

**“LONELINESS IS KILLING ME”: LIFE STORIES AND RESILIENCE OF
CANADIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN**

RUKSANA RASHID

M.B.B.S. Rajshahi Medical College, 1990

MPH, Dhaka University, 2004

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
of the University of Lethbridge
in Partial fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters in Health Sciences

MASTER OF SCIENCE HEALTH SCIENCES

Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

© Ruksana Rashid, 2011

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and life-stories of recent Canadian immigrant women and their resilience in every day life. A qualitative methodology involving repeated in-depth person-centered interviewing (two to three interviews for each participant) focused on a holistic and in-depth understanding of resilience. Five immigrant women volunteered to participate in the study. Snowball sampling and ‘word of mouth’ were used to recruit participants. Narrative analysis (first level) and thematic analysis (second level) were used to explore. In addition to the life stories, three major themes emerged from the data: Life before Canada; A Journey of Compound Stressors; and Resilience in Everyday Life. Loneliness surfaced as a dominant stressor among the participants as a consequence of immigration. The absence of friendships within the context of immigration was a new finding emerging from this study. Findings further our understanding of recent Canadian immigrant women’s life experiences and concomitantly their resilience. Suggestions for future research are addressed in this study.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I express my sincere appreciation to Dr. David Gregory, my Supervisor, for his continuous support, direction, and insights throughout this research journey and master program. **David**, thank you for introducing me to the world of qualitative research. The quality of this thesis is representative of your encouragement and expertise. Your guidance through the years has been invaluable and has always helped me to grow. You are an amazing teacher, a powerful leader, and a wonderful mentor.

I also want to express my profound gratitude to my committee members for their contributions and expert guidance into my thesis. Dr. Kazemipur, for your expertise in the area of immigrant Canadians, I was fortunate to have a scholar of national reputation and accomplishment on my Committee. Dr. Scruby, a feminist scholar and researcher, who helped me understand the importance of gender and the place of power in the lives of my participants.

I thank Dr. Gary Nixon. I am grateful to have had your support during this challenging and, at the same time, inspiring process of mine. Thank you.

Many thanks to Dr. Shamsul Alam and his family who have provided support, encouragement, and love to me and my family over the past two years.

My wonderful husband, Morshed and beautiful children, Raisa and Rayeed, thank you for believing in me. This process would not be the same without your love and sacrifice.

Much appreciation is acknowledged to Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism Education Fund, Alberta—for funding this research.

Finally, I am grateful to my co-researchers who delved deeply into their souls in sharing their stories. Without their openness this research could not have been completed.

I thank you all with love and sincerity.

Table of Contents

Abstract-----	Iii
Acknowledgements-----	Iv
Table of Contents-----	V
List of Tables-----	Xi
Chapter One -----	1
Introduction-----	1
Background and Context-----	1
Immigrant Women in the Canadian Context-----	3
Statement of the Research Problem-----	5
Immigration as a Gendered Experience-----	8
Rationale for Study-----	9
Research Purpose-----	11
Research Questions-----	12
Theoretical Frameworks-----	12
Resilience theory-----	12
Feminist theory -----	15
Implicated Researcher-----	16
Research Approach and Method-----	17
Significance of the Study-----	18
Summary-----	19
Chapter two: Review of the Literature-----	20
Immigration and Canada-----	20
The Stressors of Resettlement-----	21
Immigration and Women-----	21
Barriers and challenges-----	23
<i>Socio-cultural barriers</i> -----	24
<i>Barriers to accessing health care services</i> -----	25
<i>Occupational barriers</i> -----	26
<i>Language barriers</i> -----	29
Immigration and its impact on women-----	29
<i>Domestic violence and Spousal abuse</i> -----	30
<i>Mental health</i> -----	31
Summary-----	33
Resilience: Meeting life’s challenges-----	34
History of Resilience Research-----	35
Resilience: Theoretical Conceptualizations-----	36
Resilience and Immigrant Women-----	37
Internal protective factors-----	37
External protective factors-----	39
Negative factors-----	41
Resilience Research and its Limitations-----	42
Viewing Immigration through Feminist Prism-----	45
Resilience Research among Immigrant Women-----	47
Distinctiveness of the Study-----	49
Summary-----	50

Chapter Three: Research design-----	52
Methodology-----	52
Philosophical Stance-----	52
Study Design-----	54
Theoretical Underpinnings-----	55
Resilience theory-----	55
Feminist theory-----	57
Method-----	61
Person-centered interviewing-----	62
Rationale to supplement the research method within feminist research principles-----	63
Accessing and Recruiting the Population-----	64
Inclusion criteria -----	66
Exclusion criteria-----	66
Ethical Considerations-----	65
Informed and voluntary consent-----	68
Confidentiality and anonymity of research participants-----	69
Sampling and Sample size-----	70
Data Collection Techniques-----	70
Data Analysis-----	73
Narrative analysis-----	73
<i>The construction of the stories</i> -----	73
Thematic analysis-----	74
Demonstration of Trustworthiness-----	75
Credibility-----	76
<i>Member-checking</i> -----	77
<i>Peer debriefing</i> -----	77
<i>Prolonged engagement</i> -----	77
Transferability-----	77
Dependability-----	78
Confirmability-----	78
Summary-----	78
Chapter four: Research findings-----	80
The participants-----	80
The stories-----	82
Pata: Life in the Homeland -----	82
Participant as person-----	82
The early years-----	82
The later years-----	84
Life in Germany-----	85
Marriage and family-----	85
The Journey to Canada-----	88
Decision making-----	88
Pre-immigration knowledge-----	89
Moving to Canada-----	90
Leaving the homeland-----	91

Reaching Canada-----	91
Life in Canada-----	92
Initial days in Canada-----	92
Disappointments in life-----	93
Life events and disappointments-----	94
Not giving up-----	95
Given an opportunity-----	97
A new start at Lethbridge-----	98
Post immigration experiences-----	99
Suggestions for new immigrants-----	102
Major achievements in life-----	103
The journey continues-----	104
Panna: Life in the Homeland -----	104
Participant as person-----	104
The early years-----	104
The later years-----	105
Marriage and family-----	106
Life in Japan-----	107
Coming back home-----	108
The Journey to Canada-----	109
Decision making-----	109
Pre-immigration knowledge-----	109
Moving to Canada-----	110
Leaving the homeland-----	110
Reaching Canada-----	111
Life in Canada-----	111
Initial days in Canada-----	111
Disappointments in life-----	113
Life events and distress-----	115
Not giving up-----	115
Moving forward-----	116
Post immigration journeys-----	117
Living in Liminality-----	122
Suggestions for new immigrants-----	123
Major achievements-----	123
The journey continues-----	123
Diana: Life in the Homeland -----	124
Participant as person-----	124
The early years-----	124
The later years-----	125
Marriage and family-----	126
Life in the USA-----	127
The Journey to Canada-----	132
Decision making-----	132
Pre-immigration knowledge-----	133
Moving to Canada-----	134

Reaching Canada-----	134
Life in Canada-----	134
Initial days in Canada-----	135
Disappointments in life-----	136
Life events and distress-----	136
Not giving up-----	137
Post immigration experiences-----	139
Moving forward-----	143
Suggestions for new immigrants-----	143
Major achievements-----	144
The journey continues-----	144
Anita: Life in the Homeland-----	145
Participant as person-----	145
The early years-----	145
The later years-----	145
Marriage and family-----	146
Journey to Canada-----	148
Decision making-----	148
Pre-immigration knowledge-----	148
Moving to Canada-----	149
Leaving the homeland-----	150
Reaching Canada-----	150
Life in Canada-----	151
Initial days in Canada-----	151
Disappointments in life-----	152
Not giving up-----	155
Post immigration experiences-----	156
Moving forward-----	161
Suggestions for new immigrants-----	162
Major achievements in life-----	162
The journey continues-----	163
Caroline: Life in the Homeland-----	163
Participant as person-----	163
The early years-----	163
The later years-----	164
Marriage and family-----	165
The Journey to Canada-----	166
Decision making-----	166
Pre-immigration knowledge of Canada-----	167
Moving to Canada-----	167
Leaving the homeland-----	167
Reaching Canada-----	169
Life in Canada-----	169
Initial days in Canada-----	169
Disappointments in life-----	171
Not giving up-----	172

Post immigration experiences-----	173
Moving forward-----	180
Major achievements in life-----	180
Suggestions for new immigrants-----	181
The journey continues-----	182
Looking Across the Five Stories-----	182
Life before Canada-----	182
Growing up in the homeland-----	183
Global family—relatives across the world-----	184
Leaving the homeland for brighter horizons-----	185
A Journey of Compound Stressors-----	186
“I am all alone”—in the midst of many-----	186
A liminal traveller on a difficult journey-----	188
Art of balancing cultures-----	189
A stranger in a strange country-----	190
Act of compromises-----	191
Resilience in Everyday Life-----	192
Safety net for an unknown future-----	192
Motivations and strengths—making a difference abroad-----	193
Marriage—in the process of resilience-----	194
The role of community in lives of Immigrants-----	197
Meaning making—the road to resiliency-----	198
Making connections and keeping contacts-----	199
Unique experiences-----	200
Summary-----	200
Chapter Five: Discussion-----	201
Findings and their Place in the Literature-----	201
Life before Canada-----	201
<i>Early and later years</i> -----	203
<i>Life experiences</i> -----	204
<i>Decision making</i> -----	204
<i>Spouses or dependents</i> -----	205
<i>Global family</i> -----	205
<i>Pre-immigration knowledge</i> -----	206
A journey of compound stressors-----	206
<i>Loneliness and isolation</i> -----	206
<i>Absence of Canadian friends</i> -----	208
<i>Non recognition of credentials</i> -----	208
<i>Weather, language, and transportation</i> -----	209
<i>Preserving culture and religious beliefs</i> -----	209
<i>Lack of leisure</i> -----	210
<i>Experiences with health services</i> -----	210
Resilience in every day life-----	210
<i>Having a back up plan</i> -----	211
<i>Striving for independence and re-framing life’s goals</i> -----	211
<i>Hope and optimism</i> -----	211

<i>Cultural values and religious faith</i> -----	212
<i>Act of resistance</i> -----	212
<i>Impact of the marital relationship</i> -----	213
<i>Transcending loss through technological connections</i> -----	214
<i>The role of ethno-cultural communities</i> -----	214
<i>The role of social support</i> -----	214
Factors impede resilience-----	215
<i>Internal factors</i> -----	215
<i>Marriage and family</i> -----	216
<i>Systemic barriers</i> -----	217
Theoretical Frameworks-----	218
Concept of resilience-----	218
Resilience—“not giving up on life”-----	221
Feminist theory-----	222
Reflection and Reflexivity-----	224
Limitations of the Study-----	227
Future Research Directions-----	228
Recommendations-----	230
Implications for Mental Health Professionals, Counsellors, and Social Workers-----	232
Implications for Immigrant Population-----	232
Conclusion-----	233
References-----	235
Appendices-----	245
Appendix A: Letter to Immigrant Services-----	245
Appendix B: Letter of invitation-----	247
Appendix C: Poster-----	248
Appendix D: Letter to Community Centre-----	249
Appendix E: Consent Form-----	250
Appendix F: Oath of Confidentiality (Transcriptionist)-----	252
Appendix G: Demographic Sheet-----	253
Appendix H: Interview Guide-----	255
Interview Guide: Interview 1-----	255
Interview Guide: Interview 2-----	258
Interview Guide: Interview 3-----	260

List of Tables

Tables-----	81
Table 1: General demographic data of participants-----	81

Chapter One

Canada is a nation of “immigrant-citizens” united by the shared citizenship of equal rights and responsibilities. Immigrants from all over the world come to Canada for better quality of life and prosperity. Although immigration brings prospects in life, this transition process of migrating from one’s homeland to a new land is not easy, and can be a stressful experience. The adjustment to life in a new country comes with challenges and sacrifices (Willgerodt, Miller, & McElmurry, 2002). Loss of friends and family, loss of occupational status, and loss of supportive networks make immigrants vulnerable to psychological trauma, emotional strain, and mental distress (Schmitz, Jacobus, Stakeman, Valenzuela, & Sprankel, 2003). Immigrant women can find the relocation experience more adverse than their male counterparts because of their social isolation, dependency on spouses, financial insecurities, and limited employment opportunities (Khan & Watson, 2005). While the majority of researchers have focused on burden, stress, and poor quality of life of immigrant women, understanding their resilience and the capacity to overcome immigration stress under pressure remains limited (Graham & Thurston, 2005). This study focuses on recent Canadian immigrant women, their experiences, and their resilience to overcome challenges throughout the immigration journey.

Background and Context

Immigration plays an important role in augmenting Canada's population and economic well-being. Roughly two-thirds of Canada's population growth comes from net international migration (Statistics Canada, 2006a). The recent Census indicates that in the past five years, Canada’s population grew by 1.6 million with 1.1 million being the result of immigration (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008a). Immigrants provide

essential linkages between provincial and international economies. Estimates show that a 10% increase in immigration is correlated with a 1% increase in exports (Alberta Government, 2005). Therefore, Canada needs immigrants to meet its labour force demand and to bring international skills and expertise to enhance economic development and prosperity.

