I see my schedule for July is more time.
> F: how many hours a week do you work here?
> M: 30
> F: So you are already at 50 hours a week and you are going to do some more?
> M: I just want to try hard working for the money, you know, because I have to pay babysitting to see how that works. And to see how my daughter is reaction, from seeing me too much. I was kind of afraid because my husband was looking at another job where he has to travel a lot. But I was afraid to know if he was going to be here and I was wondering about that. But now he is not going to do that job so I am thinking how it is going to be. There is a lot of stuff going on. Even I thinking, because my husband relationship is not working so good, so maybe I might move alone with my daughter. So I am still thinking how?
> F: So you are trying to make that a possibility?
> M: Yes, trying to see how. And if doesn't work, I just, I gonna give up but I want to try. (Maggie 2: 621-651)

Araba, as a single parent recently separated from her husband, is responsible for her family here as well as providing support for her sisters in Africa. In fact, both Araba

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and Manini talk about life becoming easier once they were living independently and had control over decisions and actions.

> I think I find it more easier now. I find it more easier now because I know my direction, where I am going, how I am going, and why I am going. What bills I paid, what bills I not paid, how much is the budget, how can I calculate and if I don't do this what will happen. I don't believe in someone who says yes, I will do this next month. And then a few months later, about four months, no bills have been paid. And, also, I plan ahead if I have things. But, before, my husband would say OK I will keep the kids. Maybe half an hour to where you want to go he calls back and says you know, I can't make it. (Araba: 503-510)

> F: Why didn't you do all those things when you were married?
> M: Because, I wanted to do, but I wasn't allowed to. Because, also, I wanted to go to school, but I couldn't go to school because my husband was going to school. If he could stop then I could go. So that, I had to work. And if I learned this thing, I had to spend money. I couldn't do that. I *could*, but then he wouldn't allow me. Like, taking a swimming lesson, I know it took time to say him yes. (Manini: 783-789)

The lack of familial support, even when the women have the finances, makes the job of raising a family in Canada difficult. The difference between the support of community and family in their home country and the isolation they feel here as well as the fact that they are not familiar with the culture makes juggling work or education and parenting a great challenge. Susan talks about the guilt associated with the struggle.

> But if parents feel frustrated or overwhelmed, has a bad attitude or bad mood that will affect his children. Sometimes I feel guilty towards my daughter. When I am frustrated and I, sometimes I just told my daughter keep quiet, or just stay in your bedroom, or don't talk to me or keep the voice down or keep the television volume down. So, you know (laughter) (Susan 2: 321-340)

Maggie also talks about the difficulty of finding adequate childcare and how this is different than her experience in her country of origin. The full quote reflects the struggle she has in meeting her personal expectations regarding parenting and employment.

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So I feel, even, in my country I work all the time as soon as I have her, right. So I have somebody who take care of her. But I was living with my mom, so even if I know someone else is taking care of her, I know my mom is there, and that makes me feel fine, you know. And also, when I moved, I still pay somebody to take care of her, but I am still phoning many times a day to be sure she eat, she have nap, she is fine, to ask her what she is doing, and also when I came back home I talk to her to know that everything was fine for her, if she has any complaints, who was taking care of her. So I really, just for me it is important. I know it is not the best job to do, housekeeping job in the house, but for me it's not fixed in my mind, I can do better stuff than that

And also, now I am having , kind of, really concern because at this time I am trying to do a different job. And the one thing come to my mind, before I took the second job, was how long will be (without) my daughter, or how we are going to do this.... But also, I was trying to find somebody else to take care of her, to have maybe somebody friend, a kind experience for her but also something I hope she likes. And I have been trying many different people. Like, I try some of those people. I try my friend, but she is no happy. I have some friend who live alone, and I think she is really safe. But she is kind of too lonely being with her because she cannot do a lot of stuff. There is no children and maybe my friend is too busy doing more stuff, like she needs to study. And I don't want to say stop your studying and play with my daughter, this is not right. I feel really confident when my daughter is with her, but I feel like she is not learning too much and it is not good for her in those hours. I feel kind of guilty. So I talked to another friend who has a daughter the same age and that really was working good. But my friend she has some bad attitude, like smoking and drinking, something like that, and I didn't realize that before. And when I went a couple of times to pick her up I saw the same thing doing, so I really was afraid, really scared, so I took her away and now I found another lady I know too, and she has a daughter again. I find she is fine.

(It's exhausting isn't it?) It is you know, and it's afraid too, because, like, if you try, you think, how is this going to work? (Maggie 2: 85-141)

The challenge of juggling work, education and family is overwhelming. In at least two of the women's stories, the families are separated due to the strain or in order to make enough money to reside in Canada, pursue work or employment and childcare responsibility. Barriers to education and employment are evident throughout the literature on social construction of women.

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Domestic Violence

The social worker at *Changing Together* is very familiar with women's struggles with domestic violence. Because of Alia's own history and her dedication to helping women experiencing domestic violence, women have been attracted to *the Centre* through this program. Two of the women in particular accessed the Centre first as a way to resolve abuse within their homes, and then found the other resources available at *the Centre*. The following conversation with Manini is an example of the ripple effect of *the Centre* on one woman's life. When asked how her participation at *the Centre* affected her settlement experience, the following discussion took place.

M: I think it affect a lot. Because when I left my spouse, I was with him but I started to work and I didn't know that would happen. It was just because I wanted to learn, right? And then I started to learn about him because I was working here, and I was getting more independent and I was getting more alert. So the stuff I was looking for. I was looking at the people when I started to work and then I thought, that is wrong, and then, you know what I mean? (ok) Because, I was getting strength that I was starting to feel that what was happening to me was wrong. And then, you know, then I started to make decisions. Like, I thought I would be fine after him because I am working and I have people to help, and if I need any kind of help. So, I knew that it would be hard, but I didn't know, but I knew that it was not impossible. This, I knew that it is not impossible, that if I work I would be able to survive, I would be able to do the stuff I want to do.

F: And meeting ladies here (yea), let you know that what was happening to you, you did not have to live with that and it was not the way that life should be for you.

M: Yes, and according to some. It is not like I had an appointment and I talked about that this is happening to me. No, other people were asking how is life going, how is things? And I explained to them and they got shocked, that's not right, jerk, blah, blah, blah. So then I started to learn. Because I was telling with a smile like I am talking to you and then I talk with Nancy. No, that's not right, and a friend. So I started to learn that and then I go more deeper.

M: And this is not only this thing. It is like, getting an apartment, knowing apartment, filling the application out about the apartment, knowing lots of questions, what should I know about the apartment, what should I do? Like,

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you know, do I give a deposit first, I never did that. So, you know, running here and applying for subsidized housing, the paper work, and other kind of ...

F: And those kind of tangible things are here.

M: Yea, it is like a chain, that is what is happening. (OK) And I am still, if I need some kind of [help]. (Manini 2: 9-52)

Although Araba did not go into the same detail, she talks about her reasons for accessing *the Centre* and the ultimate impact it had on her life.

> So then I walk in and I used to come to Mennonite Centre to take my English and all those kinds of things. And then I saw this brochure where they said stop violence against women. And I thought, this is ...that actually got me to walk in. (Araba: 44-50)

Throughout the previous sections, I documented the experiences of the women as they participated in programs at *Changing Together*. I hoped to 1) explore whether their needs were met, and 2) identify the existence of border crossing and impact of the Third Space. Some of their needs were met and there were experiences of border crossing, though they appear to be limited to this locale. *The Centre* proved to be *necessary though insufficient* in terms of creating the translation and relocation of the Third Space envisioned by Bhabha. The Third Space *exists*, but fails to disrupt the use of culture and existing power imbalances and lack the turbulence and conflict that would be expected when power and privilege are challenged. The women *do* relocate themselves in Canadian society and do come to see themselves as an 'Other', though appear to be 'trapped' by the barriers they face. They do not come to see themselves either as a Canadian woman, nor as the woman they were prior to their immigration. They appear to remain in state of ambivalence, not the person they were before immigration (the first person) *or* the Other they have measured or compared themselves with since coming to

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Canada (third person). This will be explored in detail in chapter eight.

Despite the intent, equality in economic, social, cultural and political life is far from reality for these immigrant women. The glimmer of hope is sustained through the efforts of a few. The next section studies their efforts in creating Bhabha's Third Space and the factors that impede their success.

Notes

[1] One of the women states that she does not believe that there is discrimination against minorities or women in Canada. I suspect that her opinion is based on the fact that 1) she has not attempted to enter the workforce and has accessed very little in terms of educational opportunities, and 2) she has few expectations in terms of acceptance, assistance, or rights.

[2] Of the ten women, one learned about Changing Together on the Internet, one through the Chinese Newspaper and one through the chair of the board in an emergency situation.

[3] Alia wanted to be sure to note that she believes in the visitor visa, a program intended to assist immigrant but potentially harmful in the wrong hands/circumstances.

[4] *Changing Together* lost funding for the Language Instruction for Newcomers due to low enrolment.

[5] History: Of the mentorship programs and employment programs in place, none of these specifically address the isolation and social barriers that a substantial number of immigrant women face. *Changing Together* found that a significant number of immigrant women do not know how to access employment opportunities, how to assess their skills in relation to the Canadian labour market, or how to access people or organizations who can provide them with information.

[6] Sonia chose not to use a pseudonym.

[7] Araba, a refugee from Africa is the one exception. However, prior to civil unrest she attended a private school and came from an intact middle class family.

[8] Bhabha (1994) writes that the Third Space is the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference.

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Chapter 7: Possibilities

Despite the barriers faced by the women they seem able to achieve some degree of settlement and even integration within their first three years in Canada. This has been interpreted throughout the following section as a sign of the possibility of hope, as a potential indication of the Third Space. In order to get a sense of their settlement, the women were asked whether they felt able to participate in Canada, whether they felt accepted and respected, whether they had a sense of belonging and how they felt about their future in Canada.

Their responses indicate that, despite the inadequacy of formal resources and the lack of coordination between the many facets of integration discussed in chapter five, particularly education, settlement agencies, family and employment, women remain optimistic.

How Settled Are the Women?

Participation

When asked about their ability to participate in Canada, most answered positively that they were able to participate. When asked specifically in what ways they were able to participate, it was usually in terms of attending public events (children's preschool or school activities), joining community groups and activities or attending church. For example, Fe was very excited about the opportunity to perform with a Filipino group that played at a celebration of the Independence Day of the Philippines (Fe: 419-428). The women, in general, do not *appear* at this point to have high expectations regarding participation in society. For example, there is no talk of having representation in

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dominant or mainstream communities or the opportunity to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Yukiko does not feel that she has had the opportunity to participate, but qualifies that by saying that she will when she is able to get others' attention and show that she does good work:

> I would not be recognized at all. If I am just sitting down here and watch people talk, they don't care, and they sometimes think, hey are you there still? It was very different from my culture, in Japan, people just sit down and wait until someone asks you a question like that. So I am pretty good at *this* kind of thing [meaning interview environment]. When it comes to discussion in groups, I am not very good at that. But I am still having to speak out, otherwise they wouldn't pay attention. Just because they don't pay attention doesn't mean they don't like me or anything. So I learned that. I have to work on that. (Yukiko 2: 461-468) But I found that, like, to be able to recognize, to be able to be heard, I have to do good work. Let's say I am working, I do everything fast and accurate, then people start having a little respect, start paying attention. Otherwise, not very many people pay attention to me from the beginning. (597-601)

Maggie, when asked about the opportunity to participate in Canadian society has a very positive attitude and response and has expectations about the quality of information she should receive. The contrast (in participation and expectations) between her response and Yukiko's is, in part, a function of each woman's confidence and experience in Canada:

> Yes. Yes, I feel that, like every, another door opens. You just have to choose where you can feel good or comfortable. And I think that is what happened with me. First of all, I did not mention that I went to Mennonite Centre and I also talk to counselor. And she tell me to do my resume and stuff. But I feel like they just do work. Like they didn't give me enough information. I didn't feel, like I don't have enough information. Even if she did my resume, but that was not good enough for me. So I still look for information, so I just change door, I just came to *Changing Together* and it was great for me. I just feeling home, you know. (Maggie: 335-343)

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Accepted and Respected

When asked about whether they feel accepted and respected, most women, again, responded positively. For Jasmine (380-384), the acceptance and respect is limited to her participation at *Changing Together*. She is unsure about the workplace, as she has not worked in Canada. Susan (2: 383-399) has the feeling that she is not really accepted. In the following discussion, Xiu talks about the need to contribute to the society if she wants to be accepted and respected:

> Nobody knows me. (laughter) I even didn't hope, because now in our situation, I didn't do something for this society, how can they respect? If in the future, the first thing is my English, I can do something for this country, then I think I will get respect. But now, I just stay home and study. I didn't hope to get something from others.... If you want to get respect, you need to do something. That is what I think. (Xiu: 628-649)

Maggie, one of the most comfortable in terms of her sense of acceptance shares her interpretation of others' experiences. Again, she points out that this is not her experience, but she knows it to be the experience of others:

> F: How about your feeling of acceptance. Do you feel accepted by the people in Canada?
> M: (small hesitation). Yea. I can understand, you know, like, for both parts. Like, you being immigrant, it is not your country, and the people who is Canadian, like, being with another people who come here and want to live and get used to. I understand why they come different to think. I don't think it's a 100% acceptable from both parts because still in some places I feel like, because you are immigrant, you cannot go to some stuff. Like, maybe you know you have some rights to do but you are afraid to do.
> F: Why are you afraid to do it?
> M: Maybe because... I don't find it just in me. I find it in, maybe it comes in my mind because I saw a lot of people doing this. Because still, my mind is very open, you don't say no to me. I try. I am that kind of person. If you don't give, if you go back and don't answer me, I just don't try anymore. But a lot of people, I think, is really afraid to do a lot of stuff because they figure they are going to be rejected.
> F: So they don't try things because they feel they will be rejected?

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M: Yes. And because they think that they cannot do that because they are not Canadian. (Maggie 2: 297-320)

Further, Maggie's quote demonstrates the issue of partial citizenship. As others have commented (Gupta, 2000; Miedema and Nason-Clark, 1989; Salazar and Signs, 2001), policies are critiqued because they leave the women little choice but to accept a marginalized position in terms of their ability to fully participate in Canadian society. The most obvious case of partial citizenship is that of live in caregivers.

Salazar and Signs (2001) write that partial citizenship refers to the stunted integration of migrants in receiving nation-states. Salazar and Signs also say that citizenship defines identity in terms of who you are, where you came from, and where you belong. Maggie's quote exemplifies not only the experience of partial citizenship, but also an understanding, even acceptance, of open, yet closed-door policy.