The Alberta Government (2005) has identified that the proportion of Canadian immigrants landing in Alberta has increased to 10% resulting in a minimum of 24,000 immigrants per year (compared to a total of 16,469 immigrants in 2004). Most settle in the province's two largest cities, Edmonton and Calgary. The foreign-born population in Edmonton grew by 14.9% between 2001 and 2006; and Edmonton had the 6th largest share of recent immigrants to Canada. (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census). Alberta's economy and excellent quality of life make the province an ideal place for immigrants. However, Alberta is facing a number of demographic challenges such as an aging population, a low birthrate, urbanization, and decreased interprovincial migration. All of these demographic forces will undermine Alberta's ability to meet the labour force demands of a prosperous economy. Human Resources and Employment reported that Alberta may face a shortage of 100,000 workers over the next ten years (Alberta Government, 2005). Therefore, the situation may become even more critical over the next decade. To sustain its economic growth, Alberta requires an adequate supply of workers with the right knowledge and skills. Most immigrants who move to Alberta are well educated. In 2004, 48% immigrants held a university degree which was up from 33% in 1996 (Alberta Government, 2005). Immigrants who came as entrepreneurs invested over \$10 M in 2002 and contributed over 200 full- and part-time jobs in Alberta (Alberta

Government, 2005). Immigrants are essential to sustaining the prosperity and continued development of the overall economy of Alberta and Canada, now and in the future.

Therefore, it is important to make their transition as smooth as possible to facilitate their integration into society to attract and retain more immigrants to Alberta as well as to Canada.

Each year a large number of highly qualified people immigrate to Canada from different countries. Despite immigrants' higher average education than the native-born Canadians, many are unable to find employment in fields related to their education. They are also less likely to be employed compared to their Canadian-born counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 2006 the national unemployment rate of immigrants was 11.5%, which was more than double the rate of 4.9% for the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Statistics Canada (2008) reported that 29.8% of recent immigrant male university graduates worked in occupations normally requiring no more than high-school education in 2005. This was more than twice the rate of 11.5% among their Canadian-born counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2008). Skilled and qualified immigrants are, therefore, underemployed and working in low-skilled occupations.

Immigrant Women in the Canadian Context

The number of immigrant women is steadily increasing and they outnumber male immigrants in developed countries (United Nations, 2009). The United Nations (2009) has reported that women constitute almost half of all international migrants world wide which is approximately 95 million. A large number of recent Canadian immigrants with a university education were women. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008b) revealed that in 2007 approximately 31.5% of female immigrants held a bachelor's degree, 11%

held a master's degree, and 1.6% held a doctorate degree. Despite higher levels of education than their Canadian born counterparts, immigrant women are less likely to be employed than Canadian born women. In 2000, the mean earnings of university educated women immigrants was \$49k compared to Canadian born women who earned \$79.3k (Statistics Canada, 2007a). The unemployment rate for immigrant women was 4% higher than their male counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2008). A study on immigrants' unemployment rates by Statistics Canada (2008) showed that women who had been in Canada for five years or less had an unemployment rate of 13% in 2006 compared with 10.3% among men in the same group. Research (Stewart, Neufield, Harrison, Spitzer, Hughes, & Makwarimba, 2006) suggests that gender, ethnicity, and race influence how immigrant women access employment markets. In addition family size, care giving role, household responsibility, and family support also affect women's ability to enter the labour market and relegate them to part-time menial work with irregular hours and low pay (Stewart et al., 2006). Therefore, immigrant women may experience more difficulties and challenges owing to their position in family and society. They face challenges as immigrants and as women.

Immigrants enter Canada through three basic categories as defined by the IRPA (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act) in 2002. These three categories include: an independent economic category that provides entrance to skilled workers, business-class entrepreneurs, and investors; family class; and a refugee category (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008b). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008b) reported that in 2008, approximately 65,567 people came to Canada under the category of family class, of this number 59.3% were women, relegating them to dependent positions in family as

well as in Canadian society. Therefore, gender roles and underlying power relations within the family, combined with social and economic inequality may place these immigrant women who entered under family class in vulnerable and high-risk positions (Ahmed, Ali, & Stewart, 2005a; O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007). Many immigrant women experience physical, emotional, and/or financial abuse at home; discrimination and exploitation in the workplace; a sense of loss of freedom, family, choice, power, respect, self-esteem, trust, and in some cases loss of self; and they have portrayed themselves as a wingless bird (Ahmed et al., 2005a; Macleod & Shin, 1993; O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007).

Statement of the Research Problem

The process of immigration as a major life transition has a number of emotional, social, and cultural consequences for immigrant women. The sudden change in the environment, occupation, community, and the transition from a traditional society to a modern one can be a challenge and adverse experience for many (Choudhury, 2001). The barriers and challenges in the new society often arise depending on women's levels of language skill regarding their host country, their cultural and ethnic backgrounds, their social isolation, and also their cultural concerns relating to childrearing and child disciplinary practices in a new country (Martins & Reid, 2007). Therefore, it is likely that in addition to the challenges brought on by immigration, additional challenges related to their responsibilities and positions within the family and in society may affect the adjustment process of immigrant women. Although many people suffer physical and mental health decrements following exposure to stress, many others show remarkable resilience, remaining healthy despite high stress levels. Research with immigrant women

suggests that not all immigrants experience immigration stress in the same way (Berry, 1997; Yoshihama, 2002) and many immigrant women exhibit resilience and withstand stress and hardships (Graham & Thurston, 2005).

Resilience is defined by Margalit (2004) as a dynamic process of positive adaptation in the context of major adversity. Over the past 40 years resilience research has variously conceptualized resilience as the capacity of people to recover from trauma, to cope with stress, or to demonstrate competence despite continuous or cumulative adversity (Bottrell, 2009). Previous research suggests that many people can “bounce back” from stress, crisis, and trauma, and experience success in life (Crocker, 2008).

Resilience is considered as a multisystem phenomenon that can occur across the life span, and it is linked to life stress and an individual’s unique coping capacity (Greene & Conrad, 2002). The concept of resilience is based upon the principles of attachment theory of John Bowlby (1969) who describes “attachment” as construction of emotional bonds between the child and the mother or a significant other that allows the child to develop self-confidence and a sense of security; which protect him/her later on in life and help him/her cope with separation and adversity (as cited in Hoover, 2004; Phaneuf, 2003). Therefore, the significance of family background remains crucial in developing personality traits in the process of resilience. Resilience is also determined by life's accumulated experiences (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Research focused on immigrants’ resilience, therefore, must go beyond their lives in the host countries and explore their childhoods, family relationships, and social and cultural contexts to understand their resilience.

Resilience can be affected by the availability of environmental resources such as support from family, school, community, and ethno-cultural society. It is also influenced by diversity including race, gender, age, economic status, and religious affiliation (Greene & Conrad, 2002). In addition, resilience may be enhanced by any intervention or process that instils confidence and reduces manifestation of distress, impairment, or dysfunction (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, an understanding of different strategies to be resilient and associated factors that facilitate the process is important. These strategies and factors offer support to women as their journey through transition to Canada and Canadian society. Moreover, understanding the experience of immigration, the adjustment process, and the influence of the Canadian context on adjustment will add to our knowledge of this vulnerable population who are integral part of the Canadian nation and society.

Though IRPA (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act) declares refugees as immigrants, the experiences and concerns for their immigration, and the situation and condition behind relocation differ extensively from immigrants of other categories. Immigrants from the economic category and family class are granted legal permanent residency by a host country and face stress of integration to a new culture and society. In contrast, refugees flee their homeland under circumstances of persecution, oppression, and violence, or even in order to survive (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1996); they suffer from the effects of trauma, discrimination, sudden dislocation from their home country, and violence faced in their homeland (Ajdukovic & Adjukovic, 1993). As a result, immigrants of economic and family class and refugee individuals and families are a diverse group with different backgrounds and needs; and

the stress, trauma, and adversity in relation to their immigration status to a new country is different. Therefore, the experiences of refugees and other immigrant populations need to be explained cautiously. This research highlighted the journey of immigrant women, excluding refugee populations, through their transition to Canadian society.

Immigration as a Gendered Experience

The processes of immigration, settlement, and integration are dynamic and highly differentiated between genders (Tastsoglou, Ray, & Preston, 2005). Gender is socially constructed, not only as an identity, but as social relations embedded in cultural norms and institutions. Tastsoglou et al.(2005) explain that gender shapes the role and function of many institutions such as family, work place, labour market, education, law, and policy and “intersects with other markers of identity such as ethnicity, race, language, religion, age, and sexuality”(p. 92). Therefore, gender is an important lens to explore immigration and integration process in order to have inclusive understanding of the heterogeneity, diversity, and uniqueness of immigrant women and men and their experiences. How immigrants respond to the transition and integration processes is fundamentally related to their identities, roles, and responsibilities as women and men. As such, research focused on immigrants must go beyond ‘adding in’ sex as a variable (Tastsoglou et al., 2005) and needs to identify gender roles in relation to immigration process and experience.

In most societies, family is an important relationship linked by blood ties, heredity, or emotional bonds. The family serves as an environment of care and affirmation and a space for communal sharing of resources (Watkins, 2000). Women, throughout the world, have played an important role in their families and communities.

Women occupy an important position at home and enact a crucial role in parenting, caregiving, and supporting the family. Therefore, women can be considered as the core of the family. The role of immigrant women in the immigration and integration process of their families has been a vital one. Given the magnitude of roles and responsibilities of women in families this research explored how immigrant women responded to immigration stressors, negotiated their gender status in their daily lives, and their role in fostering integration for themselves and their families with respect to Canadian society.

Rationale for Study

Women come to Canada with the expectation of a better future and increased prosperity. However, the sharp contrast between pre-immigration hopes and post immigration challenges can increase the vulnerability of immigrant women to ill health and poor quality of life (Khan & Watson, 2005). The transition from one society to another requires that immigrant women manage new values and cultures, typically encounter a new language, and adjust to a new and different environment (Schmitz et al., 2003). Furthermore, conflicts in cultural heritages, traditional values, intergenerational relationships, and sometimes loss of roles and familiar economies may cause an identity crisis (Schmitz et al., 2003). While all immigrants are considered as a high risk population because of hardships and life challenges, women are at even greater risk owing to their gender roles and potentially marginalized positions in societies, and the labour force (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007). However, women may also have skills that reinforce their resilience. Many women keep a positive outlook despite frustrating circumstances (Graham & Thurston, 2005) and they develop strategies to overcome adversities. In addition, marital harmony and support from family and the community

provide protective effects on immigrant women with respect to their adaptation and encountered adversities (Cheung, 2004; Khan & Watson, 2005). The experience of immigration has been the focus of much research and the experience of immigrant women has also been explored (Martins & Reid, 2007). However, little research has been conducted with immigrant women emphasizing their resilience of overcoming adversities while under stress (Graham & Thurston, 2005). Also, there is lack of knowledge and limited understanding about the factors that facilitate immigrant women's resilience.

Upon conducting a literature review for this research study, I found very few studies that examined resilience among immigrant women. Only three relevant published articles (Cheung, 2004; Graham & Thurston, 2005; Timberlake, Farber, Wall, Taylor, Sabatino, 2003) and one unpublished thesis (Toth, 2003) were retrieved while searching research articles focusing on resilience and immigrant women. The research studies revealed that despite stress, pain, and frustration, immigrant women demonstrated resilience through negotiating and adapting to new roles associated with immigration, maintaining hope and optimism, evidencing strong network-building skills, expressing spirituality, and maintaining harmony in their marriage (Cheung, 2004; Graham & Thurston, 2005; Timberlake et al., 2003). Among these four research studies, Timberlake et al. (2003) focused on economically disadvantaged immigrant women in the USA, examining the interrelationships among immigration experiences, challenges, and protective factors of resilience. Cheung (2004) examined the resilience of the immigrant couple in Canada, and Toth (2003) explored resilience among immigrant and refugee women. Therefore, only one study (Graham & Thurston, 2005) directly addressed resilience of Canadian immigrant women. Furthermore, there were only two studies

(Graham & Thurston, 2005; Toth, 2003) that used a qualitative approach. None of these studies explored the immigrant women's life in their own country in their own culture.