Manini pulls together the comments of all the women when she speaks about the importance of contacts and networks in order to feel both visible and accepted in Canada. She has gone from feeling invisible to feeling that she is not only seen, but cared about. When asked, do you ever feel invisible or like you don't count, Manini responded:

> I used to but not any more. (Why did that change) because at that time I did not have contact with people, I didn't have enough friends and networking, research. Like, I know when I don't go to work and there were lots of customers, they say "where were you?" and I got lots of comments. I got gifts from them, Christmas gifts, Halloween. And I feel cold here, so when I serve them my hands are cold and they say 'cold hand, warm heart'. So they come to me and they ask about my school, about my life, they are nice. (Manini 2: 583-590)

The degree of acceptance and the extent to which women feel respected in Canada is disappointing if measured against the goals of multiculturalism. They are neither comfortable with nor fully involved in social or political activities. Their

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participation in community groups or advocacy is limited to their participation either at *Changing Together* or in ethnocultural communities.

Sense of Belonging

The ability or inability to be seen and to participate and their sense of acceptance and respect are related to their sense of belonging in Canada. I asked each woman if she felt she belonged in Canada or was comfortable in Canada. For some, the sense of belonging has been increased by the opportunity to participate and gain respect from members of society.

All the women will continue to identify with their country of origin. Yukiko and Xiu both talk about the fact that, although they do not consider themselves Canadian, returning to their country of origin is not an option. Xiu (601-621) talks about becoming accustomed to Canadian life and the fact that she cannot go back to China and has no reason to. Yukiko, below, expresses what both women share:

> I am still Japanese. I wasn't born here so there is no way I can be Canadian. So I might feel something like this for the rest of my life, but I will know how to control that feeling. Sometimes people joke and I don't laugh (laughter). When I understand jokes and hockey games, that is the time for me to become Canadian (Yukiko: 446-455). I am more comfortable here and I think this is my place to live. I don't think I can go back to Japan. I wouldn't,... I couldn't live. I don't belong to either Canada or Japan. I will be stranger if I am back in Japan now. I would find some funny culture or some funny custom in Japan. But at the same time I am not 100% here and I don't think I will. Because I am still Japanese. I am Japanese and live in Canada. It is not like I am Canadian now and Japanese is not part of me. (Yukiko 2: 272-284)

Maggie and Disha speak about the ties that they will always feel for their home and the families they left behind:

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> But, I really want to go to my country. Not because I don't feel good here, because I really miss my country. And that part, I think, even with all the stuff I have being taught me, I have been taught, like job, language, everything I need I have. But something is missing and that I cannot change, I cannot feel, you know. And I feel I need my family, I need my mom (laughter). I think it is something from our culture. When you grow up, parents raise children, right. But when you grow up and you are older, you have to take care of them. And that is our culture, like, no matter what you have to take care of them because they already did the job and you have to support them now. And, we have in our culture, family is so close. We need each other. Even, like, we need to see or we need to talk all the time. So I think it's really strong that feeling in me now. (Maggie: 367-376)

Jasmine states the reality of immigration and the sense of belonging that will continue for countries of origin regardless of time or opportunities. "When you think about immigration it is not just one or two years, it is life long. Still you spend more than twenty years or thirty years in own country so you still have sense of own country" (Jasmine: 542-544). Similarly, Yukiko talks about the role of life long friendships in creating a sense of belonging and the seeming impossibility of that in Canada. When asked if she had a sense of community or a sense of belonging in Canada, Yukiko replied:

> No.... I haven't got any belonging sense in Canada. Sometimes I feel very, very lonely. You know, I have lots of relatives and very, very quite close friends in China, but not here. Sometimes, I feel I just, friends that are nice to meet but they are not very close. (So you don't feel like there is a real closeness or connection between you and your friends?) No, because my close friends grow up with me in China so they are totally different than these friends. (Do you think that time will help that?) Not really, because friends and I move on. Sometimes they find a job and go to another city and then we lose contact. (Yukiko 2: 430-449)

While acknowledging the duality of their 'citizenship' and the fact that they lack a sense of belonging, they also express gratitude for the opportunity to live in Canada. Furthermore, the women expressed a kind of sympathetic understanding of

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their treatment as an 'other' in Canada. They did this through expressions of gratitude for the opportunities made available to them as women in Canada and through comparisons with relatively restrictive attitudes in their countries of origin. In this way, the women demonstrate Bannerji's (2000) position on 'otherness' in Canada.

> No third world immigrant is left in doubt that he/she is in Canada on public and official sufferance and is to be grateful for being allowed into the country. They are made to feel that otherness is of an antagonistic variety to Canadians, and they also know that this otherness is not in them, but in how they are perceived, what ascriptions pre-exist their arrival into the country, how racialization and ethnicization have already put a white Canada in place" (p.46)

This sense of otherness was most apparent when I asked the women to talk about their feelings of acceptance and belonging in Canada and reflect on their experiences of discrimination. As stated earlier, they do not expect much in the way of acceptance or belonging. Their participation seems limited to ethnic groups and women's organizations. They have not broken barriers to participation with White women and do not anticipate that changing in the near future. The women have found an interesting way to cope with this otherness and the realization that that they are socially constructed as immigrant women. For example, when they find themselves in difficult situations (whether abuse, discrimination, or some other challenging life event), they tend to attribute their circumstances to specific causes, be it an individual or event, as opposed to systemic racialisation or feminisation. Again, this supports previous work by Ng (1981).

Ng (1981) writes that society tends to attribute difficult situations to ethnic backgrounds and the assumption is made the there is a causal link between their ethnicity and what happens to them. Immigrant women themselves also attribute some of their

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difficult circumstances to their ethnicity in Canada, having been unable to resist or challenge their socially constructed place in Canadian society. Not enough of the immigrant women or broader society recognize the systemic nature of feminisation and racialisation and the impact that has on immigrant women's ability to participate and be accepted. The inability (of members from all factions of society) to overcome this socially constructed notion of immigrant women has allowed the state to consistently shortchange them in terms of their emotional, financial and political needs.

Ng (1981) also writes that ethnicity in Canada is reinforced when there is disjuncture between how the everyday world works and one's knowledge of it. Two examples stand out as particularly strong evidence for this statement. First, women's responsibility for parenting and the lack of familial support upon immigration reinforce the differences between countries of origin and Canada. Canadian systems that are impacted by traditional gendered immigration policies (social, financial, legal, and health) reinforce traditional gender roles that have begun to erode in the women's countries of origin. As the women struggle to meet the demands of multiple roles in a new society, they begin to doubt their ability to measure up to societal expectations (to parent and work and study), and second guess their decision to come to Canada at the expense of social status, income and familial support. This, again, supports Ng's (1993) research finding that when women immigrate, their work in the home is intensified. The difficulty of doing housework properly in Canada means that life seems more hectic and worries are compounded. At one point, Araba says that she knows of families who made requests to return to the refugee camps because they could not adjust to family life here in Canada. She herself states at one point that

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raising children in Canada has been even more difficult than surviving in the refugee camp. This shows the frustration, exhaustion and lack of support Araba is experiencing in Canada. In fact, when asked where she goes for help, she replied "Dr. Phil and Oprah".

A second example of the reinforcement of ethnicity is Xiu's experience during her attempts to sign up for a course at Grant McEwan. The combined misunderstanding of how the system worked and the intolerance experienced at the hands of an extremely rude and unsympathetic registrar dramatically reinforce her ethnicity, her otherness in Canada. When I ask Xiu how that makes her feel, her response is "I feel I need to be strong". Again, Xiu's solution is to take control and attribute future success to her own actions, not the actions of others or the system that works to marginalize her.

The women, reflecting on their comfort or future in Canada, speak of the fact that they would never be Canadian or that they would never belong 100% to Canada. They will always be an 'other'? They told me that they are what they are and they made the choice to come to Canada. Those who were born here and have always lived here; they are Canadian. Bannerji (2000) writes that citizenship does not equal membership and this proved true. The women were very honest with themselves about the impossibility of returning to their countries of origin, acknowledging that they would be strangers there based on the changes they have made in their lives since immigration. They are clear about the fact that they are not "Canadian" (despite citizenship), but that they would also not feel part of their countries of origin.

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Appreciating Canada

Despite the difficulties faced in accessing educational opportunities, the ongoing expectation to acquire credentials due to a lack of recognition of existing credentials and experience, and their experience of partial citizenship, the women appreciate the fact that they are 'allowed', even 'encouraged' to pursue education. In the following quote by Araba, her appreciation becomes the beginning of the process of hybridity as she comes to see herself differently than before:

> You know, when I say that, I mean, like, I was so scared of my age when I came. I was, can I go back to school? Because, back home, if you have had early a baby, that is your age. There would be no school after 15, after having a baby or pregnant or something. So I was so worried. I have all this wish about education. I know that having education is working for a different life...independence and be self-supportive. I was so worried about interrupting the school and the work I wanted to do. But, I see that women still are going to school, having good jobs and .... *So why not me?* (Araba: 600-607)

Yukiko makes a comparison between her life if she had stayed in Japan and her life in Canada (keeping in mind her marriage to a Canadian). I asked Yukiko if she finds Canada accepting and hear, again, the beginnings of identifying herself as a participant (Bhabha's first person position) in Canadian society, reflecting (Bhabha's third person position) on life in Japan:

> Right now, yes, I do. It is more tolerant, friendlier, especially, I always think about the other way, if we were in Japan and my husband tried to make his life. That would be very, very difficult because it is not open country. Here is more acceptable and I have more choices. *I can go to school and I can do whatever I want. I can always say no. They respect me, I feel respect from everyone. They listen to me. Um., ..., I feel it.* (Yukiko: 105-113)

> At this stage of the analysis process, I was perplexed by the fact that these

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women, despite their efforts, were struggling to break the barriers yet appreciated their fortune in living in Canada. The women, for the most part, do not have personal expectations equivalent to their personal potential (in terms of social skills education or experience).

The Future

One final way to tap into the women's settlement in Canada was to ask them how they are feeling now and how they feel about their future. The women continued to have a very positive attitude and had confidence in their future. Their confidence was tempered by the conditions of their language skills and opportunities. Susan believes that improving her English will lead to confidence and the ability to achieve different things and feels satisfied by the fact that she is able to do the shopping and banking. Their plans and expectations are diverse as were their needs upon immigration. While Araba (640-659) has plans to study law and embark on a career connected with women's issues, Xiu says that if she cannot find a job that she wants, that is "OK", she will return to labour work. Claire says that "I think it is easy to survive here. You know, if you don't care about what kind of job, you can find a job very easy, like dish washer or many jobs you can do" (Claire: 266-267). Araba and Manini both state that life is easier now, on their own, having control over finances and life choices.

The one aspect of their lives that leads to improved confidence and optimism is the sense that they have control over their lives and a sense of direction. Maggie and Manini, the two who have resolved issues of work, education, family circumstances, and language speak of direction and capacity:

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> I can see myself, what I want to do and yes, I can do it. And everything is clear. Like, back home, I didn't know what I wanted to do. What I am doing, then I start thinking, everything was kind of... I was doing computer but just because it was in demand....But here, now, I am interested because I want to do it. And I am doing hard work and I am learning. I try to do here. I know where I am going and I know what I want to do....I want to be independent and that is why I am living by myself, I am learning. I know that a lot of the stuff I am dealing with it is hard, and it makes me sad, and I get a little frustrated. But after that, this is a part of learning. (Manini: 642-663)

> I could do a lot of stuff, you know. Even I couldn't do stuff from before doing, because I feel I have the capacity and I will be good. (Maggie: 380-381)

> I think it is very bright. I have to make it bright. (laughter) I can't go back to Japan. I can go to school just because I am in Canada. And if I am success here, I can do whatever I want just because I am in Canada. I could not do that in Japan. I am 30 years old, in Japan I have been away from work a long time. I could do something but it would not be a high paying job. Society thinks I have to stay at home because I have two little children, so there is so much barrier that I don't have here. (Yukiko: 349-354)

In contrast, Xiu and Susan were not yet settled in terms of securing education or employment opportunities. When asked about how they felt about their future in Canada, this is what they had to say:

> Not so clear. If I can try to learn more English, if I can speak more fluent, maybe I will have more opportunities. But now I know the competitions is so, more competitors join the group. (Xiu: 522-529)

> Uncertain. Sometimes I regret. Actually the main thing for me is the job. I desperately want to go the RN program. You know, I already finished the statistics and the psychology and I got an A- in both courses.... You know. Job opportunities here, it is very challenging, the job opportunities. If we have the job opportunities we will do our best to do the job. But we don't have chance to get a job. Sometimes I think it's so unfair for immigrants. (Susan: 352-362)[1]

Their responses reflect their doubts in terms of their ability to break the barriers experienced thus far. However, they have not lost hope and, given a chance, still believe in the future. I begin to contemplate the fact that there may be a 'window of opportunity' that must be capitalized upon. As the women become comfortable enough to take some

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risks, there must be some opportunity to take those risks. The opportunity may come in the form of education, employment, or networking. Before optimism and appreciation turn to despair and disillusion, at least some of the promises of multiculturalism must materialize in concrete ways.

Border Pedagogy and The Third Space

In this section I present the findings and reflections on border pedagogy and *begin* to explore the Third Space. Bhabha (1997) writes "[I]t is the ambivalence of their coexistence – *the proximate relation between persons* – that becomes the basis for the performance of moderation as a practice of life" (p. 435). This space of ambivalence was explored by asking questions about the women's experiences thoughts and feelings about their ability to participate in Canada, their sense of belonging, and what settlement means to them. Are they able to participate? Are they accepted? Do they have a sense of belonging? Their responses were used as indicators of whether or not they were in the process of cultural hybridity and, if so, whether or not it was their participation at *Changing Together* that enabled them to experience the Third Space. The women show the greatest diversity in this section of the findings. While their reasons for coming to Canada and their needs were fairly homogeneous, the degree to which they have settled is not.

In this section, I explore three formal resources – education, employment, and settlement agencies – fundamental to the Third Space, that interstitial space between cultures, genders, and power imbalances. The ability to access and/or retain some control over these three facets of settlement as well as the women's character and attitude (chapter 5) are key to immigrant women's integration. Their hope and

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perseverance inspired the final analytic model used to critique the limiting factors to the experience of the Third Space at *Changing Together* (discussed in detail in chapter eight)

Possibility Through Settlement Agencies

Volunteer and Job Opportunities

Settlement agencies, including *Changing Together*, strive to provide immigrants with volunteer experience and open doors to job opportunities. Where other doors are closed, settlement agencies attempt to equalize opportunities in Canada.

> They all, anytime you need help, they are ready.... They know I didn't have any work experience, right. I have background, but I didn't have any work experience, but they give me a job. They hired me for three months (to do accounting). (Disha: 232-235)

> Like, suppose somebody has some kind of experiences back home in accounting, and they have two courses here. But after that, they are not getting jobs because they need experience. If they come here, they will help the people and they will learn how he or she will work when she gets a job in an office environment, learning many things, many things. Like a child is born and they learn everything like walking. It's different; it's everything different. It's how you wear clothes and how to say things and the way to say things, everything. (Manini: 502-509)

> They [volunteer coordinator] sent me to accounting because they saw my experience in accounting, right? So for me, it was like, OK I just want to do something, I don't want to be at home. I want to do something to know how is life here? And I need to know doing something. So they were putting me in the cafeteria sometimes and that was fine with me. And I was in accounting. I was so afraid, they put me in reception because by that time I could speak good.... And, just, I started to do volunteer jobs and that was fine with me. And I apply to another job. Like, I get some phone calls, but I get no work. Sometimes it was the time different, sometimes it was too far, so it never worked. And sometimes my interview did not work in some way. (Maggie: 247-255)

Although it is important to offer volunteer opportunities in order to learn

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Canadian systems and acquire some job related skills, it is equally important to recognize that some jobs require specific skills and there comes a point at which reliance on volunteer time becomes exploitive. There are repeated instances of the women who took part in the study and whom I have met casually at *the Centre*, taking volunteer positions because it was the only alternative available to them when education and employment strategies failed. The most common motivation for taking volunteer jobs was the desire to learn or improve upon basic English skills.

Pre-employment Training – The Practice of Border Pedagogy

The pre-employment training program exists as an opportunity, one of the few that attempts to move beyond basic English as a second language skills in order to open up opportunities in the workforce. I took the opportunity to ask each of the women why they took the pre-employment course and, in some cases, why they would be comfortable recommending the course to other immigrant women. Women's responses indicate that many of them took the course not necessarily to find employment but to fill a gap between their needs and the programs and services available to them. They also entered into a site of border pedagogy and found those qualities of border pedagogy cited by Kanpol (1995) – mutuality, cooperation, connectedness, and care. For example, while searching for a way to increase their understanding of Canadian culture or improve their English skills, they found empathy and understanding and possibilities of hope. The women also spoke of newfound confidence and knowledge about their rights in Canada. They begin to think and imagine otherwise:

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> I participate and practice from Nancy and the textbook from Nancy was very, I can't find the right words, it was very good. *It described all the feelings I had about home sick, culture shock, and trying to make life here.* And that was very good, and *I saw that there was someone who understands the situation,* and I felt so much confidence and relief and I talked with some people in the classroom workshops and found that *they were going through the same situations. And that made me feel more comfortable* (Yukiko: 266-271)
>
> To knowing about Canada. *To knowing about rights and what should we do if we are in this situation?* (And you did not have that information before?) No. (Manini: 241-247)
>
> Because I want to know much information about Canadians, Canada you know. In the beginning, I think I can do the job, international even, I don't know change. But Nancy told us that *everyone has many skills and you can transfer skills from here to there so you can do many jobs.* So she left me feeling more confident. (Claire: 173-176) I think that *Changing Together* helped me get more confidence (305)
>
> Because *I want to know about Canada.* How do you adapt yourself in Canada, and everything...., how to get into reach, how you are going to find a job, or going to human resources or whatever. (Fe: 340-356)

Despite the fact that the program objectives are to prepare the women for the workforce, it also highlights the inadequacy of current policy and programs. The reasons the women participated in the pre-employment training, whether they were prepared to enter the workforce or not, speaks yet again to the inadequacy of transition programs to serve their most immediate needs – ESL and the opportunity to interact with Canadian-born, connecting Canadians to one another in order to build bridges across differences and distances, and deepening our understanding of each other and our shared values as per the multicultural act.

In addition to meeting their basic goals of learning Canadian culture and English, the women show in their responses a growing awareness of personal rights, personal expectations, confidence and ways and means of achieving their goals. It became

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increasingly apparent that the pre-employment program was a site of border pedagogy and border crossing where interactions between students and the teacher fostered cultural translation, negotiation, and opportunity.

> But I think that really made me think about one picture in the *Making Changes* book, the instruction book. There is a picture of a lady mopping something. At that time, I worked as a janitor. I looked at the picture and think, oh, that is the same like me. They put the words, I forget the whole sentence is, "You want to spend your life like this? You can do something else." (Xiu: 443-448).... yes, and another thing is from the class and Nancy. *You make the purpose and make the step to reach your purpose. You think work is first obstacle and you can jump over it. And if you can jump over it and to get the second step. And to think like this, to think, really to think, what do you plan to do.* And what is a real situation, maybe hard, something dragging you back, don't let it, do something. (Xiu: 452-457)

> And then she [a friend from work] saw changes in me. Because I quit that job and I went to another job but I was still going to meet her. We were still having a contact. *She saw changes in me. "You know what you are doing now here". Because I know and nobody can put me down.* (Manini: 259-262)

> Before I attended school, I get a little bit confidence, right? I improve my English. But when I start this course, the pre-employment course, it was really help me, like, give me information on how to do interviews, how to dress up, how to talk when they interview. *So I got more and more confidence.* (Disha: 179-182)

Kanpol (1995) writes that border pedagogy provides individuals the space to develop empathy and intersubjectivities and the opportunity for unification between centers and margins of power. The border pedagogy practiced through *Making* Changes does facilitate border crossing within the population of its participants – confined to participation by many immigrant women and a lone participant from the mainstream societal culture. In this respect, the possibility for unification between centers and margins of power is extremely restricted. In providing a course for immigrant women only and further restricting access to immigrant women arriving within the past three

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years, two important opportunities to facilitate mutuality, cooperation and connectedness are lost - first, between immigrant women and Canadian born women and, second, between recent immigrant women and those immigrant women who have begun to experience border crossing and the Third Space through other means and may serve as role models for their colleagues.

If one of the goals of multiculturalism is to assist cultural groups to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society, the opportunity to increase women's awareness of personal rights and their personal expectations cannot be limited to training for workforce participation or dependent on their potential for immediate workforce participation. These are essential lessons of life in Canada in order to foster full participation in Canadian society.

An unfortunate and repetitive finding in the research is the fact that, in creating a site of opportunity for immigrant women, the women also experience isolation and the very goals of multiculturalism (full participation and integration) are shortchanged. At a personal and individual level, the women at *the Centre* experience empathy, mutuality, and cooperation.

Empathy, Mutuality, and Cooperation

As the women reflect on their experiences at *Changing Together*, they often refer to the emotional support and the empathy they feel for others at *the Centre*. They begin to identify common struggles. I had the opportunity not only to witness this, but to experience this myself during informal discussion and potluck lunches where women from many countries and many cultures shared stories of raising children in Canada, of extended family, of education and employment. This is the first indication of the

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possibility of a borderland. Many of the women talk about the empathy and emotional support they found through Centre staff and clients:

> .... And then the first person who came to meet me was Alia. *She was smiling like she knew me.* That was my first visit to *Changing Together*. And everything that I am, I am for *Changing Together*. It was so good. (Araba: 44-53)

Araba mentions in the above quote the importance of the quality of the interaction with the social worker during her visit to *Changing Together*. In fact, many of the women talk about the qualities of the service providers and the impact of *Changing Together* with emotion and sincerity.

> Whatever today I am, I am from *Changing Together*. I find everything here....*Anytime you need help they are ready*.... (Disha: 456-458)

> *Changing Together* has helped me a lot because I could get the support right away, you know. Like, ever since I came here, I get information, you can do this, you can do that. *It was kind of open, open door, to get me and just keep me inside. And they were so good to me. I feel just like a big family here*.... I think it is all the people who work here, you know. Because, at the starting, I haven't work and I thought they were smiling, they were talking, they were trying to talk with me all the time. Because, even when I was just in accounting, you know, everybody has to come sometime there (laughter), so they were trying to talk all the time with me. And Sonia. She is just not a boss, you know. *She is just a woman helping.* You have that feeling. I cannot see her like a boss. (So you did not necessarily get closer to people who spoke only your language or who came only from your country?) No. (Maggie: 268-271)

They also talk about a feeling of connectedness that comes from sharing common struggles, even identifying those with greater challenges. Kanpol (1995) also wrote that, at the base of individuals' differences lie the commonality of similarities of oppression and pain. In the following conversation, Manini talks about her friendship with another woman at *the Centre* and the fact that they share common struggles and provide each other with emotional support. Knowing of this friendship, I explore the reasons for the

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closeness. I ask why she believes they become such good friends despite coming from such different countries and different families, and find evidence of the mutuality inherent in border crossing:

> M: Because we both like to learn and we had or have same kind of experience in our lives. Like, she has a white husband, I had a white husband. Think the same way sometimes.
> F: How is it that you would think the same way, when your backgrounds are so different?
> M: Think, like, back home it's different. Like, she's from hot country, I'm from hot country, you know, we have such good food and she has the same thing. And then we talk like, that in Canada, she cannot find that thing. And I think the same way. So we talk like that. So, we exchange food. Like, she cook desert and bring it to me. And then I cook and I give it to her.
> F: What did you give her and what did she give you in terms of quality?
> M: Emotional support.
> F: OK. Both ways?
> M: Both ways, yea. (Manini: 510-542)

The other woman talks about the same friendship, explaining how the nature of their friendship and what that friendship meant to them:

> She is a lot like was many people. She doesn't have any family here. I have some family here, my husband and family. I feel like they support me a lot, I cannot complain. I don't know. I just feel like we can be together like a company as a friend, all the time.... And also when she start talking about her country, her culture, and I talk the same to me. We find so many things in common, even if she was raised in different. And it was so funny for me. I say, OK. Until now we have a really good friendship. (Maggie: 314-321)

I did find that the women valued the opportunity to meet other women, in particular women from other countries that were sharing similar experiences. Even though the relationships may or may not endure beyond the duration of their participation in *Making Changes*, these relationships do cross boundaries of race, language, culture, religion and class and are a valued aspect of their experiences at *Changing Together*.

> I just enjoy everyday the people. All the people live like family.... When we all want to talk, we speak English. (Disha: 56-57)

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> Especially, when I came, I thought that when people talk about racism it was only African problem. To me, I did not see the difference between Canadian skin, American skin and the Afghan, the Arabs, we all call you white people. So when I attended Nancy's class I was so surprised to hear people talk about racism. I thought, but you are white people. So, I discovered a lot. And also, about people who came here with good qualifications and they feel like they are so stuck and also to listen to their stories. So, makes us see we are not alone. There are so many of us struggling about how to be and what to be. (So you found that you shared common troubles or common challenges?) Yes. (Araba: 672-684)

In chapter three (p. 68), I asked "Is *Changing Together* (specific in locale and time) a site where a unity of purpose emerges out of the practice of border pedagogy and border crossing, where a voice of resistance may be heard above predetermined boundaries?" These findings show that women experience a very limited amount of border pedagogy and border crossing. The experience is confined within the physical space of *Changing Together* and limited by the absence of participation or representation of non-immigrant women. Although the participants may begin to consider and critique constructed differences between people within the context of power and domination, widening the boundaries of possibility and hope, and finding commonality and community (Kanpol, 1995), the end of alienation and subordination requires participation by the often 'forgotten' faction of society in multicultural initiative and policies – the centers of power. Border pedagogy cannot succeed when only the margins of power are represented and participate.

Having acknowledged the limited success of border pedagogy, I turn to a second question posed in chapter three. "Are immigrant women empowered as a result of sharing experiences and time within a new community and does this empowerment facilitate integration?" Recall that empowerment is conceived as a tool for human betterment, an opportunity to expand the range of social identities and the possibility of

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human agency. This research documents the individual empowerment of the women who have taken part in programs at *Changing Together*, most notably *Making Changes*. So, although border pedagogy in the way it is employed at *the Centre* fails to create a unified voice of resistance, it succeeds in that it provides the women with tools, opportunities and the possibility of human agency.

Possibility Through Education

Throughout the interviews with all the women, education was seen as essential to their ability to integrate and settle in Canada. Education serves a greater purpose than academic credentials. When I asked Yukiko when she began to feel comfortable in Canada and believe in her future here, this was her response:

> I think when I started going to school and started getting something for myself after the children. The biggest thing, it gave me confidence.... I was feeling confident enough, not like it is now. Because I see more people and talk with people and I get recognized, totally different from staying at home and watching kids. (Who do you get recognized by?) People at school. And for me, we go out, not everyday, but sometimes we go out and we study together. So we talk more and I talk more so that is different from talking with your husband and children and school teacher and stuff....I live here and I think that I am someone they know, someone they will call. (Yukiko 2: 289-309)

Manini, Susan and Maggie identified the importance of school in their ability to build networks. In this way, education was one of the first means of establishing networks outside of ethnic communities. Xiu speaks about the role of education in regaining and building confidence in Canada:

> I think I know my teachers better than my classmates because I think I can get a lot of information and because these are the big resources for information, so I

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> talk to them. And I, I don't know how, somehow they become my friends. (Manini 2: 322-325)
>
> I took an English course and in my class I met all kinds of people and made lots of friends. So, sometimes we visit each other and we introduce some very important information to each other. And also my friends they introduce their friends to me. (Susan 2: 273-276)
>
> In China, when I was going to university, I feel, oh I have confidence because I was successful and the year I came to Canada, when I studied so much at school, in accounting and marketing, when I get a good mark at school, I feel more confident. (Before you took courses, in that first year you were here?) Oh my confidence (hand low at knees). I should say that I have confidence that one day I can get a job. I am confident. My confidence is more, not English. (Xiu 2: 333-343)

Acknowledging the difficulty of recognition of skills or training, the women seem to have an overwhelmingly positive attitude when it comes to retraining. Furthermore, the women are willing to gain experience and training through either educational, volunteer or employment opportunities. Warren (1988) referred to this as the "positive and pragmatic bridge" (p. 105), referring to the tenacity and pragmatism of many immigrant women. However, as I explore this more deeply, I find that opportunities for education or employment are difficult to secure.

Possibility Through Employment

The inability to have credentials recognized and admittance to upgrading and post secondary education granted have direct impacts on the women's ability to gain entry into the workforce. Here they speak eloquently about the *importance* of employment in their ability to cross borders of race, class and culture, in their ability to integrate, to settle and to become contributing members of their society. In other words, employment is *a* site of possibility.

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The women either spoke spontaneously of the importance of employment, or I asked them specifically what role employment (other than financial) had played in their settlement. Their responses show how essential employment opportunities are to their settlement experiences. These findings support the work of Warrren (1988) and Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989).