In this thesis, qualitative methodology was used to reveal the life-stories (Atkinson, 1998) of Canadian immigrant women to know their individual life trajectory in their own culture and their journeys throughout the transition process from leaving their country of origin to living in Canada. Atkinson (1998) describes life story as the account of a person across the length of life or an aspect of the life experience as told to another (as cited in Ojermark, 2007). Life stories of individual participants in this study helped in understanding the changing experiences and perceptions of individuals in their daily lives. In-depth person-centered interviewing (Hollan 2005; Polakoff & Gregory, 2002; Tarrant & Gregory, 2003; Levy & Hollan, 1998) informed by feminist research principles served as the method. Person-centered interviewing has its root in anthropology which primarily addresses culture. This research explored experiences of immigrant women from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds; and person-centered interviewing provided a deeper and more holistic understanding of their experiences. Therefore, conducting this study was justified to incorporate the knowledge and understanding of immigrant women's resilience in relation to their immigration experience.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and life-stories of recent Canadian immigrant women, and concomitantly their resilience, to overcome challenges and adversities faced during the course of their immigration journeys. The research revealed their pre-immigration and post-immigration lives to understand their resilience

holistically. The research also focused on those factors that facilitated or undermined resilience among the immigrant women. Considering the many challenges recent immigrant women encountered during settlement and the negative impact these experiences had on individuals, it was important that the research focused on how the participants withstood adversity and enhanced their resilience.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the life experiences of immigrant women as they transition from their countries of origin to the Canadian context?
2. How can immigrant women become or remain resilient during the course of their immigration journeys?
3. What factors enhance immigrant women's resilience as they overcome immigration stressors and adversities?
4. What factors undermine immigrant women's responses to adversities?

Theoretical Frameworks

Most researchers use theory to guide their work, to locate their studies in larger scholarly traditions, or to map the topography of the specific concepts they will explore in detail (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Resilience theory, and feminist research principles (Cook & Fonow, 1986) adopted from feminist theory, guided this research.

Resilience theory. The term resilient has generally been applied to people who overcome the adversities (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Stewart, Reid, and Mangham (1997) have defined resilience as “the capability of individuals to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk” (p. 22). Greene and Conrad (2002) described

resilience as a multisystem phenomenon that occurs across the life span and is linked to life stress and individuals' unique coping capacities. Resilience research has identified specific protective factors that are consistently associated with "bouncing back" from adversity (Roberts, Galassi, McDonald, & Sachs, 2002). These involve internal factors including temperament, attitude, self-motivation, self-esteem, sociability, and autonomy; and external elements such as family, neighbourhood, community well-being, and supportive relationships. Some theorists believe that resilience or successful adaptation may be an innate characteristic but can not develop without positive interaction with the environmental resources (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Resilient behaviors, then, can either be fostered or hindered by environmental factors. It is reasonable to assume that "a person's capacity for resilience can be either enhanced or eroded upon the complex interplay among risk and protective factors encountered at any given point in time" (Powers, 2002: p. 167).

The concept of resilience refers to "the capacity to transcend adversity and transform it into an opportunity for growth" (Bottrell, 2009: p. 125). The concept offers a valuable framework in exploring abilities to overcome adversity with diverse individuals and challenging situations. However, debate exists in the literature concerning the definition, operationalization, and measurement of the concept (Bottrell, 2009). Therefore, a better conceptual understanding of resilience may be needed to explain why some individuals are able to overcome adversity while others not. In this study, resilience is viewed as embracing the challenges of life and maintaining optimism in the face of adversity. It is the ability to make plans and take decisions to face life stressors and

challenges; it is the ability to set goals and have hopes for the future. Resilience is about “not giving up on life”.

The concept of resilience has emerged out of research conducted principally in children (Gillespie, Chaboyer, & Wallis, 2007). Researchers concur that the potential for positive adaptation exists across the life course. This ability to bounce back in spite of adversity and function above norm provides reason for optimism about intervention programs to promote health and prevent illness (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). Therefore, the area of resilience has been of interest to researchers, clinicians, and educators for many years. However, several limitations were identified in the resilience research while conducting the literature review for this study.

Although resilience is embedded in natural growth and development across the life courses, in cultural contexts, in belief systems, and in the nature of individual-social relations; in most resilience research, these aspects remain ignored in understanding the dynamic process of resilience (Bottrell, 2009).

Most resilience research has focused on “western cultures” lacking in sensitivity to community and cultural factors that contextualize how resilience is defined by different populations and manifested in everyday practices (Ungar, 2008). Therefore, what resilience means to non-western populations and marginalized groups who live side-by-side with their ‘mainstream’ neighbours in western settings remains largely unknown.

Most resilience research has used quantitative methods and focused on resilience among children at risk, or vulnerable youth. There is a dearth of research that provides insight into how in different situations and at different points in the life span, resilience

can be mobilized. Therefore, there is need for an inquiry into what resilience means and how it occurs in many different cultures and contexts; and at different life stages.

Feminist theory. Harding (1987) defines feminist research as being done for women and from the perspectives of their experiences. The goal of feminist inquiry is to see the world from the vantage point of a particular group of women and place them at center stage. Studying women from their perspectives and representing them as authorities on their own experiences, recognizing the researcher as part of the research process through changing power relations between the researcher and the participants, and acknowledging that the beliefs of the researcher shape the research make feminist research feminist (Cook & Fonow, 1986). Thus, feminist research is not simply the study of women, nor is it enough that it is done by women (Webb, 1993) however, it involves 'a set of principles of inquiry a feminist philosophy of science' (McCormack, 1981). Webb (1993) considers that feminist research should, therefore, focus on 'women related research questions', should analyse 'the condition of women's lives', and should be 'grounded an actual experiences closely related to social change' (p. 417)

Cook and Fonow (1986) identified five epistemological principles in feminist methodology. These include women and gender as the focus of analysis; the importance of consciousness raising; the rejection of subject and object (between researcher and participant); a concern with ethics (use of language, use of research results); and an intention to empower women and change power relations and inequality (Cook & Fonow, 1986). The principles of feminism offered by Cook and Fonow (1986) guided the research related to immigrant women's experience and their resilience.

The Implicated Researcher

The transition process of immigration from one's homeland to a new land is not easy, and can be a stressful experience. As a landed immigrant my own experience was not an exception to that reality. I faced a number of challenges during the adjustment of my new life to a new country. As with many other immigrant women, I came to Canada with dreams of exploring and expanding my professional career. While my previous academic qualifications and work experience as a physician offered privileges throughout the immigration selection process, such privileges disappeared once I moved to Canada. That is, the Canadian system enacted multiple barriers to my practice as a physician in Canadian society. Therefore, in addition to the challenges brought on by relocating to a new culture and society, negotiation with ambition for prosperity and loss of professional career were additional challenges in my adjustment process to Canadian society as an immigrant professional. This lived experience of being an immigrant has provided me with deeper insights into the immigration stressors.

The lived experience may shape our consciousness in such a way that our world view differs from those who are in a privileged position. While living on the edge, we develop new ways of seeing reality and strength inherent in "not giving up". In my experience, I encountered many immigrant women who successfully recovered from adversity and crisis during the course of their immigration journeys. However, it was the dearth of research about the strengths and potential of immigrant women that led me to research the resilience of immigrant women in Canada.

Patton (2002) argues that "qualitative analyst owns and is reflective about her or his own voice and perspective" (p, 41). Therefore, the researcher's focus becomes a

balance in understanding and depicting the world authentically while at the same time remaining self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness (Patton, 2002). As an implicated researcher it was important for me to be aware of my own values and potential biases; and at the same time to reflect openly on the perspectives and voices of the women who were interviewed.

As the research explored the hardships and challenges immigrant women faced throughout the process of their immigration journeys, the interview procedure brought painful memories and sometimes caused emotional distress to the participants. However, as a former medical doctor I was capable of assessing one's state of emotional health. Therefore, I took all necessary steps to address their distress. I also provided information about counselling services, encouraging the woman to follow through with counselling services for further support if necessary. I believe that my fifteen years of work experience with women as a former medical doctor in Bangladesh and my present status as a landed immigrant woman afforded me sensitivity, insight, and credibility to work with Canadian immigrant women.

Research Approach and Method

The research made use of qualitative methodology. Person-centered interviewing (Hollan, 2005; Levy & Hollan, 1998; Polakoff & Gregory, 2002; Tarrant & Gregory, 2003) informed by feminist research principles served as the method in this research. Repeated in-depth interviews (two to three per participant) were conducted among five immigrant women who immigrated to Canada under immigrant status (other than refugee) and who were residing in Lethbridge, in Southern Alberta. The women lived in Canada from nine months to five years to be considered as a recent Canadian immigrant.

This tenure of stay in Canada was sufficient to better understand immigration challenges and to identify their resilience. The rationale of focusing on recent immigrant women was to recognize the initial challenges immigrant women experienced while relocating to a new culture and society. The participants were married and had children to be considered eligible in this study. The purpose was to explore possible barriers and challenges immigrant women faced in light of their parenting and care giving role in addition to the personal adversities brought by immigration. It also helped to establish the impact of marriage, the role of family, and influence of the ethno-cultural community in their adjustment process. The initial intent of recruiting the sample was through a purposeful and convenience sampling and snowballing sampling. However, the recruitment procedure relied mostly on snowball sampling and “word of mouth”. Only one participant was accessed through Lethbridge Family Service-Immigrant Services. Participants were recruited after obtaining an ethic’s certificate from Human Subject Research Committee, University of Lethbridge. In this study, narrative analysis (Lauritzen & Jaegar, 1997) served as the first level of data analysis and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as the second level of data analysis.

Significance of the Study

The study focused on recent Canadian immigrant women, their experiences, and their resilience during the course of their immigration journey. An understanding of different resilience and adaptive strategies enacted by many immigrant women can facilitate and support other immigrant women and men in their transition and integration process into Canadian society. Moreover, a better understanding of the experiences and resilience of Canadian immigrant women can contribute to the conceptual understanding

of resilience and immigration studies. It can also help service providers, professionals, and policy makers to better understand the obstacles faced by immigrants. These have the potential to be incorporated into programming and service delivery within the community. Finally, the study gave voice to immigrant women in sharing their spirit, courage, and wisdom.

Summary

In this first chapter, I provided an overview of background information, statement of the problem, and the rationale for conducting this research. I explained the purpose of my study, including the overall research questions that guided the research process. The method and theoretical frameworks were also discussed, in brief, with the support from relevant literature on immigration, resilience, and feminist research. These topics are more thoroughly explored in Chapter Three. The limitations of previous resilience research are discussed briefly in this chapter and are discussed thoroughly in Chapter Two.

Chapter two critically reviews relevant literature in the areas of immigration and women, immigration and resilience, feminist theory and feminist research. It also provides an outline of the distinctiveness of the study. Chapter Three outlines my research approach and method, philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, ethical considerations, sample selection and recruiting procedure, data collection technique, data analytical procedure, and issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to critically review the relevant literature regarding the immigration experience and resilience of Canadian immigrant women. Research that has explored the experiences and hardships of immigrant women during their course of relocation to a new country is addressed. Finally, the gaps in knowledge regarding resilience and immigrant women are also identified. This research focused on immigrant women; therefore, experiences of refugee populations are not addressed in this chapter.

Immigration and Canada

The world's population has reached six billion. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007) reported that the world's population will peak at approximately nine billion in midway through the 21st Century and then it will begin to decline with relative rapidity because of decreasing birth rates and the mortality of the 20th Century's population bulge. The report also indicated that Canada had shown similar population trends within this global context. The Canadian fertility rate (average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime) has already fallen to 1.5 when its population replacement requires a rate of 2.1. It is estimated that deaths may equal births by 2020 and thereafter population growth will entirely depend on immigration (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). If Canada continues on its current immigration path, its population will stop growing at about 40 million around the mid-century. Therefore, Canada's first over-arching goal may be developing a population strategy; and immigration would be one of the most important components within it.

The Stressors of Resettlement

Resettlement is not simply a matter of adapting to a new culture. It includes challenges of maintaining lifelong beliefs and values while at the same time embracing new ways of living in a new country. An individual's sense of life's meanings, personal values, moral frameworks, and commitments are greatly influenced by the culture of origin, spirituality, and family (Timberlake et al., 2003). Culture encompasses the values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, and social rules that inform worldviews while spirituality provides the universal and fundamental aspects of human nature and moral frameworks for relating with self, other, and the ultimate reality (Timberlake et al., 2003). The immediate and extended family provides nurture, protection, and support to meet basic psychosocial needs (Greene, Taylor, Evans, & Smith, 2002; Timberlake et al., 2003). Hence, culture, spirituality, and family can comprise protective factors in dealing with life's challenges and adversities (Timberlake et al., 2003). Disruption of established ways of being and doing and the sense of life's meaning exposes immigrants to extremely stressful experiences throughout this adaptation process. The risk of relocation stressors can be higher when the socio cultural milieu of the country of origin and the host country are less congruent and can impede the adjustment to the new life in the new society and culture (Ahmad, Shik, Vanza, Cheung, George, & Stewart, 2005b).

Immigration and Women

In Canada, immigrant women became a visible social category in the latter half of nineteenth century when England experienced a surplus of single, unemployed women and Canada was in need of domestic labour and wives, and subsequently when male immigrants were authorized to bring their families into Canada as permanent residents

(Ng, 1996). The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) received royal assent on November, 2001 and came into effect on June, 2002 divides immigrants into three categories: economic immigrants, family class, and refugees (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008b). Economic immigrants' entry into Canada is subject to economic requirements; and their skills and abilities to contribute to Canada's economy are measured by a point system. The economic immigrant category includes skilled workers, business immigrants or entrepreneurs, and live-in caregivers. In reference to labour market characteristics the economic immigrant category is further classified into two subgroups: principal applicants and 'spouse and dependents'. Family class immigrants are those who are sponsored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living in Canada. Family class immigrants include parents, grand parents, and others (dependent children; brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren who are orphans and under 18 years of age; other relatives etc.). A Refugee claimant receives Canada's protection when he or she is found to be a Convention refugee according to United Nations 1951 Geneva Convention (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008b). Therefore, the classification of immigrants does not distinguish between gender, ethnic origin, or class position of individuals; however, when we take into account the criteria for determining entry of independent immigrants based on their investment potential, educational attainment, and the labour requirement of Canada, gender composition of immigration becomes visible (Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Ng, 1996).