A number of the women spoke about work as an important aspect of their identity, affecting their confidence, their independence (Yukiko: 321-323), and their sense of personal worth. In particular, consider the following conversation with Susan as well as comments made by Xiu and Maggie:

S: Yea, you know, I feel terrible because I depend on my husband. I cannot be independent economically.
F: And in China?
S: Yea, I was independent, definitely.
F: Did that change your relationship at all, when it changed.
S No.
F: That's good. Because that could be hard for some people in a relationship have that change?
S: I know some Chinese people, their relationship has changed because the wife cannot make money anymore.
F: And they were making money at home? (yes) would it have been different if you didn't have, this is hard for you to say, if you hadn't had such success in your profession back home, would that have changed your experience here, do you think?
S: Yes.
F: In what way?
S: In one way, I will lose my confident. If I can't be independent, I will lost my confidence and all my, I don't know.
F: At this point, you still feel that you will regain your independence economically? So your confident is OK?
S: Not right now, no. Right now, I just stay home, I am a housewife.
F: So your confidence is being challenged right now, it is tough to stay confident?
S: Yea. My confidence is very, very low, no confidence.
F: And when you first came to Canada, your confidence?
S: Relatively high, but not right now. You know, while I was in China, I like to make friends. And also I have many friends. But right now, I

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> am not interested in making friends anymore because I am busy. I am busy with my English and with my courses and also the other main reason is I don't have any confidence. (Susan: 369-411)

> Because I do not have a family, we need money to make life. Lots of work. Another thing is you need to do something. We couldn't live out life with no job. The feeling is not good - frustrated and no help, no hope. And if you can't find a job you depend on somebody, that feeling is not satisfying. (Xiu 2: 6-16)

> I was really, like I have been working since I was 19 years old. In my country, usually, our custom is like the men work, the women stay home. But since 20 years ago, many things change with revolution, communist, right. The women want to participate in a lot of things and want to work, want to be independent. So I grew up with that idea. And I didn't want to fail. Even in another county you do not want to feel like you are not doing anything. (Maggie: 192-196) And when I am in a job, I feel like I can be independent and I can feel more confident in myself. (Maggie 2: 52-53)

Jasmine (238-239) and Manini speak specifically about the value of work in terms of learning about Canadian culture.

> Yes, at work I was learning language and I was also learning how to behave. When I listened, what kind of talk they talked, like what kind of way they talk, eating, wearing clothes. Like, I was wearing totally different clothes according to India style. If I am wearing jeans, then they are old fashioned or something like that. So, you know, I was learning everything. (Manini: 295-299)

When I asked Yukiko about her sense of belonging to Canada or in Canada right now, the importance of work came out again. Her decision to actively seek employment reflects her conscious effort to become an active participant in society:

> When I thought about working in Canada, that was probably the biggest moment, I thought I have to get involved more, I have to make some effort to participate in society. I can't always look back on my past. (Yukiko: 127-129) (Do you have a sense of belonging to Canada or in Canada right now?) About 50%, 60%. If I start looking for a job and I see a reality, how far it is getting a job, then I will see even more. And when I start working, I will feel more. (Yukiko: 408-409)

Yukiko states, when asked about networking[2], that until she is able to work, she does not see opportunities for networking. "I don't know how to network when you are

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not working. I know how to network through work because they are already doing the job, your reputation, that may be the key for me to network" (Yukiko 2: 411-414). Manini acknowledges the importance of work in creating networks for personal and professional reasons:

> Because you know somebody and they know somebody and then after that they know somebody and then you just get famous. Like, it's kind of like a circle. Like, at work, because I do my best in working and I try to do nice job, people mostly are really nice. Like, one of the guys said if you need a sponsor signature, you are going to apply. I told him that I am applying for citizenship and they said you might need signature, (he said) come to me, I will sign it. And he said, come with me, sit with us. And then he tell me this is his friend, and his friend's wife and we were eating together. (Manini: 741-747)

The strongest signs of hope for the women who participated come in the form of education and employment. When the women arrive in Canada, they are educated and have employment experience. Upon their arrival, they are very optimistic about their possibilities for the future and inspired by the freedom and opportunities available to women in this country. Unfortunately, the systems that are in place to capitalize on their skills and attitude only begin to touch on their potential. Ironically, the women are more likely to identify personal limitations rather than recognize the limitations imposed on them by discriminatory policies and practice that are based on constructs of race and gender.

Canada has in place the beginnings of opportunities for immigrant women. Attention to recognition of skills and credentials as well as their status and roles while living in their country of origin while developing programs and policies would enhance the possibilities present in education and employment. Settlement agencies are more inclined to have a realistic understanding of the lives and potential of immigrant women

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in Canada.

As analysis continued, it became clear that the three formal institutions of education, employment and settlement agencies were very intricately tied with personal agency and character that were enabled or stifled by family situations (see chapter six). Continued analysis of the interviews and on-going participant observation were undertaken with the intent of exploring sites of possibility, the Third Space, and border pedagogy. Eventually, the spirals of analysis resulted in the analytic model presented in the next chapter.

Notes

[1] Susan has since been accepted into the Registered Nursing program at the University of Calgary.

[2] The importance of networking and the ability to network are presented in more detail in the section exploring women's character and attitude in settlement (chapter five).

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Chapter 8: An Analytic Model for The Third Space

The final research question asked "Do the experiences of the women reflect the possibility of a borderland, a space where their participation in a community of women empowers them, enabling them to integrate and participate in Canadian society?" As noted in chapters six and seven, one of the emergent themes throughout the research was the complexity of the Third Space and the inadequacy of formal resources and institutions in meeting immigrant women's needs. Bhabha (1994) writes that in the Third Space, individuals are "free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference" (p. 38). In this chapter, I look more closely at the existence of the Third Space for women who participated in programs at *Changing Together*, and then take a more critical look at the ways in which the inadequacies of institutions and formal resources hinder the existence of the Third Space. This critical analysis leads into the revision of the analytic model introduced in chapter three.

While exploring the inadequacy of formal resources and the impact of social institutions, the following questions arose. Do institutions and the formal resources foster the location of interstitial spaces that provide possibilities for negotiating and translating cultural identities?[1] Does negotiation and translation resolve fears and anxiety regarding English language skills, employment opportunities, isolation, and discrimination? Do the women's experiences within these institutions provide evidence of the existence of the Third Space where women redefine the roles/expectations/ norms and societal cultures so as to facilitate integration?

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While the original proposal sought to explore the possibility of the existence of a Third Space through participation at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women*, these findings demonstrate the complexity of the Third Space. Although there is evidence of the process of cultural hybridity and the Third Space, both were restricted by factors outside the control of the women or *the Centre*. Without participation by immigrant women in multiple spheres and recognition by Canadian born individuals of their own participation in the construction (and potential to participate in the deconstruction) of restrictive social constructs, there is little chance of immigrant women realizing the potential of the Third Space and its contribution to integration. In the absence of turbulent interfaces, there is little opportunity for translation or translocation on the part of Canadian-born. In this respect, integration remains a one-way street, with immigrants adjusting to dominant or mainstream institutions and systems. In this chapter, I will present evidence of the existence of the Third Space as well as critiques of its application to the practice of multiculturalism and integration.

The Third Space at Changing Together

Bhabha (1996) suggests that rather than dealing always with the issue of us/them, researchers deal with the "temporally disjunct positions that minorities occupy ambivalently within the nation's space" (p.57). I interpreted these disjunct positions to be indicative of living in the ambivalence of the Third Space, of moving in and out of borders made possible by a border pedagogy that leads to negotiation, opportunity and translation.

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In examining the experiences of the women at *Changing Together*, I responded to Giroux's (1996) request that we consider schools *and other public sites of education* as border institutions, "institutions where teachers, students and others learn to think and imagine otherwise" (p. 110). In the Third Space conceived by Homi Bhabha, individuals go through "a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness" (Rutherford, 1991, p. 211). Giroux and Bhabha write of individuals beginning to think and imagine something other than they have ever thought or imagined before, engaging in dialogue with each other, constantly moving in and out of experiences; they speak about the blending of individuals and the negotiation of meaning and representation. It is that Third Space, "though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meanings and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). While sharing their stories, the women talked about the environment of *Changing Together* and the impact of *the Centre* on their settlement experience. Translating new and shared meanings of symbols, the women demonstrate the beginnings of thinking differently, the blending of individuals and the negotiation of meaning and representation.

While considering how to explore and document the women's experience of the Third Space, I found Janmohamed's (1995) interpretation of Feire's intellectual border useful. Janmohamed (1995) writes that border intellectuals, whom I equate with those experiencing the Third Space, have the following qualities. First, they become archeologists of the site of their own social formation. They excavate and read their own social and physical bodies and the history of their own oppression. The women who have

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begun the process of becoming border intellectuals tend to acknowledge restrictive environments, expectations and statuses in their lives before, upon, and since immigrating to Canada. They also recognize that the restrictions were frequently created through discourses of gender and culture. Many make note of the opportunities and freedoms they have here that they would not have in their countries of origin (most notably the option to pursue further education and employment after children are born). Recall the quotes from Yukiko and Disha when they spoke of their ability to go to school at age 30 (following marriage and child-bearing) and gain a sense of independence. Others acknowledge that, despite this improvement, they are still restricted by race and gender in Canada.

Second, according to Janmohamed (1995), *from their new subject positions*, individuals contemplate the conditions of their lives. These interviews show that immigrant women began to contemplate the conditions of their lives in Canada, where they (as women) hold different subject positions than in their countries of origin. This contemplation represents the ambivalent character of the Third Space, where individuals displace and relocate (Bhabha, 1994) signifiers such as culture and gender created by discourses that "attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged histories of nations, races, communities, peoples" (p. 171). New subject positions were evident in their recognition of educational opportunities and their willingness to engage in educational and employment opportunities on the basis of future potential, and their refusal to stay in oppressive and discriminatory jobs or abusive relationships:

> I feel confident, if I look for job, I can get job. I don't know how long, but I will get job. I feel that confident. But also, my mind change a lot, you know.

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> Because *knowing different culture, a lot of different people in a different country*, I want to, I feel like here *I have a lot of opportunities to do a lot of things*. You can, even I can *change my career* you know, I feel like that, I can change my career, not just accounting. I could choose a social worker because I really see how helpful it is in this society because you get a lot of immigration and I think that is really, really useful. (Maggie: 357-363)

Finally, through the process of decodification (Janmohamed)/ cultural hybridity (Bhabha) / border crossing and border pedagogy (Kanpol and Giroux), immigrant women disrupt a sedimented social existence and reactivate (challenge and change) the borders between themselves and the dominant group (Janmohamed, 1995). This drawing of new boundaries allows the women to *change their relation from passive to active*, opening themselves up to the possibility of forming alliances. Rather than passively accepting the socially constructed position of immigrant women in Canadian society, Araba begins to actively challenge mainstream society to redraw existing boundaries:

> F: [A]re you a full participant [in Canadian society]?
>
> A: I think there is a big gap here in my opinion. There is a big gap between the women of Canada and the women of the immigrant. You have just so many things for immigrant people, but we don't come together with the mainstream. And of this point, when you say I need, I think that is the biggest thing that I feel. (Araba: 755-762)

The women's progress from ambivalence, through translation and hybridity, to the possibility of hope emerged as I began to explore the different ways that individuals see themselves today, where they see themselves going in the future, and how they plan to get there. Their responses say to me that each one is in that interstitial or Third Space between cultures; each at different points in the process Bhabha refers to as cultural hybridity. Some women have found that Third Space where the process "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of

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meaning and representation (Rutherford 1990, p. 211). These are the women who have found access to multiple institutions and/or resolutions to restrictive environments that negatively affect their membership in the institutions (for example, separating from an abusive partner).

Giroux writes that border crossing asks educators to develop a 'unity in difference' perspective whereby we create or recognize unity without denying the multiple and the specific. Kanpol (1995) writes that such recognition is possible because of commonalities of similarities of pain or oppressions. Perhaps the women are able to find this unity in difference because of the way that institutions and policies structure and homogenize their immigration experience. During their participation at *Changing Together*, the women spoke of seeing themselves in others while also recognizing differences based on history, education, language or race. Because there exist similarities within differences, they found ways to challenge barriers and began experiencing life differently than they had ever imagined and futures never thought possible before. Border crossing widens the boundaries of possibility and hope.

Consider the following montage of the women's thoughts and experiences. Each word or phrase is taken directly from the interview. I have chosen to illustrate their thoughts and feelings this way for two reasons. First, the graphics help to impress upon the reader the mixing/crossing of boundaries, the turbulence of the process of hybridity, and the beginnings of clarity as they become border intellectuals. Second, in this form, I am able to leave a resource for the Centre to begin dialogue with women who come to *the Centre* at different points in the hybridity process.

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Figure 7, with the turbulence and unpredictability of the prairie sky records words and phrases about the women's first thought upon immigrating to Canada. Figure 8, with the Northern Lights, records the beginnings of cultural hybridity and finding similarities within difference. Finally, figure 9 depicts the women's thoughts on their future, the possibilities, freedoms, and condition of their lives.

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Figure 7. Coming To Canada

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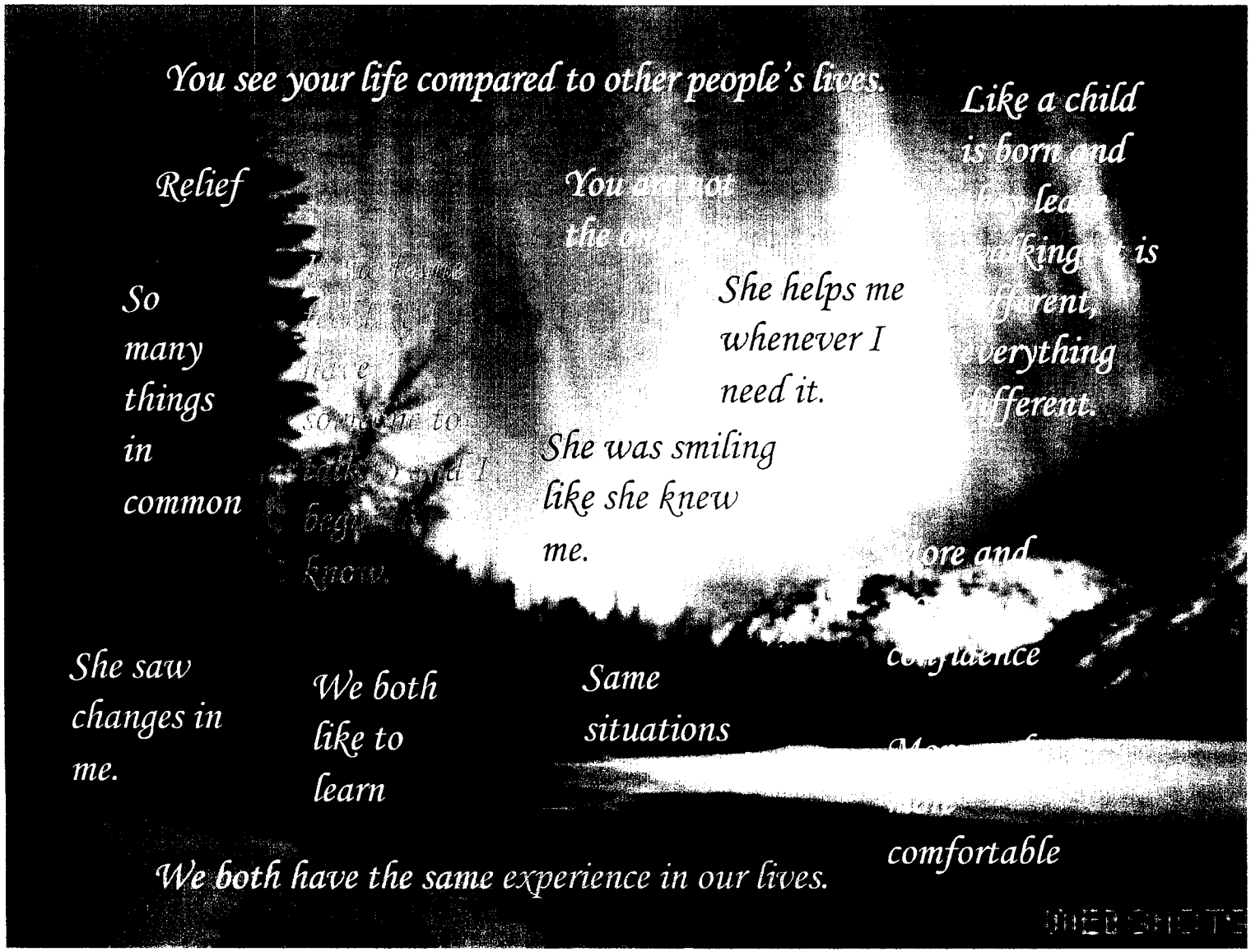

Figure 8. The Experience of *Changing Together*

Figure 9. The Future

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Critiques of the Third Space

The empirical data support previous critiques of the concepts of cultural hybridity and the Third Space. In order to enter into the Third Space and reap the rewards of cultural hybridity, greater attention must be paid to (1) the multiple sites and the connections between the many communities to which women may *or may not* belong, and (2) the absence of border sites that include Canadian born participants. I found that the Third Space exists as an experience considered relevant to Canada's immigrant population but void of border crossing between centers and margins (of power). Change will occur only when the social and political environments encourage (or at the very least permit) immigrant women to transcend a single locale (such as *Changing Together*) and overcome discrimination in society. The Third Space may be generated by the *combination* of formal resources in multiple locales, within a social context of non-discriminatory attitudes.

The one constant for all the women was their participation at *Changing Together* and in the *Making Changes* pre-employment program. However, their participation at *Changing Together* and in *Making Changes* in itself was inadequate in terms of creating the Third Space wherein women experience a negotiation of identity (of who they were before immigration and who they may become in Canada), ultimately opening up the possibility for integration. Recall that integration is used throughout this work to refer to the means by which women actualize their personal and professional membership in society. Some women have accessed educational or employment opportunities while others have been proactive in transcending the traditions of the patriarchal family in order to establish healthy family roles and relationships. Participation in or a sense of support

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from all spheres of their lives is critical to creating the Third Space. Access to and/or intersections between many institutions (settlement agencies, education, work, and family) and the centers and margins of power would enhance women's ability to fulfill their needs, participate and settle in Canada.

Yukiko, Xiu, Susan and Jasmine – all unable to secure paid work in Canada - talk about unresolved feelings regarding their progress in Canada and their future in Canada. They still have concerns about language, work and culture. When asked if they felt accepted, they hesitate and qualify their participation as limited or fine, 'as long as they stay home'.

In contrast, Maggie and Manini, who have made changes in their personal lives in order to gain a sense of control and independence, and who have accessed settlement programs, educational opportunities and work, speak more confidently about their progress and their future. Similarly, Claire speaks positively about her future and role in Canada, as she is confident of her ability to continue in educational programs, work, and settlement agency or Chinese community programs.

Contrary to the analytic model depicted in Figure 6, a single locale, in this case the settlement agency of *Changing Together*, isolated from (and by) locales or communities that provide education, employment and/or support, lacks the ability to foster the Third Space. Those women who appear to go through the process of cultural hybridity have, with assistance from settlement agencies, been able to gain control of multiple aspects of their lives (whether education, family, or employment) and have begun to redefine their roles and responsibilities. Figure 10 depicts revisions to the analytic model.

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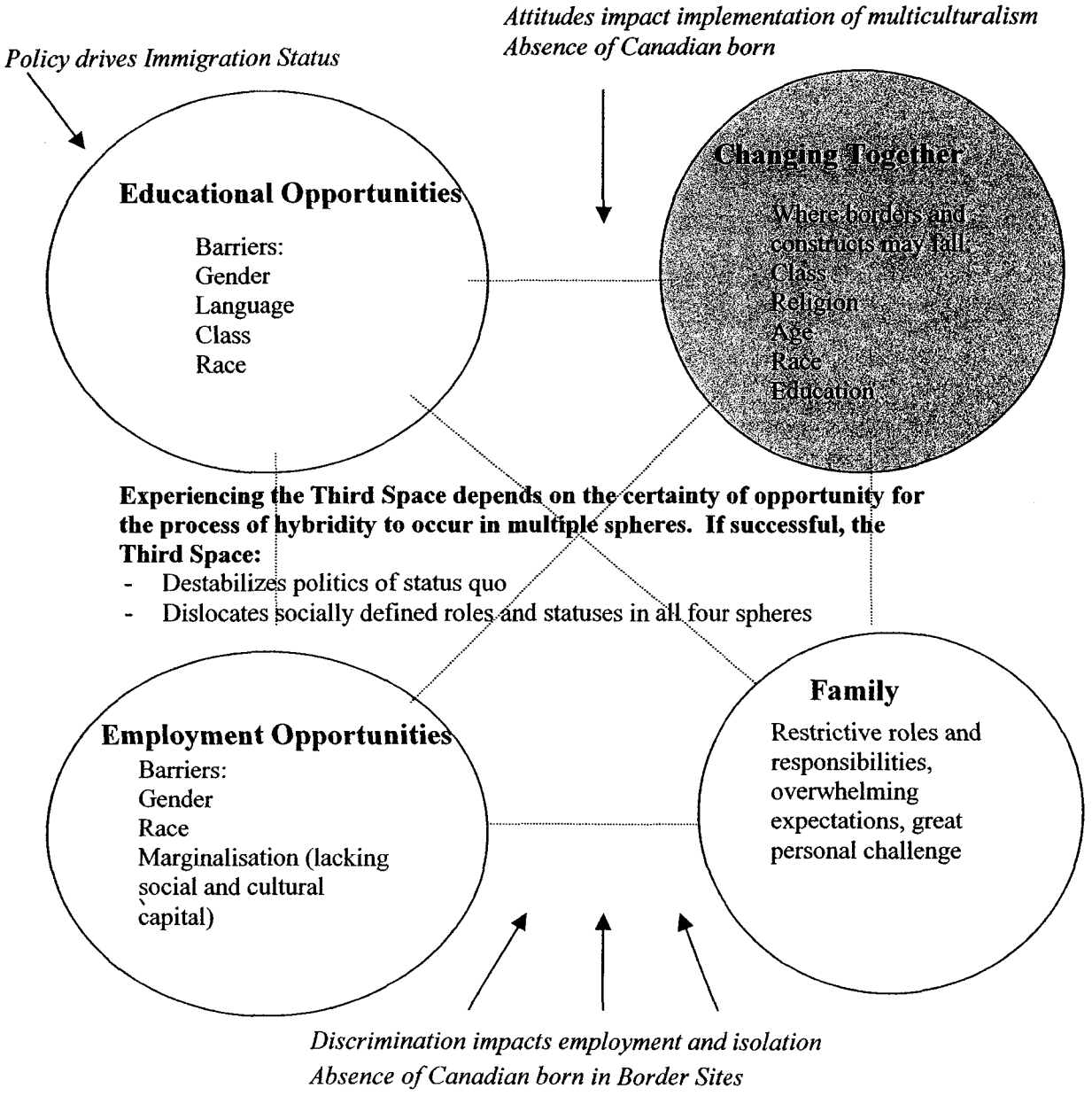
Figure 10. Post Analysis Analytic Model



Is there a Third Space for immigrant women, where roles and statuses are transformed and negotiated in a community that fosters individual empowerment? The findings suggest that women were able to move in and out of boundaries of education, race, class, religion, and age within a single locale – *Changing Together*. However, the impact of societal attitudes, policy, and discrimination prevent the women from moving in and out of the borders of and within other critical locales of education, employment and family.

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The revised model reflects the importance of participation in and intersections between multiple locales (spheres) - educational opportunities, employment opportunities, settlement agencies and family - as well as the impact of policy, discrimination and societal attitudes. This model depicts elements of the Third Space at *Changing Together* and barriers to membership in other spheres.

The findings show that the Third Space is limited and fails to destabilize the status quo although it does begin to make apparent the socially defined roles of immigrant women. Change will be difficult without the cooperative and collaborative efforts of Canadian born citizens and immigrant women in at least four important locales or spheres of settlement – education, employment, family, and settlement agencies. Each locale represents a site of both challenge and possibility, dependent on the use of race and gender constructions within society. Furthermore, the possibility of cooperative work between these locales, the possibility of the women crossing borders, and their potential to change constructs within these locales depends on broader societal attitudes, discrimination, policies, isolation, and marginalisation. I find in my research support for previous critiques of the Third Space and cultural hybridity I chose to employ.

Of particular relevance are critiques by Anthias (2001) and Wright (1995) of hybridity and the Third Space. Although I set out to find, and found, *evidence* of the creation of the Third Space through participation at *Changing Together*, I also found support for critiques of the Third Space. The ability to foster the experience of the Third Space is made possible at *Changing Together* due to the fact that power imbalances are reduced by virtue of the philosophy of the Centre (a centre run b*y* immigrant women *for* immigrant women, regardless of race, class, religion, or political beliefs). Power

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imbalance, discrimination, and societal attitudes, the greatest obstacles to achieving the Third Space, new hybridities and integration, are neutralized by this philosophy.

I posed the following questions in the early stages of the research. First, I asked whether, with limited financial resources, on-going stereotypes based on patriarchal conceptions of roles and responsibilities, and dependence on the volunteer sector, immigrant women and those providing services through the settlement agency are participating in the maintenance of social relations that perpetuate oppression and repression (power imbalances)? Perhaps, but what is the alternative? *The Centre* is also the only site at present that appears to truly foster the hope for immigrant women to experience the Third Space. The women working and participating in the programs are making the best of a system that has failed in terms of meeting their needs and allowing them to have a voice in Canada. The more important questions are: (1) What are the factors limiting the success of an organization that is so well established and respected within the community and dedicated to serving the needs of its members, and (2) How can those limiting factors be addressed?

This research shows that organizations such as *Changing Together* cannot succeed in isolation. In the absence of collaborative and cooperative work, *Changing Together* will struggle to meet the needs of their membership or fulfill the objectives of multiculturalism policies. It could be argued that hybridity, like multiculturalism, may become yet another discourse that serves to obscure oppression and power differentials.

Anthias (2001) echoes concerns by Bhabha (1994) that the language of theory (multiculturalism) may be a "ploy of the culturally privileged Western elite to produce a discourse of the Other that reinforces its own power equation: (p. 20-21). Anthias writes:

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> If hybrid social identities are now the characteristic identities of the modern world, then struggles over cultural hegemony and the underlying mechanisms that support it, become increasingly empty signifiers; merely to occupy the space of the 'hybrid' constitutes an emancipatory human condition. (p. 620)

As such, the status quo is served and maintained by a false illusion of opportunities for hybridity and the assumed companionship of integration and full participation. Furthermore, the individual is assigned responsibility for personal success or failure.

> It is important to recognize the role of agency, on the one hand, but explore also how it is exercised *within a system of social constraints linked to the positionality of actors* (both individual and collective) within specific *social contexts*. (Anthias, 2001, p, 629, italics added)

The women's agency (documented in the presentation of their personal characteristics, their determination and skill sets) is useful only to the extent that systems of social constraint (locales of education, employment and family) *allow* for agency. Recent research by Jeffrey Reitz (2001) is useful for demonstrating the impact of institutional change on the employment success of recent immigrants to Canada. Although the education levels and skills of immigrants to Canada are equal if not better than immigrants before them, Reitz found that:

> The employment and earnings success of newly arriving immigrants has been eroded by rising levels of native-born education, the increased significance of education in Canadian labor markets, and the increased difficulty that immigrants have had in gaining market recognition for their qualifications.... But over the period 1971-1991, native-born education levels actually rose more rapidly than did those of immigrants. This trend, when coupled with the lower evaluation of immigrant skills, easily enabled native-born workers to widen their lead over immigrants....Not only are immigrant skills discounted, but the extent of this discounting has increased. (p. 600-601)

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The importance of the interaction between the four locales in which the women participate (or are unable to participate in) is crucial to the existence of the Third Space and the experience of identifying new roles and statuses in Canadian society. In the absence of symbiotic relationships between the spheres, it is a challenge to generate the Third Space. Ng (1981) so insightfully wrote that the task is not simply to describe, define and package social phenomena, but to discover "the *social relations and processes* which generate the specific character of the phenomena that we make the subject of enquiry" (p. 106, italics added).

The impact of broader society on structuring the day-to-day life experiences of immigrant women has been explored at length in previous discussions. In short, policy decisions and program development that perpetuate patriarchal constructs of women that are contrary to independence or integration, that underestimate skills and credentials, and that fail to encourage communication among spheres of participation in society, directly affect the women's experience.

Unfortunately, their participation at the policymaking or program development level is minimal. They tend *not* to be members of the decision-making bodies that influence the environments they participate in. As a result, they are prevented from informing policy and program makers regarding the impact of immigration policy and relevance, availability, or accessibility of programs. As Neysmith and Chen (2002) correctly note in their analysis of the impact of globalisation and restructuring on women:

> In Canada, policy definitions of what women need differ from women's demands. On the one hand, governments, many experts and the majority of the public believe that poor women need to become active in the labour force, get motivated and overcome their dependence on welfare. On the other hand, study after study finds that the minimum wage jobs these women take cannot cover their expense;

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> women are in need of affordable day-care, housing, education, and other supports (p. 250)

Having established the importance of membership and the experience of hybridity in multiple spheres, the question then becomes "how can the relationships between spheres (of education, employment, family and settlement agencies) be fostered in such a way as to facilitate women's success in all facets of integration?" How can border crossing be encouraged in and between multiple spheres?

In the literature review, I cited Kanpol's belief that empathizing with the Other is central to a politics of similarity within difference, transcending one's own ethnocentric view of what counts as correct culture, and instead, learning to understand, incorporate, and change oneself in light of the other culture in order to shape a common emancipatory and democratic purpose (Kanpol, 1992). As stated earlier, this appears to be the case within the walls of *Changing Together*. However, it is sadly lacking between immigrant and mainstream communities. Recall Manini's story of the burning tears. The missing piece is the creation of empathy between both individuals and spheres. The missing piece is not only communication between individuals and agencies of both immigrant and non-immigrant communities, but the redistribution of power in and between these communities

Successful border crossing and border pedagogy served to enhance the objectives of critical social research, unveiling individual and systemic power imbalances that serve as barriers to immigrant women's integration and full participation in society. Rather than creating empathy and unity in difference, policy and program development to date appear to have segregated immigrant women within Canadian society. Ng (1993) wrote

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that we must work towards alternative forms of alliances and practices that ultimately transform the society of which we are a part. Perhaps the first alliances should focus on relationships between the locales that most impact the women's lives – education, employment, family and settlement agencies – and the negotiation of boundaries of race and class.