The majority of the people entering Canada as "spouses or dependents" and "family class" are women, children, and elderly from Third World or industrially less developed countries under the sponsorship of the men, who are seen to be the main

sources of income (e.g., spouses, parents, and adult children). Statistics Canada (2006b) reported that only 10% of economic immigrants are women, while 37% of all immigrant women are classified as “spouses or dependents” of economic immigrants and 36% are “family class” immigrants. Women, in particular, are commonly considered their husbands’ dependants, even when they have been in the labour force in their home countries. Women, as dependent spouses of male independent immigrants have their autonomy and independence compromised from the beginning of their new life in Canada (O’Mahony & Donnelly, 2007).

Khan and Watson (2005) cited that immigrant women experience a number of challenges and hardships which create a stressful relocation journey. In their study, Khan and Watson (2005) observed that the loss of financial resources, unemployment, underemployment, and uncertainties about the future in Canada intensified the emotional, cultural, and social losses of recent immigrant women. The loss of a social safety net is further aggravated by the sense of difficulty in forming new community ties in a new land.

Barriers and challenges. The process of immigration seems to have a number of emotional, social, and cultural consequences for immigrant women. Research with recent immigrant women reveals that isolation from people, absence from extended family and friends, and sense of loneliness are some of the greatest difficulties they face during this major transition process (Martins & Reid, 2007). Furthermore, the reality of transitioning from one society to another requires immigrant women to maintain traditional ethno-cultural values and at the same time to take on new cultural values. Therefore, cultural

traditions often clash with new situation and stress becomes a common experience (Schmitz et al., 2003).

Socio cultural barriers. Culture has a powerful influence on shaping one's behaviour. Berry, in Martins and Reid (2007), observes that successful adjustment to a new culture rests on how individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, manage to adapt to new contexts that result from immigration. For many immigrant women, this transition can be difficult when their previous cultures and homeland attachments are central components of their personality and identity. Disruption of personal attachments, change of family roles, loss of identity, and difficulties in maintaining heritage create further stress (Timberlake et al., 2003). This sudden change in environment and the transition from a traditional society to modern one can make the immigrant woman feel dislocated and uprooted (Choudhury, 2001).

Socio-cultural barriers often arise depending on a woman's level of communication skill, her cultural and ethnic background, and her social isolation (Oxman-Martinez, Hanley, Lach, Khanlou, Weerasinghe, & Agnew, 2005). Cultural concerns relating to children and motherhood have also been found in previous literature. Liamputtong and Naksook (2003) described that cultural beliefs and practices had profound effects on women's perception and experience of motherhood. Their research found that immigrant women faced challenges regarding childrearing and child disciplinary practices in a new country. They described that immigrant women experienced intergenerational conflict and disappointment over the influence of host country values on their families and the consequent erosion of traditional values (Liamputtong & Naksook, 2003). Therefore, many women perceive their inability to

transmit their culture and tradition with the next generation as a loss and a source of sadness (Choudhury, 2001). It is likely that, in addition to the challenges brought on by immigration, additional challenges related to parenting and childrearing may affect the adjustment process. The challenges of immigration for women who are mothers have not been the focus of research and warrant further exploration.

Barriers to accessing health care service. A health forum in Calgary identified that the cultural incompetence of health care providers, the lack of participation or consultation with immigrant communities, and language barriers are critical obstacles to effective health care (Calgary Multicultural Health Care Initiative, 2000). Perhaps the greatest barrier to appropriate health care is language. Many immigrants are not able to communicate in English nor are they aware of available facilities (Halli & Anchan, 2005). Therefore, language barriers limit immigrant women's access to health care services. Moreover, previous research suggests that cultural differences in beliefs about health, illness, and health seeking behaviour create barriers for the adequate delivery of medical services; and influence an individual's willingness to report health problems (Halli & Anchan, 2005). Likewise, many immigrant women are not used to formal health promotion initiatives and Canadian health services; and are much more comfortable with accessing health information through informal social networks (Ahmad et. al., 2005a; Stewart et al., 2006). Research also reveals that women who are sponsored are less likely to deal with ill health because of financial ramifications (Oxman-Martinez et. al., 2005). In a study in British Columbia it was found that 15% of immigrants had unmet health needs as a result of costs, while almost half (48%) had negative perceptions of healthcare services, contributing to underutilisation of services (Stewart et al., 2006).

Access to health can be defined as the absence of policy, financial, and cultural barriers to the protection, maintenance, and promotion of health, through preventive measures, primary healthcare, or treatment for health problems (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2005). Barriers in access to health for recent immigrant women in Canada generally arise from their cultural and ethnic background, social isolation, unfamiliarity with the health care systems, family relations, inability to communicate easily in the language of care provisions, and lack of awareness of their rights to service (Im & Yang, 2006; Oxman-Martinez et al., 2005). In addition, long waiting periods to see specialists or in the emergency department, lack of control in the referral process, and cost of medication may also limit access to health services by immigrant women (Ahmad et al., 2005a). Therefore, the challenges of immigration increase the vulnerability of immigrant women to ill health and poor quality of life.

Occupational barriers. For decades, the Canadian government admitted large numbers of internationally trained immigrant professionals to support the growth and competitiveness of the Canadian economy. Yet, once these professional immigrants arrive in Canada, their international credentials and work experience are often devalued (Girard & Bauder, 2005). Research has documented that the most critical obstacle for new immigrants' entry into the work force is lack of Canadian job experience and recognition of their foreign qualifications or experiences (Statistics Canada, 2007b; Khan & Watson, 2005). It has been recognized by the Minister of Immigration that the treasure trove of skills and experiences brought by new immigrants has been wasting in factories and other low-paying jobs (Laidlaw, 2005).

Even though immigrants are more likely to have a university education compared to the Canadian-born population, the national unemployment rate of immigrants in 2006 was 11.5%, which was more than double the rate of 4.9% for the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada, 2007b). Khan and Watson (2005) found in their research that immigrants felt incapable of competing for professional jobs because of non recognition of their foreign qualifications. They are, therefore, obliged to engage in low-paying occasional work. A recent study noticed a significant decrease in the number of recent immigrants in occupations that required higher levels of education (Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, 2009). The unemployment rate among very recent immigrants living in Alberta (those who became landed immigrants to Canada between 2001 and 2006) was 5.8% in 2006. However, the rate was more than double the unemployment rate for Canadian-born Albertans which was 2.6% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008). The 2006 Census report on earnings and incomes of Canadians noted that during the past quarter century, the earnings gap between recent immigrants and Canadian-born workers widened significantly (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 1980, recent-immigrant men who had some employment income earned 85 cents for each dollar received by Canadian-born men. By 2005, the ratio had dropped to 63 cents. The corresponding numbers for recent-immigrant women were 85 cents and 56 cents, respectively. These gaps widened even though the educational attainment of recent-immigrants were much higher than that of their Canadian-born counterparts during this period (Statistics Canada, 2008). Researchers (Schellenberg & Hou, 2005) identify some underlying related factors such as the shifting source of countries for immigrants from Europe and United States to other global regions which may cause potential difficulties related to language, culture, and

education quality; non-recognition of skills and credentials; and possibly discrimination.

The other important factor that may adversely affect the economic prospect of immigrants is the increase in the number of Canadian-born individuals with high levels of education. Therefore, highly educated immigrants must compete with a growing number of highly educated Canadian-born individuals and in such competitive market, even marginal differences in educational quality, in language and communication skills, and in culture or norms could have an impact on employment outcomes (Schellenberg & Hou, 2005).

In their research, Khan and Watson (2005) found that despite higher than average levels of education, many immigrant women experienced more difficulties than their counterparts. Previous research speculated that lengthy and expensive accreditation process of international qualifications, providing a supporting role to family during resettlement process, family size, limited fluency in Canada's official languages, and country of origin influenced skilled immigrant women's entrance and participation to Canadian labour force (Preston & Giles, 2004). Moreover, household responsibilities, lack of subsidised day care and home care services, and loss of support from extended families relegate immigrant women to marginalized positions in the labour market and force them into part-time menial work with irregular hours, resulting in low pay with no benefits or job security (Man, 2004; Stewart et al., 2006). This can potentially erode their sense of identity, self-respect, self-esteem, and confidence. Therefore, occupational dislocation sometimes has a greater effect than economic impact on internationally educated professional immigrant women (Khan & Watson, 2005).

Religion may also be emerging as a factor influencing the labour force experiences of many immigrant women. Research found that women who wore the hijab or head cover faced considerable discrimination when applying for jobs, were harassed in the workplace, or were fired from jobs (Persad & Lukas, 2002). Persad and Lukas (2002) stated that “poverty has a colour and a gender and that immigration status has become a justification for racial discrimination in employment” (p. 5). Discrimination and racism in the workplace and around hiring practices continue to force minorities into poverty (Persad & Lukas, 2002).

Language barriers. Verbal communication is another major barrier among many immigrant women. Language barriers discourage them from using social support services, welfare, and health care services (Stewart et al., 2006) and limit them developing a social network. In some circumstances, language may be the most salient obstacle to resettlement process hindering immigrants’ ability to reorient themselves in their new context (Colick-Peisker & Walker, 2003). A language barrier can confine women to contacts with members of their own ethnic community (Colick-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Lack of proficiency in English even reduces women’s ability to use public transportation, thus limiting their outdoor activities, participating in the work force, and increasing their dependency on other family members. As a consequence, they feel disconnected and can experience loneliness, hopelessness, desperation, and in many instances, depression (Choudhury, 2001).

Immigration and its impact on women. No matter what the circumstances, immigration is a stressful experience of cultural, social, and political dislocation; and it brings many changes in life. Arriving in a new country creates a harsh compromise

between the pre immigration hope for prosperity and the post immigration reality of being marginalized at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Ewing, 2007).

Domestic violence and spousal abuse. Violence and abuse are common features of many Canadian women's lives and immigrant women are no exception (VanderPlatt, 2007). The immigration experience sometimes affects the whole family and brings disharmony to the spousal relationship. While immigration is not the cause of violence some studies report a trend for domestic violence and spousal abuse as initiating or becoming worse after immigration (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Spousal abuse is increasingly recognized as a significant social and public health concern, particularly for women. Poverty, family isolation, unemployment, job dissatisfaction, poor living conditions, marginalization, and specific aspects of women's identity such as their race and ethnicity leaves some women more vulnerable to violence (Ahmed et al. 2005a; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Such factors may not be the crucial reason for violence but can perpetuate the abuse. Unfortunately several of these factors are found in recent immigrant families (Ahmed et al., 2005a). The relocation stressors, disruption of cultural norms, and isolation from traditional social support increase vulnerability of immigrant women to domestic violence and abuse (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Ahmed et al. (2005a) found that spousal emotional abuse was significantly higher among immigrant women than Canadian-born women (14.7% vs. 8.7%). However, the proportions of spousal physical abuse in their study were not statistically different between Canadian-born and Canadian immigrant women (4.5% vs. 3.3%). Researchers explained that it might be that immigrant women have greater barriers in communicating sensitive issues; and feel less comfortable reporting physical spousal abuse compared to mainstream

Canadian women (Ahmed et al. 2005a). A prevalence rate of 10% for spousal abuse was revealed in a study done among 23 married women from Bangladesh living in Houston, Texas (Rianon & Shelton, 2003). The researchers (Rianon & Shelton, 2003) identified isolation, cultural stigma, lack of knowledge regarding the accessibility of services, and lack of trust in available social resources were underlying factors exacerbating the vulnerability of these Bangladeshi women to abusive relationships. Abused immigrant women face several challenges to report and seek help because of limited social resources, economic circumstances, lack of knowledge of the availability and accessibility of services, legal and emotional dependency on husbands, fear of reprisal, and fear of police involvement (Ahmed et al. 2005a; Hyman, Forte, Mont, Romans, & Cohen, 2006).

Mental health. Women are almost twice as likely as men to experience depression and anxiety (Smith et al. 2007). Women cope with stress and life events in different ways and it differs from men in how they show their distress. Differing in rates and diagnoses of mental illness between men and women are the result of an interaction between well-known physiological and social differences (Morrow & Chapell, 2000). Immigrant women are vulnerable to violence because of multiple social inequities based on race, social position, and gender (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007) that influence their experiences in the mental health care system. Many immigrant women suffer serious mental health problems (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007) and often do not receive the care that they need. Therefore, pre-immigration experiences and the process of resettlement affect women's mental health, sometimes resulting in increased anxiety and depression.