Note

[1] Translation takes place when individuals understand that cultural statements and systems are constructed in ambivalent spaces and that they come to be constructed in discourses.

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Chapter 9: Reflections on Key Findings and Areas for Future Research

One of the key objectives of this research was to explore the possibility of the existence of the Third Space facilitated by participation in programs at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women.* These findings demonstrate the importance of multiple facets in terms of personal characteristics merging with multiple opportunities in order to experience the Third Space where borders are crossed and integration proceeds. As stated earlier, the critical ethnographer asks, "what could be?" (Thomas, 1993). To this end, I ask, is it possible to:

- ✓ disrupt the social construction of immigrant women so that culture and gender provide an inclusive understanding of group difference[1]
- ✓ create strong, positive relationships between the locales to which women belong in order to create possibilities for the Third Space,
- ✓ engage the centers (of power) to participate in sites of border crossing and the experience of the Third Space,
- ✓ bring the needs of immigrant women to the attention of policy makers so they are seen as systemic problems that are deserving of attention and, in doing so,
- ✓ find ways to move multiculturalism beyond policy and into action?

In doing so, could we

- ✓ recognize immigrant women as a heterogeneous group of individuals with valuable skills and education, who share common experiences with Canadian-born women
- ✓ remove existing barriers to the Third Space, thus facilitating full participation,

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- ✓ develop more appropriate programs,
- ✓ and secure more adequate funding?

The research questions were:

1. How have the educational opportunities and integration experiences of women been structured by immigration policy and the multiculturalism act?
2. What are the experiences of immigrant women taking part in the programs at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women* and of the women involved in the administration and delivery of settlement programs? And
3. Under what conditions might settlement agencies offer potential borderlands, where individual's participation in a community of women empowers them, enabling them to integrate and participate in Canadian society?

To conclude, I will summarize the key findings in relation to my original research questions and then present some potential policy implications. First, the structuring of opportunities for immigrant women; second, the experiences of women taking part in programs at *Changing Together* and their experiences integrating in Edmonton; and finally, praises and critiques of the concept of hybridity and the Third Space.

Impact of Immigration Policy on Opportunities

There has been little change in the provision or funding of adequate programs for immigrant women. As cited earlier (and summarized in Appendix 1), conference findings and research publications have repeatedly cited the need for adequate

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educational opportunities, recognition of skills, recognition of education, and more egalitarian treatment in terms of gender. Unfortunately, despite the increased skills and education of immigrant women, there has been little change in immigration policy or program development in this regard. Women are left few options other than low-paying jobs, re-training or unemployment. This is particularly problematic in light of the fact that education and employment are key factors in integration.

The women who participated in this research identified overarching barriers to full participation in Canadian society on a daily basis. Their day-to-day experiences reveal key shortcomings of current policy and programs. The apparent assumptions of current immigration policy and program development conflict with the life experiences and skills of immigrant women. In table 8, I have recorded the apparent assumptions, the reality of women's lives, and policy recommendations based on this research.

Policy reform is required that recognizes and rewards women's roles prior to immigration, acknowledges assumptions regarding their care-giving role upon immigration, eliminates race *and gender* discrimination in terms of immigration status, ensures consistent and adequate funding for transition programs, and reflects the valuable social and economic contributions of immigrant women.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of policy reform will be equity versus equality. There are many aspects of immigration that are unique to women. Developing and offering courses 'equal' to men would be detrimental to women. As long as women are expected to assume primary responsibility for child and elder care in families, it is necessary to develop policies and programs that allow them to resume educational and occupational goals at different times. In other words, what is needed is English language

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education appropriate to educational goals, employment counseling and pre-employment courses when women are prepared to enter the workforce, opportunities to establish and maintain networks (social capital), and the means to achieve a sense of status and independence in Canadian society.

Table 8: Policy Recommendations For Program Development

Policies that impact program development appear to assume that:	**Impact on day-to-day lives in Canada**	**Recommendations**
• There was a patriarchal family structure and that women's primary role prior to immigration was childcare. As a result, women's full time participation in the workforce prior to immigration is seldom acknowledged.	• Women's skills and education are undervalued and/or unrecognized • Women are only able to access basic English training (if any)	Recognize that women were often equal partners in terms of financial contribution to the family and review program development and policy in order to increase access to education and relevant employment.
• Women will be stay-home moms in Canada	• Women are overwhelmed by the demands of childcare, a responsibility that was often shared or assumed by extended family. • There are few programs for pre-employment AND, once children begin school, the women no longer qualify for relevant programs.	• Provide stable funding/ access to programs that assist with the responsibilities of childcare – daycare, support groups, bi-cultural parenting. • Programs equitable to men's versus equal to. Provide relevant programs at appropriate times.
• The women come from lower socioeconomic class and have little status in their country of origin, are an oppressed group in country of origin.	• Many of the women come from middle class backgrounds and feel a drop in social status upon immigration	• Develop programs and relationships with Canadian-born women so that they feel accepted by and retain their status as women in Canadian society.

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Policies that impact program development appear to assume that:	Impact on day-to-day lives in Canada	Recommendations
• The women have chosen to come to Canada in order to improve their lives.	• In reality, the women are often here as a result of a decision made by their partner.	• Be aware of the mixed feeling of immigrant women and the impact that loss of control may have on the overall experience. Again, provide equitable versus equal programming.
• An independent sponsor cares for the women, as sponsored immigrants.	• Women do not qualify for social and educational programs. • In reality, the women are often victims of abuse because of the power imbalance created by immigration policy.	• Develop policies assuming that women are very capable of being self sufficient and provide programs (stable and appropriate) ensuring that women have the means to live independently if they so choose. • Establish policies and programs, for all Canadian women, recognize the right to live without abuse • Provide the necessary financial support.

Impact of Multiculturalism

Another question posed in the course of this research was whether or not Canada's multiculturalism policy affected the integration experiences of immigrant women, and whether their experiences reflect the attitudes reported in public opinion polls. As stated in the literature review, the policy proclaimed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had four broad objectives (Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism, 1998); 1) to assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity, 2) to assist cultural groups to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society, 3) to promote creative exchanges and interchanges

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among all Canadian cultural groups, and 4) to assist immigrants in acquiring at least one of the official languages.

The ability of the women to retain and foster their identity is limited. It is true that the women feel comfortable retaining aspects of their identity from their country of origin in terms of food, music, religion and family. However, they are unable in most situations to retain those aspects of their identity that are based on economic independence, employment, or professional status. There has been some assistance to the women in terms of overcoming barriers to full participation in Canadian society, but accommodation to their needs is slow. Cross- or multi- cultural exchanges are more often the result of individual efforts than initiatives of the state. This presents perhaps the most challenging aspect of turning the rhetoric of multiculturalism into the reality of a multicultural society.

The state is not in the position to mandate participation in or support of multicultural initiatives. The state can, and has, supported ethnic communities and settlement agencies in the empowerment of individuals and the integration of individuals from cultural groups with Canadian-society. Perhaps the key to more meaningful and plentiful cultural exchanges is policy that recognizes the need for partnerships between mainstream and isolated groups. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) stands as an example of the initiatives taken in promoting collaborative research between communities as well as communities and academic institutions through the Community University Research Alliance grants. A similar policy focus that encourages collaborative projects/initiatives/research between mainstream and ethnic communities may strengthen the efforts of isolated community groups. Ultimately, the

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success of such policy relies on the participation of key people in many communities. Finally, there is assistance to immigrants in the acquisition of one of the official language. However, this is again a qualified success in that the level and appropriateness of language education is inadequate.

Next, I explored whether or not the women's experiences reflect the attitudes of Albertans' shown in public opinion polls. As stated in the literature review, government documents and public opinion polls seem to show that Canadians have embraced diversity or cultural pluralism as both policy and practice. It is viewed as one of Canada's most important attributes, socially and economically. Again, women recount, *as individuals*, stories of compassion on the part of Canadians and assistance on an individual basis that reflect positive attitudes toward diversity and multiculturalism.

However, the lack of communication or collaborative work between (1) immigrant settlement agencies and mainstream educational and employment opportunities and (2) immigrant women and Canadian-born women indicates little commitment on the part of mainstream or dominant societal cultures to embrace (let alone integrate with) marginalized societal cultures. The lack of connection between these locales and societal cultures more accurately reflects the fact that multiculturalism is either seen as something of significance to immigrant or marginalized groups in Canada as opposed to all Canadians *or* as a way in which to maintain the status quo. Homi Bhabha writes about the use of stereotypes, created through the recognition of difference, as a 'tool' of both fantasy and defense. Bhabha (1994) refers to the stereotype as "an arrested, fixated form of representation" (p. 75) and goes on to say, "as a form of splitting and multiple belief, the stereotype requires, for its successful signification, a

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continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes" (p. 77). The use of the stereotype as a fixated identity of the Other, echoes Bedard's comments about the necessity of the Other in creating Whiteness. Perhaps this is the very reason that it has been difficult to create alliance and partnerships between the centers and margins of power through border pedagogy (as opposed to the border pedagogy between multiple margins that is exemplified by the Making Changes program at Changing Together). Hybridity (the product of border pedagogy and border crossing) becomes problematic as it prompts individuals and communities to reconsider *the facts*, "so that 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority- its rules of recognition" (p. 114). The negative impact of stereotypes and isolationist attitudes on the settlement and integration of immigrant women is seen in the lack of opportunities, or possibility, and the limitations of the Third Space.

In 1998, Albertans told the Government of Alberta that multiculturalism policy should encourage respect for, and integration of, all cultures. These societal attitudes seem contrary to the experiences of immigrant women. So too, the objectives of MAP (Alberta's Multiculturalism Action Plan) have not been met. To review, the objectives of MAP, cited as particularly relevant to the exploration of immigrant women, were:

- ✓ to develop strategies to reduce barriers in both the public and private sectors;
- ✓ to create (by April 1996), a sustainable network of Albertans and Alberta organizations who could demonstrate and "champion" the value and benefits of cultural diversity to their peers within industry, institutions, and communities;
- ✓ to equip individuals and organizations in the community (December 1996) with skills to develop and administer cultural diversity programs.

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Recall Rex's (1996) two definitions of a multicultural society. First, a society may claim to be multicultural if the policies operate in such a way that, although immigrant communities and their cultures are seen as having the right to exist, they are not necessarily accorded equal rights and may be regarded as culturally inferior. Second, a more ideal form of an egalitarian multicultural society is based on some ideal of equal citizenship previously negotiated between the classes and status groups in the host society. This equality is extended to immigrant groups, even though their right to retain their own culture is recognized. Based on a closer examination of the Multiculturalism Act and the results of a poll of public opinion (Canada and Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991), Canada's multiculturalism is *based on* the ideal of equal citizenship. However, the experiences of the women indicate that the first option of multiculturalism may be in practice, one in which cultures (the focus here being the culture of immigrant women) have a right to exist but are not accorded equal status or opportunities.

Kymlicka (2001) argues that, in order to achieve some form of equal citizenship (as per the ideal), and integrate, immigrants are entitled to fairer terms of integration. Based on the fact that immigrants are forced to integrate by virtue of the necessity to speak in one of the two official languages to access major institutions (legal, political, financial, educational, health), policy and program initiatives must (1) recognize that integration does not occur over night, and (2) "ensure that common institutions into which immigrants are pressured to integrate, provide the same degree of respect, recognition, and accommodation of the identities and practices of immigrants as they traditionally have of the identities and practices of the majority group " (p. 30).

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In order to achieve these objectives, Kymlicka (2000) states that a systematic exploration of Canada's common institutions is required in order to discern whether their rules, structures, and symbols disadvantage immigrants. My findings, though based on a limited population and small sample size, indicate that major institutions in Canada *do* disadvantage immigrant women in their attempts at equal citizenship and full participation.

Shortcomings within and between the institutions (spheres) included in this research point to the ways in which these structures and rules disadvantage the women's opportunities for integration. The absence of sustainable contact between immigrant women and mainstream women points out the importance of taking questions of equity and interaction beyond the institutional, to the role of individuals in achieving the ideals of multiculturalism. One is left questioning the success of individuals and organizations in 'championing' the value and benefits of cultural diversity.

Finally, there is no tangible evidence to support or refute whether or not individuals and organizations in the community have developed the *skills* to administer cultural diversity programs. However, I would recommend that such skill development focus on the establishment and maintenance of relationships (1) between the locales identified in this research, and (2) between the dominant societal cultures and multiple marginalized societal cultures. The return on investments in skill development will be exponential if combined with the facilitation of locale-to-locale communication and cooperative program development. One step in the creation of these relationships is founded on the advice of George Dei.

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Dei (1996) states that antiracism education must ask whether the emphasis on cultural diversity is making the politics of racism invisible and, if so, how may antiracism work break away from fixed dichotomies of self/other and either/or. The language of cultural diversity made the politics of racism invisible as is demonstrated by barriers to integration caused by the segregation and isolation experienced by immigrant women.

The emphasis on cultural diversity is partly responsible for the establishment of settlement agencies such as *Changing Together*. In this way, the state has acknowledged the existence of diversity and provided a means of addressing the needs of immigrant communities. However, far from altruistic in its actions, Carty and Brand (1993) see such policy as a means of 'containment and control'. The establishment of state initiated organizations was a response to a problem (immigrant women) that, once identified, needed to be contained in terms of their political demands. I echo Dei's encouragement to break away from fixed dichotomies of self and other, proposing assertive strategies that would unite immigrant women with 'mainstream' women, searching again for similarities within difference upon which to build a united (though not one and not common) voice.

Regardless of the motives for the establishment of such organizations as *Changing Together*, these organizations continue to challenge the policies and systems, voicing their 'political demands'. Handel Kashope Wright (1995) speaks about the importance of recognizing that the maintenance of borders is not always negative and, in fact, may allow the creation of sites of empowerment. Wright uses the example of African American women.

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> African American women created a site of empowerment, thereby transforming a bad border into a good border, one which shields them from the patriarchal and racist gaze and enables them to take on a project of possibility.

Changing Together is one such site of possibility, despite the fact that immigrant women's' voices remain stifled by the lack of partnerships between critical institutions, the overarching impact of discrimination, and the ineffectiveness of multiculturalism.

Integration Experiences of Immigrant Women

This research also supports previous scholars' belief that immigrant women, though diverse in terms of culture, education, country of origin, and religion, share common experiences as a result of their constructed membership in Canadian society.

Most of the women came to Canada as a result of a decision made by their family or spouse. Their initial thoughts on coming to Canada were mixed. Some were excited by the prospect of life in Canada, some were frightened but felt compelled to follow the wishes of loved ones, and some had no other choice as they escaped poverty or oppression. Once in Canada, the women experienced fluctuations in their sense of self-esteem, their sense of dependence, confidence, and assertiveness. In the face of discriminatory practices and interfaces, the women resolved to 'be strong' and to find the ways and means to secure a more promising future in Canada.