Researchers confirm that depression is a common psychological problem among most immigrants in North America which may result from resettlement issues related to the new environment, severing of ties from family and friends in the country of origin, and a lack of useful coping resources (Samuel, 2009). The research (Samuel, 2009) held with fourteen South Asian immigrant women in Atlantic Provinces in Canada found noticeable high depression levels allied with family conflict, lack of self-esteem, and a deficit in social support.

The different life experiences and roles of women associated with social and economic inequality make women more vulnerable to violence throughout history. Women are more likely to experience violence than men; therefore, women are more likely to experience mental disorders (World Health Organization, 2010). Current research (World Health Organization, 2010) shows that people with major mental illness are 2.5 times more likely to be the victims of violence than other members of society. When these inequities and vulnerabilities are not addressed, women's illness may be exacerbated and their safety may be compromised. Recent immigrant women are more likely to be socially and economically marginalized; therefore, poverty and its consequences might have an impact on their mental health.

In a study with twenty four South Asian women, Ahmad et al. (2005b) found that immigration stressors such as loss of social support, low social status, financial uncertainties, mechanized lifestyle, inadequate leisure time, change in climate and food habits were important contributors towards these immigrant women's compromised mental health. The researchers (Ahmad et al., 2005b) cited that social isolation and lack of knowledge about the mental health system served as the major barriers for these recent

immigrant women with respect to accessing services. Moreover, language barriers, poverty, cultural and social stigma, unemployment, marginalization, discrimination, and gender roles influence immigrant women's access to mental health care (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007). In their research, O'Mahony and Donnelly (2007) pointed out that gender roles and underlying power relations within the family placed the immigrant women in a socially disadvantaged position; and greatly influenced how some immigrant women accessed the available mental health care services (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007). Therefore, to provide effective health care services to immigrant women, health care providers need to recognize women's social positions and the conditions they live under.

Summary

Adjustment to life in a new country comes with many challenges and sacrifices (Willgerodt et. al, 2002). The process of immigration changes the economic, social, and physical environments of the individual. Therefore, immigrants are often exposed to extremely stressful and traumatic experiences throughout the transition and adaptation process (Schmitz et al. 2003). These experiences and challenges of immigration and integration into a new country have a major impact on their overall quality of life and the resettlement process.

Immigrants feel uprooted and dislocated from their place of origin. These feelings of uprooting are associated with certain emotional insecurities, loss of supportive family networks and well established careers, isolation, sadness, depression, and feelings of low self-esteem. Many studies have highlighted that these stressful events associated with the transition process have detrimental impacts on the health and well being of immigrants (Khan & Watson, 2005). While all immigrants are considered as a high risk population

because of hardships and life challenges, women are at even greater risk owing to their marginalized position in the family, society and in the labour force. Congruent with Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs, these life challenges form a wide pyramidal base of survival needs and culminate in a peak of creative self actualization that reflects immigrant women's resilience as well as their hopes for the future (Timberlake et al., 2003) The resources for meeting these needs and hopes include the personal, interpersonal, cultural, and spiritual strengths that shore up their resilience, the capacity to bounce back, to lean against the wind, and to move on.

Resilience: Meeting Life's Challenges

Resilience is defined as the ability to "bounce back" from a difficult situation (Ross, Holliman, & Dixon, 2003). It is the practice of adapting well in the face of adversity, threats, or trauma (Crocker, 2008). Greene and Conrad (2002) describe that people who are resilient have the capacity to be flexible and empathetic; the competence to use problem-solving skills, and the ability to plan and think critically and reflectively. Conversely, many theorists view resilience as an ecological phenomenon and argue that the influence of family, peer group, neighbourhood, school, and society may affect one's resiliency (Greene & Livingston, 2002). Therefore, an individual's resilience is embedded in the larger social systems (Greene & Livingston, 2002) and greatly depends on the extent of the match between an individual's personal characteristics and the qualities of her/his environment (Greene & Conrad, 2002).

Resilience consists of two components: The first is "thriving or succeeding and the second is exhibiting this competence in a difficult situation or a situation where others often do not succeed" (Ross et al., 2003, p. 84). A succinct statement of resilience theory

is that there is a force within everyone that drives them to seek “self-actualization, altruism, wisdom, and harmony with a spiritual source of strength and this force is resilience” (Richardson, 2002, p. 313). Resilience or energy comes from within the human spirit and also from external social, ecological, and spiritual sources of strength (Richardson, 2002).

History of Resilience Research

Over the last forty years, resilience has emerged as intriguing area of inquiry that explores personal and interpersonal strengths that can grow through adversity. Early resilience research focused on resilient individuals and their capacities. The lists of resilient qualities represent the outcome of the first wave of resilience inquiry (Richardson, 2003).

A second wave of resilience research was a pursuit to discover the process of resilience. The second wave of resilience inquiry was an attempt to answer the question of how these resilient qualities could be acquired (Richardson, 2003; Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Cheung, & Levine, 2008). The third wave of resilience research looked for resilience related resources. Therefore, the focus has shifted from seeking to understand the process to how best to build developmental assets in individuals (Ungar et al., 2008).

A fourth wave of research is now breaking conceptual ground, demonstrating the need to understand resilience as an artefact of both individuals’ capacities to navigate resources and their communities’ capacity to provide those resources in culturally meaningful ways. In this sense, resilience is the result of both successful navigation to and negotiation for resources. Resilience, therefore, can be defined as a social construct that identifies both processes and outcomes associated with what people themselves term

well-being (Ungar, 2008). This definition shifts our understanding of resilience from an individual concept to a more culturally embedded understanding of well-being.

Resilience: Theoretical Conceptualizations

The ‘metatheory of resilience and resiliency’ defines resilience as the process and experience of being disrupted by different life events, stressors, adversities, challenges, opportunities, and after some introspection, eventually accessing strengths to reintegrate to grow stronger through the disruption (Richardson, 2002). The concept of resilience has been of interest to various professional groups for many years and there has been diversity of definitions used to reflect the difference in resilience across context and time. However, theorists suggest that resilience does not function independently or uniformly (Gillespie, Chaboyer, & Wallis, 2007). Research has identified specific protective factors that are consistently associated with “bouncing back” from adversity. Protective factors, both internal and external, help people resist risk or ameliorate the effect of risk and enhance adaptation. Internal protective factors are innate or can be developed by the individual such as positive temperament, self-esteem, self-motivation, sociability, autonomy, or being ‘good at something’; and external protective factors are those that exist or can be developed in the environment as supportive family milieu including warmth and cohesion, supportive social environment and relationship, and other opportunities for meaningful participation (Greene & Conrad, 2002; Roberts, Galassi, McDonald, & Sachs, 2002).

Greene and Conrad (2002) described resilience as bio psychosocial and spiritual phenomenon that is shaped by multilevel attachments including marriage, family, school, and ethno-cultural society; and can be influenced by diversity including race, gender, age,

economic status, and religious affiliation. Moreover, resilience can be considered as multisystem phenomenon that can occur across the life span. Faith, spirituality, self-esteem, and positive attitudes are often discussed as important characteristics in the development of resilience (Greene, Galambos, & Lee, 2003). In addition, schools and supportive teachers, neighbourhoods, peers, and communities can play a critical role in helping people develop into competent and resilient individuals (Greene & Conrad, 2002).

Resilience and Immigrant Women

Although many people suffer physical and mental health decrements following exposure to stress, many others show remarkable resilience, remaining healthy despite high stress levels. Research with immigrant populations reveals that not all immigrants experience immigration stress in the same way (Yoshihama, 2002) and many immigrant women exhibit resilience which serves to intervene between stress and health (Graham & Thurston, 2005).

Internal protective factors. Immigrants experience several challenges related to adjusting to a new life; however, research indicates that women have excellent skills reinforcing their adjusting capabilities and resilience capacities. A study (Martins & Reid, 2007) on twelve Canadian immigrant women who came from South Asia revealed a number of strategies that immigrant women developed in overcoming these adversities. Strategies included: learning new skills, such as attending language classes; upgrading educational and job related skills; accessing and utilizing community resources; building social networks; and actively seeking out information about their new environments

(Martins & Reid, 2007). Engaging in these activities had a positive effect on the experience of adjusting to a new life (Martins & Reid, 2007).

Resilience, most simply, manifests itself as the ability to respond or perform positively in the face of adversity (Gilligan, 2007). In their study, Martins and Reid (2007) found that personal characteristics such as motivation and positive attitudes had lead immigrant women to access and learn new skills, which in turn, influenced their opportunities to build social contacts and job skills. These also facilitated their levels of adjustments by improving integration into new society. While the majority of researchers have uncovered the challenges faced by immigrant women, understanding their resilience and the capacity of coping under pressure remains limited.

Socialization is another key positive factor that facilitates resilience among many immigrant women. Friendships with other immigrant women offer a sense of solidarity because they know that women similar to them are also encountering the same challenges (Martins & Reid, 2007). This facilitates the adjustment process as it offers them a sense of comfort. Additionally, friendships with other individuals from the same or other cultural groups also benefit immigrants by serving as sources of information, referrals, and emotional support (Graham & Thurston, 2005; Martins & Reid, 2007).

Re-framing of life goals is one resilience strategy and is a part of developing positive self image for many immigrant women in Canada (Graham & Thurston, 2005). The process of immigration allowed women to examine differences between societies as manifest in their own behaviour and attitudes, which is one form of self-exploration. Women's roles often change significantly as a consequence of immigrating to Canada. Research revealed that immigrant women had to carry out all the domestic chores which

influenced their participation in Canadian labour force and obliged them to part time menial jobs (Graham & Thurston, 2005). However, many immigrant women framed their roles as transitory and necessary in the process of relocation. Negotiating and adapting to new roles and expectations is part of the adaptation process for them. Research also revealed that another mechanism of adjusting is hope and optimism. Many women keep a positive outlook despite frustrating circumstances (Graham & Thurston, 2005).

Bicultural satisfaction has been found to be a successful adjustment strategy to new culture and society (Willgerodt et. al., 2002) whereby individuals integrate by adopting new behaviours from the larger society and, at the same time, retain valued features from their own heritage culture (Berry, 2003). Biculturalism entails the ability of a person to function effectively well in more than one culture and also to modify roles back and forth as the situations change (Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 2000). Martins and Reid (2007) found that maintaining cultural values such as speaking in the mother tongue language at home, associating with friends from one's own cultural group, retaining culturally related gendered roles in homemaking and care giving were important factors in adjusting to a new country. On the other hand, adopting new cultural values such as learning to live independently without support from extended family and friends, building new friendships with different ethno-cultural community groups facilitated an understanding and appreciation of the dominant culture in the host country (Martins & Reid, 2007). Therefore, bicultural experiences and intercultural understanding strengthen resilience and facilitate women's integration into the host country (Cheung, 2004).

External protective factors. Social support from family, friends, and others is often cited as being essential to develop resilience (Brennan, 2008). It is generally

accepted that social support is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon encompassing social networks, behaviours, identified roles, and other conditions (Dolan & McGrath, 2006). Previous research has also demonstrated the benefits of social support in terms of providing information, emotional support, and assisting in identifying and accessing community resources (Martins & Reid, 2007). Social support can, therefore, act as a buffer to negative adjustment experiences.

The association between social support networks and health has been well researched and documented in the literature (Graham & Thurston, 2005). Health Canada, 2002 lists social support networks as one of the social determinants of health; and emotional support of friends and family is important to buffer stress and mental health problems. Research also indicates that women who settle immediately in the suburbs and do not participate in immigrant settlement programs may actually face more problems accessing primary health care (Graham & Thurston, 2005). The ability of individuals to become members of different networks can confer advantage for health and well-being. Cattel (2001) describes that women have excellent skills for developing and maximizing the benefits of a variety of social support networks with loose and close ties.

Researchers have consistently found marriage satisfaction as a strong positive effect on immigrants in terms of stress and crisis (Cheung 2004). Family relationships, values, and family history provide support and strength in transitioning to the new country. Family can be a source of peace, security, and success; and family goals and hopes for the future provide a basis for planning. A study on eight Canadian immigrant couples by Cheung (2004) found that long-term marital satisfaction and relationships constituted a good foundation that helped the immigrant couples endure hardships during

the process of adjustment. Community-based assistance within cultural traditions that works with the family and marriage may facilitate resilience capacity of immigrants to adapt well to new environments (Khan & Watson, 2005).

Negative factors. Changes in gender attitudes are among the inevitable outcomes of the immigration process (Cheung, 2004). During the transition process, immigrant women are more likely to adopt democratic attitudes toward gender roles than their male counterparts which may lead them to challenge their husband's privileged status and to take on more non-traditional roles. Ethnographic research (Min, 2001) on Korean immigrant families in USA found that active participation of Korean immigrant women in the US labour force and their husbands' traditional patriarchal attitude caused serious marital conflicts in many Korean immigrant families. Attitudinal disparities between husband and wife could lead to less mutual understanding and marital disharmony which could jeopardize the conjugal relationship and impede resiliency capacity.

Racism and discrimination affects one's self-image and feeling of acceptance by the host country (Cheung, 2004). This poses additional risks to the stress of immigration and the resettlement process of immigrant women; intensifies their personal vulnerability; hinders the process of integration and adjustment; and hampers their resiliency capability.