One of the most compelling aspects of hearing the stories of these women's integration in Canada was the exposure of my own naiveté, my own experience of the Third Space. This was made especially clear during the final stages of my analysis, as I reflected on the research process and experience in relation to the work of Ruth Frankenburg (1993). Frankenburg explored the ways in which race shapes white

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women's lives. I saw myself throughout her book and am constantly reminded of how race has and continues to shape my life. Despite my early recognition of the diversity of immigrant women and the inadequacy of immigration and multicultural policy, I realize that the day-to-day experiences of the women continued to challenge some strongly held misconceptions about race and relationships.

First, I am struck by my naiveté as I look back at the questions posed in light of the information gained from this research. The way in which I posed my preliminary research questions placed the responsibility for generating the Third Space squarely on the shoulders of immigrant women (both the organization of *Changing Together* and the individuals), isolating them from the impact of societal attitudes and beliefs and overlooking my own part in creating the Third Space. To this end, I underestimated the impact of both societal attitudes and beliefs on both program development and day-to-day experiences. In placing the responsibility for generating the Third Space on the women, I also reveal an underlying acceptance of the us/them dichotomy so prevalent in multicultural discourse.

Second, I underestimated the skills, both personal and professional of the women. In doing so, I overlooked the aspect of agency and the utility of Friere's inaugural moment – when possibility and agency meet. These women, with less than three years in Canada, have experienced very low times in terms of their sense of independence and confidence, yet they are determined to succeed in Canada. Policy and program development needs to find a way to capitalize on this moment, when possibility and agency meet.

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Third, I had grave misconceptions regarding the women's social status and economic status prior to immigration as well as their control over the decision to come to Canada. I believe that I am representative of many who believe that immigrants to Canada feel fortunate to be here and are experiencing an improvement in their overall quality of life. In fact, many of the women find that they have less status and are making sacrifices in order to provide a better future for their children. Ironically, their sacrifices are also our loss. If allowed to retain their social and economic status, these women could contribute far more to our society as full participants, utilizing their skills and resources.

Finally, I am struck by my naiveté regarding perceptions of culture and multiculturalism. While I engaged in the research based on my own beliefs regarding culture and multiculturalism, I was soon to face the stark reality of these women's lives. First, a closing quote from Anthias (2001)

> The bringing together of different cultural elements syncretically transforms their meaning, but need not mean that dialogue between cultural givens is necessarily taking place. Moreover, it could be argued that the acid test of hybridity lies in the response of **culturally dominant groups**, not only in terms of incorporating (or co-opting) cultural products of marginal or subordinate groups, but in being open **to transforming or abandoning some of their own central cultural symbols** and practices of hegemony. (p. 630)

The following conversation with Yukiko reveals my own assumptions about the day-to-day experiences of immigrant women in terms of the response of the 'culturally dominant group' and in terms of 'transforming or abandoning cultural symbols:

F: It sounds to me, tell me if this is wrong, but what you are saying is give me a chance to talk because I know some things too.
Y: Hmm

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F: Is it kind of like that?

Y: Maybe. It's a little bit easier to pretend I agree and yea, yea, yea, that is right, and forget about it. Because that is how it happens, part of my life. And that is true, you think pay attention to me and listen, just for a second, that might make a difference.

F: That is very good.

Y: They measure by their values, they just measure everything based on their Canadian values... whispers –especially truck drivers, they are so rude, they think they have a truck and they have the right of way.

F: That is something that is very profound, as a woman in our culture, or as an immigrant and a woman in our culture to say I have a voice to be heard and I have ideas that are worth listening to. And especially measuring everything according to Canadian values. Maybe we should think about there are other ways to measure, other ways to look at things.

Y: There may be, but this is still Canada.

F: But, this is my bias, it doesn't mean that the Canadian way is the way it should be. I think that, I really believe that if we can get all different perspectives and cultures working, we can get the best of everything. I may have some ideas myself, and they are good ideas let's say, and then you have ideas of your own and they are good ideas. But when we get a chance to talk, I think we come out with even better ideas, better understanding. It is like the more heads you put into thinking, the better your solution would be.

Y: Not everyone thinks that way (laughter). But I found that, like, to be able to recognize, to be able to be heard, I have to do good work. Let's say I am working, I do everything fast and accurate, then people start having a little respect, start paying attention. Otherwise, not very many people pay attention to me from the beginning. (Yukiko 2: 563-601)

I am becoming more and more critical of the ideals of multiculturalism as I begin to witness what I perceive to be a 'pacifier approach' to policy and program development for immigrant women. Although the theory of multiculturalism is alive and well, the practice of multiculturalism is not. "Political empowerment and the enlargement of the multiculturalist cause, come from posing questions of solidarity and community from the interstitial perspective" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 3). And so, though the Third Space is evident in women's stories of experiences at *Changing Together*, more must be done if the interstitial spaces are to be *all* inclusive. Kymlicka (2001) claims to provide evidence

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that multiculturalism is very positive, that it is not promoting Balkanization, cultural or linguistic apartheid or partial citizenship. While he has proven quite convincingly that multiculturalism does not promote separatism or apartheid, I am not convinced that it has not been partly responsible for immigrant women's experiences of partial citizenship. The women who participated in this research see the value of Canada's Multiculturalism Act and were drawn to this country because of its policies and reputation. The Multicultural Act is a tool for the negotiation and translation of membership in Canadian society and has the *potential* to create a truly multicultural (versus many cultured) environment given the means by which to ensure participation and inclusion – through the rights of minority cultures.

The women's shared experiences of disillusion, of hope, and of courage are the beginnings of the process of hybridity. However, the process and the realization of the Third Space are stunted by on-going discrimination, idealization of multiculturalism and culturally racist and gendered immigration policy that reinforce stereotypes and pre-conceived ideas of immigrant women. In the next section, I reflect on the fact that only with changes to the *practice* of multiculturalism will immigrant women begin to expose the falsity of fixed stereotypes, identify similarities within differences, and disrupt the use of culture and gender in shaping their future.

The Third Space

I have commented repeatedly on the necessity of representation of people from both the centers and margins of society in order to realize both the existence and the potential of the Third Space. I have also commented on the necessity for collaborative

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work between the multiple institutions that most directly impact the integration experiences of immigrant women. There is very little evidence here (beyond written policy statements) to suggest that mainstream, common or shared institutions *actively* promote the Third Space. There is little evidence here to suggest that individuals from the dominant societal culture actively seek to enter into relationships that draw them into the Third Space. In the absence of these 'agents': (1) societal attitudes continue to project and reflect an us/them approach to multiculturalism, (2) culture and gender are used to perpetuate fixed stereotypes that sustain power imbalances, (3) the process of cultural hybridity and integration of societal cultures is limited, and (4) the responsibility for the success or failure of individuals and the minority groups is attributed to those who have little control over the process.

For example, I asked whether women at *the Centre*, with a better understanding of each other's daily interactions and experiences, could facilitate the restructuring of relations in the broader society in order to increase financial resources, challenge the patriarchal stereotype of women's roles and responsibilities, and decrease dependence on the volunteer sector in a way that impacts policy and program development. As stated earlier, the way in which I posed the question reflects the existence of dichotomies (us/them) and places responsibility in the hands of (marginalized) individuals within a single organization. In hindsight, I question why I placed the responsibility for change on the women as opposed to the system.

Perhaps future research that attempts to measure Canadians' attitudes towards multiculturalism and awareness of multicultural issues could pose questions that require commitment to action and recognition of personal agency by all societal cultures (as

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opposed to simple agree/disagree responses regarding 'motherhood' statements of multiculturalism). For example,

1. Are you prepared to recognize the experience and credential of immigrants and demonstrate such through employment opportunities that grant minority rights to immigrants?
2. Are you aware of the fact that immigrant women tend to be more highly educated than Canadian born but hold lower paying jobs?
3. Do you believe in funding ESL training appropriate to education levels (for example, post secondary) to all immigrants regardless of immigration status or gender?
4. Do you believe that integration requires participation by Canadian-born citizens in ways that challenge what *all* Canadians 'know' (to be fact) and value?

Future research is required in order to establish and enhance communication between systems of education, employment and settlement, as each is critical to women's integration. Through this communication, future researchers could explore between institutions the similarities within differences, creating empathy between individuals and agencies. Goals of the three may be different but a shared belief in multiculturalism and the value of immigration and full participation of all citizens in Canada may go a long way in finding the means to achieving the full potential of all citizens.

The third question I posed questioned whether or not the Third Space provided the means to achieve a common or united voice for immigrant women. Interestingly, the

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empirical data repeatedly indicate that, for those who demonstrated cultural hybridity, the Third Space was experienced as an individual. Not only is the Third Space not a single locale; it is also not a group experience. Although participation in a group certainly contributes to a woman's potential to re-define roles, statuses and position in society, and participation in multiple groups enhances this potential, the end result is individual empowerment as opposed to a single common or united voice. I propose that this finding, however, is the result of a single snap shot taken during a process that takes many years.

Relatively recent immigrants to society, these women are in 'survival mode'. They are making the best of an overwhelming transition and have little to offer to social or shared causes in terms of time or energy. However, it would be premature to assume that individual agency will not eventually lead to united efforts. The united efforts of women who immigrated 15 to 20 years ago are documented in recent research and demonstrate united efforts at overcoming the challenges faced upon early immigration. Having made the adjustments and integrated in Canadian society, immigrant women have a strong desire to give back to the community (Fletcher and Gibson, 2003). Each of these women had contact or participated in *Changing Together* programs at one time. Their dedication to and efforts within the community of immigrant women as well as their efforts to build relationships between spheres is a sign of hope, perhaps proof of borderlands of possibility.

Fletcher and Gibson (2003) documented stories of successful integration and participation in Canadian society. Reflecting on their experiences, the women identified opportunities in education and employment as well as the support of their families as

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critical aspects of their success. This was particularly interesting to me as I found striking similarities between these women's memories and the current experiences of Claire, Jasmine, Maggie, Manini, Yukiko, Fe, Araba, Xiu, Susan and Disha. All acknowledge the generosity of women they met and the fact that they, as community leaders and role models in the immigrant community, want to give back. They also say that, for them, success means making a difference to the community where they live and where their children will grow up. A longitudinal study of the process of cultural hybridity may produce concrete examples of not only unity among immigrant women but unity of immigrant women in building bridges between the spheres or locales in which they become participants, even leaders.

Finally, I explored the use of border pedagogy as a means of facilitating the crossing of boundaries and, ultimately, the creation of the Third Space. As was the case throughout the research, there was an obvious lack of participation in this process by members of the dominant societal culture. Participation was lacking not only in the formal and informal sites of education and employment, but in the personal daily lives of immigrant women. There is ample evidence of the existence and value of finding similarities within differences. The women repeatedly spoke of the importance of identifying and empathizing with others as they recognized common struggle as immigrant women in Canadian society.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this research, the following possibilities exist for future research into the settlement and integration experiences of immigrant women in Canada.

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First, a more in depth look at their expectations prior to coming to Canada. This would be informative in terms of recommendations regarding the type of information included on websites such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This would also facilitate the inclusion of information about what immigrant women can expect upon immigration to Canada in terms of employability, independence, rights, status, and self-esteem. Providing a sense of the lived experiences of immigrant women may lessen the disillusion and disappointment typical of the women's first experiences. Relevant to this research would be a more in-depth exploration of the extent of input women have in the decision to immigrate.

Second, as mentioned previously, longitudinal research into the process of cultural hybridity would allow for a more complex understanding of border crossing and the Third Space. Ideally, such a study would follow the lives of a cohort of immigrant women. However, taking into consideration the expense of this research design, a cross-sectional analysis of women who immigrated three, five, seven and ten years previously would be worthwhile.

Third, it would be worthwhile to explore the reasons for the lack of communication between the locales critical to integration and full participation and possible solutions to the continued marginalisation and isolation of immigrant serving agencies. Such research would require collaborative work between education and employment sectors to discuss the needs of immigrant women and they ways in which current policies and programs may be amended in order to provide equitable opportunities for immigrant women.

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One approach to establishing these relationships may be to begin with an exploration of immigrant women's perception of the role of volunteerism and engaging sites of potential volunteer placements to explore why immigrant women are seldom placed with their organizations. The objective of such research would be to open doors to volunteer training and placement that 1) is relevant to immigrant women's career goals, 2) facilitates their full participation in Canadian society, and 3) begins collaborative partnerships between locales, and 4) lead to paid employment.

A much more sensitive locale to explore would be that of the family. However, the impact of the family in terms of responsibilities, expectations and position are critical to understanding full participation and integration. This would require an analysis of the role of individual family members, and their adjustments to societal norms and expectations.

Finally, it would be interesting to do a comparative analysis of the roles of multiple settlement agencies. Factors to explore would include unique initiatives, duplication of services, and the ways in which competition between agencies accessing a limited pool of resources hinders collaborative initiatives.

Despite the limitations and barriers found in this exploration of the Third Space, I believe it is a very viable and valuable concept for multicultural societies. In discovering its weaknesses, researchers are better equipped to engage in community-based, participatory and collaborative projects that will invite more participants into the ambivalent yet liberating and rewarding interstitial spaces between cultures, politics, religions and genders. The future of immigrant women's well-being and their

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participation in Canadian society will be enhanced by continued collaborative research endeavors.

> Social differences are not simply given to experience through already authenticated cultural traditions; they are the signs of the emergence of community envisaged as a project – at once a vision and a construction – that takes you 'beyond' yourself in order to return, in a spirit of revision and reconstruction, to the political conditions of the present. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 3)

Notes

[1] Marion Iris Young (2001) writes that a relational understanding of group difference "no longer implies that groups be outside one another. To say that there are differences among groups does not imply that there are not overlapping experiences, or that the two groups have nothing in common (p. 399).

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Findings and Recommendations from Research and Conferences of Immigrant Women Particularly Relevant to the Proposed Research

Recommend	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Attitudes Towards Multiculturalism and Immigration Policy	▪ Although multicultural, Canadian society as a whole does not recognize or show respect for cultural traditions or heritage of newcomers, *especially women.* ▪ Fundamental reform to immigration policy is necessary for the health of immigrant women, allowing access to support services. ▪ The following *gendered* variables were all identified as contributors to ill health: immigration policy, labour policy, education, employment practices, wage scales, workplace conditions, income security, language acquisition, and education policy.	Women called for aggressive strategies that would overcome discrimination, working for a new egalitarian relationship that would replace on in which women were perceived as dependent. (The responsibility for this initiative has been taken over almost exclusively by Multiculturalism Canada.)	▪ Existing immigration policy reinforces the dependent status of women. As sponsored immigrants, they are ineligible for social services like income assistance, social welfare programs, legal aid, and publicly subsidized housing. ▪ Multiculturalism policy presents a struggle for women as research identifies gender bias and sexism embedded in multicultural ideology. ▪ National debates on multiculturalism are masculinised, dominated by men and perceived as high value to the state.
Spoken and Written Language	▪ The government must support the provision of language training for all adults immigrants and refugees, ▪ including the provision of childcare when necessary, ▪ making the material relevant to the lives of the students.	The government should provide: ▪ Basic language instruction regardless of immigration class. ▪ Reasonable living, travel, childcare while taking instruction. ▪ Instruction by immigrant women's and community organisations.	▪ Like previous reports, Lee (1999) cites the lack of English language training as a concern for immigrant women. ▪ Official language training is less than systematic, leaving women unskilled in verbal and written skills.