Appraisal of the gains and losses from immigration and their proportion greatly influence the capacity to "bounce back" from challenges faced by immigrants during integration to a new society. Research suggests that those who suffer most from a sense of loss of belonging, a perception of discrimination towards them in the host society, lack of self-fulfillment, feeling of hopelessness, low self-esteem, and negativity exhibit poorer adaptation patterns (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007). Therefore, they find

themselves incapable of successful adjustment to the new socio-cultural environment, experience melancholy, and feelings of loss and grief towards things they had abandoned because of immigration (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007) and remain less resilient.

Resilience Research and its Limitations

The concept of resilience is primarily derived from humanistic psychology theory and focuses predominantly on mastery, competence, coping, strengths, and resources (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). The concept of resilience has been of interest to various professionals and fostering resilience has become an important objective in education; social policy and practice; and within the field of psychology, particularly in work with disadvantaged people, families, and communities. However, inconsistencies associated with the definition, operationalization, and measurement of concept exist in the literature and needs further theoretical delineation (Gillespie et al., 2007).

The concept of resilience is based upon the principles of attachment theory of John Bowlby (1969) which describes that emotional bonds between the child and the mother or a significant other allows the child to develop self-confidence and a sense of security; which protect him/her later on in life and help him/her cope with separation and adversity (as cited in Hoover, 2004; Phaneuf, 2003). Therefore, the significance of family background remains crucial in developing personality traits in the process of resilience. Resilience is also determined by life's accumulated experiences (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Patterson and Kelleher (2005) argue that as individual grows from adversity, he/she expands the resilience through strengthening personal values, efficacy, and energy. Research focused on immigrants' resilience, therefore, must go beyond their lives

in the host countries and explore their childhoods, family relationships, and social and cultural contexts to understand their resilience.

Resilience research consistently draws attention to individual's strengths, capabilities, and innate qualities; and to environmental factors buffering or mediating adversity and coping. However, there is dearth of research that considers the embeddedness of resilience in natural growth and development across the life courses, in cultural context and practices, in belief systems, and in the nature of individual-social relations (Bottrell, 2009).

Researchers have found that, despite the overwhelming environmental stress, a large majority of people remained adaptive (Greene, 2002). However, resilience is a bi-directional relationship shared between individuals and their environments. A particular individual may respond differently to the same life stressors in different contexts (Richardson, 2002) and people who are not adapting well at one point in their lives may become more adaptive if they have social, economic, and emotional opportunities (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Therefore, understanding the process of resilience can be elucidated through emphasizing individual trajectory in terms of their relationships with environments such as family, marriage, children, and ethno-cultural community.

The early studies of resilience focused upon innate characteristics that support individuals to thrive from adversity (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). Research also focuses on environmental factors that influence resilience capacities. However, there is a need to use a holistic framework to explore the dynamic interactions between these characteristics, environmental resources, and the context on which resilience occurs.

Resilience is a subjective concept that is not simple to define. What is perceptible as resilience or positive adaptation from subjective point of view may not be appreciable from the social point of view. Resilience research needs to take account for people's own perceptions on their own terms. As a result, individuals' experiences can represent not only their responses to adversity and the directions they wish to take; but also indicate the consequences of individual-social positions and economic and policy effects that structure individuals' experiences of adversity and ability to resilience (Bottrell, 2009).

Resilience has global as well as culturally and contextually specific aspects. What may be considered resilient in one context may not be so in another (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Similarly, what may constitute risk in one cultural context may not apply to another and may constitute protective factors or process, based on specific conditions, cultural values, and norms (Ungar, 2008). Therefore, without understanding the context and culture in which behaviour occurs, little authoritative comment can be made on findings related to resilience. Gilligan (2004) argues that "the degree of resilience displayed by a person in a certain context may be said to be related to the extent to which that context has elements that nurture this resilience" (p.94). Understanding the context in which the resources to nurture resilience are found is essential in order to distinguish successful adaptation and good coping strategies. Therefore, resilience research among immigrant women needs to emphasize cultural practices and diversities, social positioning, and the nature of individual-social relations as significant aspects for analyzing resilience (Bottrell, 2009).

Viewing Immigration through Feminist Prism

Gender is one of the fundamental social relations shaping immigration patterns and immigration is one of the most powerful forces disrupting and realigning everyday life. Gender informs different sets of social relations which organize immigration and social institutions (e.g., family, labor markets, etc.) in both immigrants' place of origin and place of destination (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). Historically, most studies about the phenomenon of immigration and adaptation have focused on male experiences and ignored the experience of women as immigrants. Feminist scholars have pointed out that including the experiences of women who immigrate is important to understand differences in their experiences and the experiences of males (Tastsoglou et al., 2005). Tastsoglou et. al. believe that research on immigrants should "take into account gender and immigrant women's experience," because "migration, settlement, and integration processes are dynamic and highly differentiated between groups and deeply gendered" (2005, p. 91, 94).

Boyd and Grieco (2003) argue that the cultural norms and community values of host country determine whether or not women can immigrate and, if they can, how (i.e., labor or family reunification) and with whom (alone or with family). Many factors exist that shape the decision to immigrate and make immigration more or less possible for women. These include both the state of the national economy of the host country, and gender relations and hierarchies within the family and socio-cultural context that control the distribution of resources and information to support, discourage, or prevent immigration (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). A woman's position in the sending community, therefore, influences her ability as an individual to decide to immigrate and to access the

resources necessary to do so. In the receiving country, immigration may also alter the status and gender relations of men and women. New economic roles and new responsibilities influence the incorporation of women and men immigrants into the labor market and how they experience resettlement process once they arrive in the country of destination. This research within a feminist paradigm focused on female immigrants to Canada through listening to women's stories of their experiences and life-stories.

The primary characteristic of feminist research involves focusing on women's diverse situations as well as the institutions that frame those situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kvale, 1996). Watkins (2000) explains that when feminist inquiries focus on the diversity of women's experiences and the effects of the social context within which women live, it "centralizes the experiences of all women, especially the women whose social conditions have been least written about, studied, or changed by political movements" (p. 27). The experiences of immigrant women are diverse and are affected differently by many factors that exist in the country of origin and the host country (Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Toth, 2003). This research explored the unique experiences and perspectives of diverse immigrant women.

Feminist research values the subjective experience and considers it paramount to the research process. Research using a feminist methodology refers to research questions that are pertinent to women, are of interest to women, and are developed out of political struggles (King, 1994). Harding (1987) explains that women's experiences provide new resources for research. Through these experiences, women are able to perceive the world from a different perspective, allowing them to identify the specific needs of different groups of women. Research studies using a feminist methodology 'view women through

a female prism' (Cook & Fonow, 1986) and view the world from an alternative perspective that places the woman at center stage. Utilizing a qualitative research inquiry within a feminist paradigm this study intended to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants' immigration experiences and their resilience.

Resilience Research among Immigrant Women

The experience of immigration has been a focus of much research and the experience of immigrant women has also been explored (Martins, & Reid, 2007). However, little research has been conducted with immigrant women emphasizing their resilience and the capacity of overcome adversity. Only four relevant articles (three published and one unpublished), focusing on resilience in immigrant women, were retrieved while searching research articles from the past ten years through CINHALL database, SocINDEX with Full Text, PsychINFO (via Ovid), Academic Search Complete, Gender Studies Database (GSD), Dissertations & Theses (PQDT), Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection, and Google Scholarly Article.

Among these four research articles, one article (Graham & Thurston, 2005) explored the resilience and coping mechanisms used by urban immigrant women to mediate gender, migration, socioeconomic conditions, and health. A qualitative methodology was used and eleven immigrant women were interviewed through one-on-one ethnographic style interviews. The period of time lived in Canada for the sample in that study ranged from four weeks to four years. Living in Canada for few weeks at the time of interview may have been too short duration to identify resilience against adversity. Nine participants were landed immigrants, while one came as refugee and one was on a work permit. Therefore the immigration status of the participants was not

homogeneous in the study. The research found that despite the stress, guilt, and frustration of immigration the women demonstrated resilience in coping with adversities. Negotiating and adapting the new roles associated with immigration, hope and optimism, and strong network-building skills were identified as resilience strategies for women in this study.

Among the other three research articles, one (Timberlake et al., 2003) examined the interrelationships among immigration stressors, resettlement challenges, and protective factors of resilience and spirituality among immigrant women. The researchers conducted a quantitative study on a randomly selected sample of 56 economically disadvantaged immigrant women. The research findings highlighted resilience, cultural connectedness, spirituality, and hope for the future as mediating protective factors for those immigrant women as they adjusted with the stressors and challenges inherent in immigration and resettlement. In this study, the researchers pointed out that resilience and cultural connectedness specifically moderated resource acquisition. However, it is important to note that the small sample size limits generalization of this research.

The third study focused on resilience of immigrant couples in immigration and integration in Canada (Cheung, 2004). A mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) was used to understand whether marital satisfaction acted as a protective factor for resilience of immigrant couples and helped in adjustment to immigration and integration. Eight immigrant couples were selected through purposive sampling method. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was used for the quantitative measure and in-depth interviews for an hour and a half were conducted for qualitative understanding. The findings of the research indicated that a satisfying long term marriage was a protective

factor for resilience and adjustment of immigrant couples. The research focused on the role of marriage in resilience of couples who encountered adversities during the process of immigration and integration. Therefore, other factors influencing resilience remained unexplored.

Finally, the fourth study (Toth, 2003) explored resilience in the lives of immigrant and refugee women. Using the principles of feminist scholarship, this qualitative study focused on the strengths of immigrant and refugee women to cope with adversity and maintain their health. Though refugees are asserted as immigrants, their experiences and condition behind relocation differ extensively from immigrants of skilled category and family class. Immigrants, other than refugees, make a deliberate decision to re-begin lives in new cultures. They have the autonomy and a sense of purpose to move to a new country. Refugees, on the other hand, take the decision to emigrate as a survival strategy, and may or may not possess a sense of purpose and autonomy; certainly the component of preplanning is absent. Therefore, understanding the diversity of stress, trauma, and complexity of lives between refugees and other categories of immigrant populations is crucial and needs more attention. In this study, data were collected by means of face-to-face interviews of one to two hours in length and only two participants were interviewed twice. Therefore, insufficient time may be a limiting factor in terms of understanding participants' diverse experiences.

Distinctiveness of the Research

This research made use of qualitative methodology to understand the immigration journeys of five women and their resilience. The methodology is appropriate here as there is only limited research on the topic under study. Person-centered interviewing informed

by feminist research principles served as the method. The study focused on immigrant women, excluding the refugee population to gain deeper understanding of the complexity of their experiences and resilience. Repeat interviews were conducted among five immigrant women who immigrated to Canada under immigrant status and who had been living in Canada from nine months to five years. Given what the women have “lived through”, it made sense to engage them in repeat interviews to reach a holistic understanding of their multifaceted experiences. The research focused on understanding the life stories of immigrant women and their journeys before and after coming to Canada and explored their resilience within their cultural diversities and historical social contexts. The research argues that cultural practices and diversities, social positioning, and the nature of individual-social relations are all significant aspects for analyzing resilience (Bottrell, 2009). This study emphasized individual trajectories in terms of relationships with environments such as family, marriage, children, and ethno-cultural community. Recognizing the influence of family, cultural, and social dimensions in the process of resilience is important. This made the study distinctive in contributing to existing knowledge.

Summary

As pointed out by Aptheker in Donnelly (2006) women are active agents and their resistance to the dominant forces has taken on many forms. Women’s resistance and resilience that go unnoticed are many and these include the ways in which women struggle to improve the quality of life for themselves, for their children, and for other women (as cited in Donnelly, 2006). An understanding of different resilience and adapting strategies enacted by immigrant women can facilitate and support other

immigrants in their transition and integration process into Canadian society. Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky (1999) point out that if we can understand what helps some people to adapt well in the context of high adversity, we may be able to incorporate this knowledge into new practice strategies. This study explored the factors that strengthened the resilience of immigrant women to meet their life' challenges positively.

Chapter Three: Research Design

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research methodology and method applied to address my research phenomenon of interest. In this chapter, a brief description of philosophical stances, theoretical underpinnings, procedure of data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, recruitment approach, and the techniques I used to justify trustworthiness of the research method are offered.

Methodology

Research methodology is a bridge that “brings theory and method, perspective and tool, together” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006: p. 21). Methodology represents a broad understanding of social context, ethical principles, and philosophical assumptions (Neuman, 2006) and explains how research does or should proceed (Harding, 1987).

Philosophical Stance

Philosophical stance or paradigm provides philosophical, theoretical, instrumental, and methodological foundations for conducting research and, in addition, provides researchers with a platform from which to interpret the world (Morgan, 1983). Paradigms are associated with ontological and epistemological stances (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The ontological stance focuses on discerning the nature of reality (Creswell, 1998). Ontology refers to questioning the existence of a ‘real’ world that is independent of our knowledge. It asks about the form and nature of reality and therefore, looks for what can be known of that reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An epistemology is a theory of knowledge embedded in a theoretical perspective (Creswell, 2003) which informs all aspects of the research process. The conscious and unconscious questions, assumptions,

and beliefs that the researcher brings to the research endeavour serve as the initial basis for an epistemological position. Epistemological questions explore the nature of knowledge and the relationship between researchers and the people or phenomena under study.

In this study, my own paradigm or world view arose from constructivism. Constructivist paradigms study the multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others (Patton, 2002). Constructs can be altered because they are not true in any absolute sense (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). Constructivism ontology suggests that realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions that are socially constructed and are products of human intellects (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructivist epistemology assumes that the investigators and the participants are interactively linked, and that findings are co-created as the research is conducted (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). The researcher is not assumed to be value-neutral and objective but rather an active participant along with the research participants in the building of descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Since the investigator and the participants are dependent on each other, knowledge is maximized when the distance between the inquirer and the investigator is minimized (Polit & Hungler, 1996). Researchers and those being researched, or the phenomena studied, engage in dynamic interaction that creates the meaning of findings. Thus, knowledge is always a human construction and never value free. Guba and Lincoln (1994) summarize the constructivist perspectives as being ontologically relativist, epistemologically subjectivist, and methodologically hermeneutic and dialectic.

Study Design

Qualitative methodology was the mode of inquiry for this study to understand the socially constructed nature of reality from the perspectives of immigrant women (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative methodology was appropriate here as there was limited reported research on the topic under study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also claim that, "If you want people to understand better than they otherwise might, provide them information in the form in which they usually experience it" (p.120).

This qualitative study made use of an exploratory descriptive design arising from the naturalistic paradigm. The aim of qualitative research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to provide well-written research reports that contribute knowledge to the community and society on the issue under study (Myers, 2000). The description in qualitative descriptive studies entails the presentation of study findings in everyday language. In this study, naturalistic inquiry was used to interpret the constructs that immigrant women hold throughout their immigration journeys. The naturalistic paradigm assumes that multiple realities exist and are constructed by human beings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Naturalistic inquiry assumes that the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Epistemological principles in feminist theory also include that women's experience can be a legitimate source of knowledge which is relational and contextual and women can be knowers (Scruby, 1999). Therefore, naturalistic inquiry fits well with feminist thinking and research; and person-centered interviewing (Hollan, 2005; Levy & Hollan, 1998; Polakoff & Gregory, 2002;

Tarrant & Gregory, 2003) informed by the feminist paradigm was appropriate as a means to create an interactive relationship with the participants. The stories or meanings constructed by individual immigrant women, within the naturalistic setting, provided a more holistic understanding of the participants' experiences. Therefore, meaningful findings were created through the research process.

Theoretical Underpinnings

An epistemology is embedded within a theoretical perspective (Creswell, 2003). Researchers apply theory throughout the research process and their epistemological beliefs are enacted through a theoretical frame (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In this study, resilience theory and feminist theory guided the research process.

Resilience theory. The term resilience originates from the Latin word *resiliens* that was used to refer to the elasticity of a substance; and Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language (1958) defined resilience as "the ability to bounce or spring back after being stretched or constrained or recovering strength and spirit" (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Greene and Conrad (2002) describe resilience as bio-psychosocial and spiritual phenomenon that is linked to one's life stress and unique capacity of coping. Some theorists believe that resilience is an innate or biological characteristic that exists in human nature and unfolds naturally in the presence of certain environmental factors (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Other theorists consider resilience as the result not only of innate traits, but also of complex and dynamic social contexts in which people are embedded and are more or less vulnerable to harm or more or less amenable to change (Harvey, 2007). Therefore, resilience is an outcome of the interaction between

nature and nurture and can either be fostered or hindered by environmental factors (Greene & Conrad, 2002).

The concept of resilience refers to “the capacity to transcend adversity and transform it into an opportunity for growth” (Bottrell, 2009: p. 125). Resilience or the capacity to transcend adversity can be affected by multilevel attachments including marriage, family, school, and ethno-cultural society; and is influenced by diversity including race, gender, sexuality, age, economic status, and religious affiliation (Greene & Conrad, 2002). The characteristics that researchers think are inherent and are related to resilience include temperament, problem-solving skills, intellectual-skills, self-motivation, self-esteem, sociability, autonomy, spirituality, and a sense of purpose (Greene & Conrad, 2002; Roberts et al., 2002). On the other side of equation, the natural tendency toward resilience may be strengthened by some environmental factors such as family and community support; access to health, education, welfare, and security services; schools, peers, and affiliation with religious organizations (Greene & Conrad, 2002). The concept of resilience theory guided the research process to understand how immigrant women enact resilience through these life events during their transition process.

Most resilience research has adopted quantitative methods and epidemiological studies to reveal the associations between “developmental outcomes and characteristics of individuals and their environments” (Barton, 2002: p. 97) However, such studies fail to address issues of causality (Barton, 2002). Several researchers have identified the lack of attention to the role of participant’s perceptions or meaning of constructions of contexts, experiences, and events as a limitation of quantitative approaches. The subjective

construction of meaning can make many differences in understanding the effects of an event upon the individual involved. Therefore, qualitative methods are better suited to this task (Barton, 2002).

Resilience is a process of “bouncing back” from a stressor, adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, reinforcement, and enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors (Richardson, 2002). Resilience is a dynamic process that occurs within cultural and social contexts. What may be seen as an ordinary developmental task in one society may not be so in another (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Understanding the process and the cultural context within which it occurs can be informative for individual immigrant woman striving to overcome crisis.

Feminist theory. Feminist research is “research on women, by women, and for women” (Crotty, 1994: p. 54) that focuses on the status of women in the society (Cook & Fonow, 1986). It is through women’s experiences and especially through their life crises that they are able to understand the world around them. Feminist research is committed to empower women and give them a voice to speak about social life from their own perspective (Crotty, 2003).

The concept of woman is the central point for feminist theory (Letherby, 2003). “Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified” (James, 2000: p. 576). Making women visible and representing women’s perspectives are major components of feminist research (Harvey, 1990). Feminist researchers are, thereby, committed to make a difference in women’s lives through bringing social and individual change.

Very broadly, then, one might characterize the goal of feminism as ending the oppression and disadvantage of women. However, if we also acknowledge that gender alone does not shape women's lives, and that age, ethnicity, culture, education, race, and sexual orientation all play roles in how women behave, interpret, and value their existence in society (McCormick & Bunting, 2002), then it might seem that the goal of feminism is not only to end oppression caused by sexism but all forms of oppression that affects women (Crow, 2000). Immigrant women and men occupy different social positions related to their economy, education, ethno-society, and gender. They have diverse life experiences. Thus, recognizing the position of women as immigrant in society is crucial; and seeing through feminist lens provides a new way of thinking about social reality and an approach to study that reality (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

The central concept of feminist epistemology is that of a situated knower, and hence of situated knowledge. Feminist epistemology recognizes women as knowers. Feminist scholars are interested in how gender situates knowers and specifically how feminine experience of the human condition is shaped by the multiple realities in which it exists (Crawford & Kimmel, 1999). Feminist epistemology and philosophy of science, therefore, studies the way in which gender influences our conceptions of knowledge, the knowers, and practices of inquiry.

Feminist research is based on the assumption that the world is socially constructed (Crotty, 2003) and people have different visions of the world based on the position they occupy within a social context (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Feminist theorists distinguish between sex and gender. Sex comprises the biological differences between males and females. Gender is what societies make of sexual differences: the different

roles, norms, and meanings they assign to men and women on account of their sexual characteristics. Gender thus has several dimensions (Haslanger, 2000). Therefore, what people know or think they know can be influenced by their own gender roles, norms, or identities; by other people's genders; or by ideas about gender. This study looked through a feminist lens to have better vision of the realities immigrant women construct within the social context they were placed.

There is no one method or strategy for feminist research rather it adopts various methods depending on the question under investigation in order to meet the requirements of the feminist paradigm (Crotty, 1998). Most common is the use of qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documents analysis (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Harding (1987) argues that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are appropriate for conducting feminist research and that it is the point of view of the researcher that makes research feminist in nature. This research involved person-centered interviewing as method to grasp immigrant women's experiences, feelings, and meanings conveyed through their language.

Assumptions associated with qualitative methods of inquiry are congruent with feminist principles. Qualitative approach necessitates reciprocal relationships where researchers and research participants are placed on the same place in the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Feminist research seeks to remove power differentials between the researcher and the researched by locating the researcher as part of the research process and by recognizing the participants as the experts and authorities of their perspectives (Brayton, 1997). In this study, my status of being a woman brought my own experiences and perspectives into the role of researcher and the research process. The

research situation based upon woman-talk, therefore, turned into more relaxed, non-hierarchical where I listened and appreciated the social realities being expressed by the participants. Women are in the best position to carry out research with women because of their particular position in society as members of an oppressed group and as scholars. As an immigrant woman and as a researcher I observed through ‘double prism’ – as a woman and as someone who lived through the immigration journey. Thus, I was capable of identifying, understanding, and interpreting women’s experiences in a more authentic way.

The purpose of feminist research is to raise consciousness and to empower women. Being involved in this research process as active participants, immigrant women were provided with the opportunity to assess their unique experiences, their situations, and their concerns which facilitated personal analysis. It also provided them with an opportunity to validate their experiences including their losses, their sufferings, and their hopes for future that accompanied their journey. The participants took comfort in sharing their stories with me. When we share our stories we validate experience. Therefore, an understanding was created, awareness was established, and a sense of a life-lived engaged as the women reflected of what happened to them. These stories were poised to create change for other women who immigrate to Canada. Thus, the research process had a positive impact on them as well as a potential impact on other women in general. Empowerment arises with knowledge. All participants received their transcripts to read their own experiences which had the potential to generate healing and an understanding that had not existed before. As for example, many of the participants became autonomous and took control of their lives, especially after coming to Canada. One participant resisted

when not being supported by her husband to get a driver's licence. So their identity changed. When they reflected on that, they saw what they did and how they did it. This knowledge is potentially empowering. Thus the research process contributed to the empowerment of these women.

One of the concerns of feminist research is to ensure the accuracy of the research in representing women's lives and experiences (Brayton, 1997). Therefore, it is important that researcher take information back to the participants for verification before representation. It is also important to recognize how language is used to construct and reflect the meanings that women want to convey. During interviews, participants in this study reviewed the transcript from their previous interview. They also received their stories for authentication of the meaning they gave to their experiences.

The central component of my research was women and their life experiences from the positions they occupied in the family and in Canadian society. The primary purpose of this study was to bring immigrant women from margin to center, putting a spotlight on them, making them visible, and giving them voice. This qualitative research, guided by feminist research principles (Cook & Fonow, 1986), offered direction in understanding how women conveyed their experiences in their own words.

Method

Methods are the tools that researchers use to gather data. In-depth person-centered interviewing (Hollan, 2005; Levy & Hollan, 1998; Polakoff & Gregory, 2002; Tarrant & Gregory, 2003), informed by feminist research principles, served as the method to understand the day to day experiences of immigrant women and their journeys throughout the transition process from leaving their country of origin to living in Canada.

Person-centered Interviewing. Person-centered interviewing is the balanced combination of informant and respondent approaches (Levy & Hollan, 1998). Levy and Hollan (1998) claimed that the person-centered interviewing engages the interviewee as a knowledgeable person who can inform us about the culture and behaviour in a particular locale. In addition, the interviewee acts as a respondent of the study and offers insights into his or her life's experiences. "These oscillations between the informant and respondent mode illuminate spaces, conflicts, coherences, and transformations" (Levy & Hollan, 1998, p. 336). The interviewer also observes and studies how the interviewees behave in the interview setting and how they respond to various probes, questions, and topics.

Person-centered interviewing is a qualitative method of gathering and collecting data. Person-centered interviewing has its root in anthropology and it addresses culture. Levy and Hollan (1998) claimed that person-centered interviewing is like a performing art; a musical score where you need to "make use of social, psychological, and evolutionary skills of social knowing and interpersonal interaction" (p. 335). As Hollan (2005) cited "There are things we can learn about people by actively engaging with them, talking to them, and listening to them that we can learn in no other way" (p. 465). Person-centered interviewing provides us the scope to learn what people feel, imagine, and think about; and to learn what people willing to tell about themselves changes as relationships between the researcher and the participants deepen and grow over time.

This study aimed to gather rich, descriptive accounts from participants of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds that explain how immigrant women made sense of their actions and constructed their identities. Therefore, person-centered interviewing was an

appropriate research method for this study to learn about the deeper perspectives held by the participants. The participants were informants who spoke to the journeys of immigration and they also shared their own experiences throughout these journeys as respondents. This fostered an in-depth and holistic understanding of woman immigrants' experiences.