[1] This 1981 Conference was organized because, although Canada acknowledged itself as a nation of immigrants, the positive role that immigrant women played at the time was not being recognized.
[2] A report commissioned by the British Columbia Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration. The purpose of the study was to provide information about the links between funded projects and the Ministry's mandate, improve the Ministry's program design and planning, collect data, account for funds allocated and increase capacity for further development

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	▪ Curricula that is relevant to their lives. ▪ Broader range of learning vehicles to reach those unable to use traditional forms of instruction	
Emotional and Economic Self Reliance	▪ The roles traditionally played by immigrant women in the economy should be examined to alter the structure	▪ There must be more ways to encourage greater independence. Often, what is required beyond initial, basic programs is missing. ▪ Immigrant women who have established themselves beyond immediate settlement and basic survival wish to address institutional and societal issues (such as systemic racism and institutional barriers). ▪ Two types of empowerment emerge from program participation[3]
Health and Social Services	▪ Funding should be based on 3-year implementation and evaluation basis to settlement, social and health service agencies ▪ Settlement, social, and health care services should develop multicultural policy. ▪ Government should fund research, education programs for immigrant women and service providers.	▪ Cited as a major area of concern to immigrant women.

[3] 1) personal empowerment in terms of self esteem and self confidence – economic independence, professional development, advocacy for others, and program planning and management and 2) group solidarity and support in a political sense, engagement I collection action and critical consciousness.

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Public Education		▪ Federal government should work with provincial ministries or education to encourage and help coordinate the development of outreach programs for immigrant women who have previously found the education system inaccessible. ▪	Cited as a major area of concern to immigrant women.
NOTE: There are no comments on the informal education possibilities such as settlement organizations.			
Individual and Community Family Life		▪ Financial support for community based life skills programs. ▪ Include women in decisions of funding to multicultural organizations. ▪ Ensure government advertising reflects participation of immigrant women in Canadian society. ▪ Ensure Federal government and other agencies involve immigrant women and their issues on their agenda.	
Discrimination	▪ Immigrant women were facing "extraordinary difficulties" and discrimination in all areas of their lives. ▪ The major contributions of immigrant women to the economic development of Canada have not been adequately acknowledged. ▪ Too many women	▪ There is systemic discrimination built into the institutions and government experienced because they are women and because they are immigrants.	▪ Systemic racism structures immigrant women's experiences in the initial period of settlement and adjustment as well as longer term integration in Canadian society.

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	are seriously exploited in the Canadian labour market.		
Denial of Expertise and the Role of Immigrant Women in Canada		▪ Federal government's relationship with immigrant women (and thus policy) seemed to deny women's expertise and women were cast in largely passive roles.	▪ Lack of recognition of foreign credentials and professional certification. ▪ Job "ghettoization" and exploitation.
Funding		▪ A lack of secure funding places severe limitations on activities of immigrant women service organizations.	
Information About Services Available to Immigrant Women		▪ There is a severe lack of information or data on immigrant women's experiences. The fact that there is no information should not be interpreted as the absence of problems. The problem is that the data is not gathered according to gender.	
Integration	It was felt that since integration is a two way process, it is equally important to educate the general Canadian public on multiculturalism and racism as well as to provide orientation programs to newcomers and their families.	▪ Immigrant women feel isolated from the paid workforce (and placed in dead-end jobs) as well as the voluntary sector (often excluded from the mainstream women's organizations), as well as Federal government. ▪ Immigrant women ask that the Federal government act to facilitate their integration into the economic, cultural,	

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		and governmental mainstream.	
Intersections	The issues of immigrant women should not be viewed in isolation or as separate from the broader social, economic, and political context of immigrant women.	▪	Feminist researchers argue that racialized women's lives cannot be understood by looking at each dimension separately. Analysis and action must begin by examining women's lived experiences and then connect them with larger structural forces.

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Information Sheet

Settlement Experiences of Immigrant Women at an Edmonton Settlement Agency

Purpose:

The purpose of this research project is to explore the settlement experiences of immigrant women who go through programs at Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women.

Methods:

I am asking you to talk to me about your experiences since immigrating to Canada and the ways in which you have come to feel part of the local community. I will ask you questions about your personal experiences and your experiences at Changing Together. There are no right or wrong answers. The interview will last for about one hour. After the interview, I may ask to talk to you again. The reason for this is to make sure that I understand what you meant. I may also want to ask some follow-up questions after the first interview. This second interview will take about 30 minutes.

Confidentiality:

The interview will be recorded on tape. I will take the recording of the interview and turn it into text or written words. The name of the person in the interview will not be recorded on the tape or the paper. Instead, a pseudonym will be provided for each participant. The only two people with access to the name of the person on the tape will be Fay Fletcher and her supervisor, Dr. Alison Taylor. All of the information that has the person's name on it will be kept in a locked file. Interviews will be conducted at *Changing Together*. It is possible that people at *Changing Together* will know that you took part in the research study, but they will not know what you said.

Benefits:

This study may or may not have any direct benefits for you. It is hoped that the experiences of immigrant women in Edmonton (and Canada in general) will be better understood and that this research may help direct future policy initiatives that affect immigrant women.

Risks:

It is not expected that being in this study will harm you. However, you may feel uncomfortable or angry as you reflect on your experiences since arriving in Canada. I will talk to you about these feelings and help you find any help you may need.

Withdrawal from the study:

Even after you have agreed to do the interview you can decide you do not want to be part of the study. This can be before or in the middle of the interview. If you are asked to do a second interview, you can decide that you do not want to. You can also decide after the first or second interview that you do not want what you said to be used. If this is what you chose, the information you shared will not be used.

Use of your Information:

This study is being done as part of a doctoral degree. Fay Fletcher is a student at the University of Alberta. The things that you say in the interviews will be tape recorded, carefully reviewed, and included in reports and a final dissertation for a graduate degree. Your comments will help us to understand what it is like to be an immigrant woman in Edmonton. The information from your interview will help us to examine immigration policy and programs. None of the reports will have your name in them. Once all the interviews are completed a report will be prepared for the University of Alberta and for *Changing Together*. If you want, I will mail a summary of this report to you.

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

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Title of Research Project:
Settlement Experiences of Immigrant Women at an Edmonton Settlement Agency

Investigator:
Fay Fletcher
Doctor of Philosophy Candidate
Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta
Phone number: 421-0175

Consent:
Please circle your answers:

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you can quit taking part in this study at any time?	Yes	No
Has confidentiality been explained to you?	Yes	No
Do you understand who will be able to see or hear what you said?	Yes	No
Do you understand that people at Changing Together may know that you participated in this study, but they will not know what you said?	Yes	No
Do you know that the information that you provide will be used for written reports and Fay Fletcher's PhD dissertation?	Yes	No
Do you agree to have your interview tape-recorded?	Yes	No

Either of the following may be contacted about the research:

Fay Fletcher	Dr. Alison Taylor
Phone: 421-0175	Phone: 492-7608
Email: fay.fletcher@ualberta.ca	Email: alison.taylor@ualberta.ca

This study was explained to me by: _____
I agree to take part in this study.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Research Participant	Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Witness
_____		_____
Printed name		Printed name

Copy of the Report:
Would you like to receive a summary of the report? Yes No
If you would like to receive a copy, please print a mailing address where the information can be sent. Your address will not be used for any other reason than to send you a copy of the report.

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Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Personal Data:
Name: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Marital Status: _____ Age: _____

Children (ages) _____

_____

Background:
County of Birth: _____

Date of Arrival to Canada: _____

Immigration Status:
- ☐ Family Class
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Refugee

Work Experience:

Home Country	Length of Time

Canada	Length of Time

Education:
Number of Years of Education: _____

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Special Training:

_____

_____

Certificate/Degrees/Diploma:_____

_____

Studies in Canada:

_____

_____

Activities and Interests:

_____

_____

Volunteer Work/Committees/ Organizations:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

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First Round Interview Guide – Immigrant Women

The Research Questions:

1. How have the educational opportunities and integration experiences of women been structured by immigration policy and the multiculturalism act?
2. What are the experiences of immigrant women taking part in the programs at *Changing Together...A Centre for Immigrant Women* and of non-immigrant women involved in the administration and delivery of settlement programs?
3. Do the experiences of the women reflect the possibility of a borderland, a space where their participation in a community of women empowers them, enabling them to integrate and participate in Canadian society?

Interview Questions:

Topic 1 Family

- Can you tell me a little about the family you grew up in?
- How many siblings? Their work and education?
- Are you married? Tell me about your husband?
- Do you have children? Tell me about them.

Topic 2: Past Experience

1. Why did you immigrate to Canada?
    - Whose decision?
    - Do you have relatives in Edmonton?
    - Did you consider other countries?
    - Were you sponsored/independent?
    - Did you work before you immigrated, what kind of work?

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2. Did you know about Canada before you immigrated? What did you know about a Canada?
    - Were you aware of the policy of Multiculturalism?
    - What was the first source of information you received in Canada regarding immigration (rights, responsibilities) and where did you get it?
4. What was your status when you immigrated (sponsored/independent)?
    - Do you think that has affected your ability to settle in Canada? In what way?

Topic 3: Present

1. What have been the challenges since coming to Canada?
    - Language,
    - Culture
    - Employment
    - Racism
2. What groups have been important to helping you feel settled since you came to Canada? Why?
3. What individuals have been important to helping you feel settled since you came to Canada? Why
4. How did you find out about Changing Together?
    - Why did you come to changing Together?
    - Has Changing Together been important to your settlement here? Why?
    - Are there individuals or events from Changing Together that stand out as important to your settlement experiences? Explain

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5. Do you continue to see people that you met through Changing Together?
    - Socially
    - Professionally
    - Support
6. Have the courses you took at Changing Together or the people you met at Changing Together helped you overcome the challenges we talked about earlier?
7. Have your skills been recognized?
8. The policy of multiculturalism says that all Canadians are entitled to full participation in Canadian society? What does full participation mean to you?
    - Do you feel that you are able to participate fully in society? Why or why not? Examples?
    - Has Canada lived up to its reputation as a multicultural society? In what ways?

Topic 4: The Future

1. How are you feeling about your future?
    a. Your family's future?

2. Have your experiences at Changing Together changed your life in any way? How?

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Settlement Interviews
Second Round of Interview Questions

Rationale: On participation (based on finding that work serves much more than just economic need):

Question 1. What would be the most important way for you to participate in Canadian society? Why?

Rationale: On program policy: (based on finding that funding requirements do not reflect the reality of women's immigration experience. While the men may access and benefit from pre-employment within first three years, the reality of the women's lives – allowing men to upgrade and work first, child bearing, adjustment to culture – means that three year 'window' excludes them from participation).

Question 2. When you took the Making Changes course,

- **How long had you been in Canada?**
- **was your husband working at the time?**
- **Did you have young children or were you planning to have a baby?**
- **Did you have plans to find employment soon after?**
- **How comfortable were you with Canadian culture and language at that time?**
- **Do you feel that you would benefit more from a course like Making Changes now than when you took it?**

Rationale: On program needs: Because a number of the women did not identify needs that should be addressed, I thought that it might be worth asking the question in a slightly different way. This may allow for more of the lived experiences that are the result of policy and cultural expectations to surface.

Question 3. Have you ever been frustrated, for any reason, since coming to Canada? Can you tell me about that?

Rationale: Sense of belonging: Although I have a fair bit of information here, it is quite clear that they do not and may never feel "Canadian" as some of them put it. Perhaps it is more important to find out how much *change* there has been in terms of their feelings as a 'newcomer' versus now (2 or 3 years later). This will also touch on stories about acceptance and respect.

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Question 4. Can you tell me how you felt the first few months you were in Canada compared to how you feel today? Do you have a story or example of something that has changed?

In the way people treat you
In the groups that you participate in
In your work

Rationale: Still trying to get at programs that are absent or restricted due to policy (immigration and multicultural).

Question 5: Given the opportunity, what would YOU teach the leaders in the settlement agencies about the experiences and needs of women immigrating to Canada?

Rationale: In some of the interviews, women talked about family members enquiring about coming to Canada, some encouraged their family to move, others do not. This, I think, reflects whether or not they feel they have a good future, are accepted, are respected, and are able to participate in Canadian society.

Question 6: Would you encourage others (if they asked your opinion) to come to Canada? To come to Changing Together?

Rationale: Some of the women spoke about becoming famous and making circles of friends that help them get jobs, social support etc. I would like to explore this more as this may be reflective of that third space (not bound by the Centre).

Question 7: Have you been able to increase the number of people you know through your participation at the Centre? And have those people helped you in any way – work , support, meeting others, ...?

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Appendix 7

Interview Guide for Staff of Changing Together

Background from PhD Proposal

Past research has identified the need for policy related research directly relevant to immigrant women and settlement services grounded in the actual experiences of organizing within immigrant and refugee women's groups.

Question from literature review: Do program and policies (and the way in which they are funded) reflect an ill-conceived idea of women's roles, underestimate education levels, and contribute to a narrow and conservative view of immigrant women, emphasizing their roles as wives, daughters and mothers?

Questions for Interview:

1. **What kind of programs have you been able to get funded? Can you give me some examples? What was the rationale/purpose of the program/funding?**

2. **What programs have you applied for that you have NOT been successful in securing funds? Some examples? What was the rationale/purpose of the program?**

3. **Do you feel that the women's day to day lives have benefited from policies that promote inclusion and diversity? If yes, in what ways? If not, why not?**

4. **Have the educational opportunities/programs/services available to immigrant women in general or those at CT been structured by immigration policy and multiculturalism? In what ways?**

Are the women able to gain independence in Canada? Why or why not?

Is Canadian policy finding way in which individuals within societal cultures may coexist with each other?

Do you believe that multiculturalism is understood by policy makers and the public as a means of facilitating integration? How was integration conceptualizes?

According to policy proclaimed in 1971, there were four objects 1) to assist groups to retain and foster their identity, 2) to assist cultural groups overcome barriers to cull participation, 3) to promote creative exchanges and interchanges among all Canadian cultural groups, and 4) to assist immigrants in acquiring at least one of the official languages.

Are multiculturalism policy/funding/programs assisting the centre in meeting these objectives?

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