Rationale to supplement the research method with feminist research

principles. The main purpose of person-centered interviewing is to elicit tacit knowledge and subjective understandings of the participants' experiences. Person-centered interviewing primarily addresses culture. However, person-centered interviewing does not account for women's unequal social position, raise consciousness, or empower women by changing power relations and inequality. Importantly, Wise, in Webb (1993) argues that feminist research is concerned with women's oppression located within a model where the power imbalance between researcher and researched can be addressed. Congruent with feminist research principles, the interview in this research process was a mutual interaction in which I was more open, flexible, and intimating by sharing my own experiences with participants and answering their questions when asked. This form of interviewing can break down the hierarchy between researcher and respondent and places the respondent in an active role in the research process (Letherby, 2003). Additionally, I offered the participants a choice in the venue for interviews and dressed casually during the interview session. I took some baked food for tea at their homes during the interviews. This prompted a temporary closeness placing me as one of them and they felt more comfortable and at ease to talk.

Feminist research methodology aims to create a research experience that is as positive and empowering for the participant as possible. To make the interview a positive experience for the women taking part, I provided them with opportunity to reflect on their own journey thus validated their experience they lived through. I also sent the participants a copy of the transcripts from their interview for their comments. Being actively involved in the research, it was more likely that the respondents felt empowered and respected. Additionally, having their voices heard was rewarding as they passed on their insights gained from experiences. Feminist research principles drawn from feminist theory thereby provided a platform on which person-centered interviewing uncovered the experiences of immigrant women in their own words. The decision to adopt feminist principles in the conducting of person-centered interviewing, therefore, was appropriate.

Accessing and Recruiting the Population

The initial plan was to obtain access to participants through Lethbridge Family Services (LFS)-Immigrant Services and the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association through purposeful and convenience sampling. In addition, snow-balling sampling was to be adopted to accrue participants if access to a sufficient number of participants was found difficult. A letter (See Appendix A), outlining the study and requesting support in accessing their clients, was provided to the LFS-Immigrant Services. The organization was asked to identify the potential participants, and therefore, send an invitation letter on my behalf to prospective participants for inclusion in the study (See Appendix B). The letter included my contact information (i.e telephone number). I also put up posters (See Appendix C) at the office of LFS-Immigration Services. The posters entailed a brief description of the inclusion criteria for prospective participants as well as my name and

contact information. I also contacted the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association requesting their assistance to access potential participants. A letter (See Appendix D) requesting their support to put up the posters at their offices and to access the potential participants was provided to the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association. Immigrant women who were interested in the study were asked to call me directly, and if they fulfilled the inclusion criteria they were invited to consider participating in the study. Only one participant through the LFS-Immigration Services contacted me about the study. However, the woman did not completely meet the inclusion criteria as her tenure of living in Canada was only nine months. After discussions with my supervisor and committee members, the inclusion criterion regarding the tenure of living in Canada was loosened up to nine months. Therefore, the woman was recruited into the study. No potential participants were accrued through the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association. Therefore, the method of recruitment as planned was changed because of the inability to accrue the proposed sample size (i.e., $n=5$). Based on circumstances, I asked my acquaintances who had access to immigrant women from diverse communities to convey the information about the study to the women they felt they met the inclusion criteria of this study. Within a couple of weeks, I received several responses from women interested in participating in the study. Thus, the recruitment procedure for this study mostly relied on snowball sampling and “word of mouth”. Once the women expressed interest in the study via a nominee, they were soon contacted. If they fulfilled the inclusion criteria I scheduled an interview at their convenience. All interviews took place at their preferred location (eg. their home). The following inclusion and exclusion criteria guided the sample recruitment procedure in the study.

Inclusion criteria:

1. Immigrant women who migrated to Canada under immigrant status other than refugee;
2. The women lived in Canada from nine months to five years;
3. The women were married and had children;
4. The women were comfortable being interviewed in English; or women who experienced difficulties in English but were willing to be interviewed in English on at least three occasions;
5. Living in Lethbridge; and,
6. Demonstrated a willingness to participate in the study by signing the consent form.

Exclusion criteria. The following were the exclusion criteria:

1. Refugee and women who migrated to Canada on a work permit, or other than immigrant status.

According to the inclusion criteria, the participants lived in Canada from nine months to five years to be considered as a recent Canadian immigrant. This tenure of stay in Canada was sufficient for better understanding of immigration challenges and for identifying resilience.

Women were to be married and have children to be considered eligible for this study. The aim was to explore possible barriers and challenges immigrant women faced in light of their parenting role and care giving in addition to the adversities brought by immigration. It also helped to establish the potential impact of marriage, family, and that of ethno-cultural communities in their adjustment process.

Ethical Considerations

Attention to ethical issues in qualitative research is essential (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I believe that ethical concern should be present in every aspect of the research design. I sought approval for my proposed research by submitting appropriate documentation to the Human Subjects Research Committee, University of Lethbridge. In compliance with ethical standards, a letter of consent (See Appendix E) was given to all participants before conducting interviews. Participants signed and dated the bottom of the consent form. All questions and inquiries were addressed prior to obtaining their signatures on the consent forms. Once the consent form was signed, one copy was stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Lethbridge and one copy was given to the participant. The participation in this proposed research was completely voluntary. Before signing the consent form I explained to them that withdrawal from the study was possible at any time, for any reason, without any negative consequences. I also explained that if participants wished to withdraw at any point during the study, the information contributed to the point of withdrawal would be completely removed or disposed of as confidential waste as appropriate, and would not be included in the study findings. In recognition of their time and contributions to the study, participants received \$50 cash at the beginning of first interview session. I mentioned to the participants that if any one wished to withdraw during the study, she would still be allowed to have her \$50 cash once she left.

As the purpose of this research project was to explore the hardships and challenges of immigration processes of immigrant women as well as their resilience, the interview procedure might be expected to cause emotional distress, recollection of painful

memories, or psychological discomfort. Therefore, the participants were vulnerable to emotional disturbances through disclosing their personal experiences and emotions. As a former medical doctor, I possess professional training and experience in monitoring one's mental distress, therefore, I was confident in my abilities to assess each participant's state of emotional health. I found one participant distressed during the interview session. Therefore, we took a break and I switched the topic. I also asked her if she would want to discontinue the interview. However, she expressed her interest to carry on, and as I found her emotionally settled I continued with the interview. Before leaving, I provided the participant the name and telephone numbers of counselling services and encouraged her to follow through with counselling services for further consultation if necessary. On the next day, I called her to monitor her emotional health.

Just as establishing research relationships often takes considerable negotiation, the ending of relationships also needs to be reflected in research (Letherby, 2003). The respondents felt comfortable with me and revealed their emotions, and expressed opinions in their interviews. However, the relationship existed for the purpose of the research and was terminated when the research came to "close". I invited the women to plan how and when the study would come to a "close" to avoid any potential harm (emotional or psychological). Few of the participants showed their interest to continue the relationship. I explained the situation and agreed to meet with them only once or twice after the research came to an end. The plan was mutually agreed upon and negotiated.

Informed and voluntary consent. Informed consent is one of the most critical issues in qualitative research. The foremost consideration in research should be given to

the dignity of the research participants (Maxwell, 2005). The consent form for my research participants included relevant information on key elements of research such as purpose, procedures, time period, and a clause stipulating that participation was voluntary; and the participants had the right to withdraw from the study anytime and without negative consequences. It also indicated that the interviews would be audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewee and later transcribed verbatim by a transcriptionist. The transcriptionist signed an oath of confidentiality (Appendix F) before transcription. Participants were offered a copy of their transcripts and therefore, they reviewed their transcripts for accuracy. Furthermore, they were allowed to eliminate parts of the transcripts as they saw unfit. Participants, who wished to obtain a copy of the Summary of the findings of the research, were offered an opportunity on the informed consent form to provide a mail/e-mail address. Contact information for me, my supervisor (Dr. David Gregory), and the Human Subjects Research Committee were provided in the consent form for any correspondence and information related to this study.

Confidentiality and anonymity of research participants. The respect and protection of research participants were maintained through offering assurance of confidentiality of information shared, and anonymity by not revealing the identity of the individuals. Anonymity was provided through the use of pseudonyms selected by the research participants themselves.

The consent forms were stored separately from transcription data so that it was not possible to associate a name with any given responses. The tapes and transcripts were identified by a code that was only known by me. The audio-recorded interviews were

destroyed as confidential waste once they had been transcribed. A password protected folder was created for the electronic copies of transcribed interviews. The folder will be deleted from the hard-drive after five years. The electronic copies of transcribed interviews did not contain any identifying information regarding the participants and the secured password was only known by me. Although excerpts of the transcripts were included in the final study, no direct identifying information was used. The hard copies of anonymized transcribed information were kept in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Lethbridge and only my supervisor and I had access to all these interview copies. All information will be disposed of as confidential waste five years after completing the study.

Sampling and Sample Size

The original intent to accrue to participants was through purposeful and convenience sampling. As the method failed to accrue the proposed sample size ($n=5$), I mobilized snow-balling technique and “word of mouth” to obtain participants. Five immigrant women from diverse backgrounds participated in this study. Four women were interviewed three times each and one women twice. Thus, with five participants, fourteen interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted approximately ninety to hundred and twenty minutes. Sufficient time was spent to learn about the participants’ experiences. Therefore, sample size was adequate for this study.

Data Collection Techniques

In-depth semi-structured person-centered interviewing (Levy & Hollan, 1998; Hollan, 2005; Polakoff & Gregory, 2002; Tarrant & Gregory, 2003) was the primary strategy of data collection of this study. Interviews were conducted in English. The

interviews commenced at the beginning of January and were completed by the mid of May, 2011. Demographic information (See Appendix G) was collected at the beginning of the interview. Repeated interviews (n=3X4 participants; n=2X1 participant) were conducted. Given what the women had “lived through”, it made sense to engage them in repeat interviews. In addition, repeated interviews for each woman were required to a) establish rapport and b) do “justice” to their journeys. The depth, significance, and honesty of respondents' responses grew over the course of a series of interviews (Levy & Hollan, 1998). Data collection was ceased when no new information was forthcoming and data saturation (Morse, 1995) was attained.

Following each interview, the participants were verbally debriefed and thanked for their participation. The following interview date and time were established according to the participants' convenience. During subsequent interviews, participants reviewed the summary and transcript from the previous interview as part of an accuracy check and to ensure comfort with the material in the transcript. Follow-up and clarification questions from the previous interview were addressed at this time.

The interviews were audio recorded with the participants' permission and were later transcribed verbatim by a transcriptionist. As Letherby (2003) argues that “silences are as important as noise in research and the interpretation of silence is as important as the interpretation of what is being said” (p. 109), it is important to listen to what is not being said as well as what is. Therefore, I always paid attention to verbal cues such as intonations, nuances, pauses, and to body language; and wrote in my field notes soon after the interview ends. Furthermore, I made use of a researcher's journal (personal notes) and recorded my thoughts, feelings, emotions, and reactions throughout the

research process, particularly, before, during, and after each individual interview with participants. The field notes and researcher's journal proved invaluable during the data analysis phase. The field notes provided me with detailed information about the participant such as her appearance, emotion, affect etc at the time of interview; thus contributed much detail during data analysis. The journal reflected my personal reactions, impressions, and self-doubts. The journal particularly helped me for further probing or discussion with the participants.

An interview guide (See Appendix H), with open-ended questions was developed to cover general topics to be explored throughout the interview. The interview questions were generated from published studies on experiences of immigrant women and their resilience strategies extracted from CINAHL database and Google Scholarly Articles. The interview guide was piloted among two immigrant women who were not included in the study, to assess the clarity and relevance of questions and to establish face validity of the guide. The interview guide was used to ensure good use of limited interview time, and to keep interactions focused, systematic, and comprehensive. Prompts and probes were used to encourage further discussion with the participants for better understanding of the research purpose.

A presentation of the Summary will be arranged at the office of LFS-Immigration Services after approval of the research findings by the thesis committee to share the results of the study with LFS-Immigration Services and immigrant women and men. Tea or coffee and snacks will be served to the audience. I will also send the Summary to participants who showed interest on their consent form via mail or e-mail according to their preference of the method of delivery.

Data Analysis

The data of this study were analysed in two phases. In the first level (Phase I), narrative analysis was adopted (Lauritzen & Jaegar, 1997) to examine and produce the stories of the participants. In the first level of analysis, I took account of a “within woman” understanding for each woman and her life story.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) comprised the second level of analysis (Phase II) of this qualitative study. In the second level analysis, I took account of a “between women” understanding. Across the five stories, I explored the common and unique experiences among the five participants and concurrently their resilience.

Narrative analysis. The narrative analysis attempts to reduce story to a set of elements that may reveal a particular case in a certain time or place (Richmond, 2002). In this study, I analyzed each life story using a framework which allowed me to examine all requirements of story such as the setting, characters, language and thoughts, and life events (Lauritzen & Jaegar, 1997). In the process of data analysis, I developed a “story-map” (Richmond, 2002) for each story to organize participants’ recounting of past and present experiences and future intentions. Davey (1983) and Rumelhart (1980) argue that ‘story-map’ ignites a meta-cognitive response in those who tell the story and those who hear it (as cited in Richmond, 2002). In this study, the stories were presented in a pattern known to both storytellers and listeners, allowing the mind of both to reconstruct and make sense of what is being told or heard (Richmond, 2002). The story map in this study included: Life in the homeland, the journey to Canada, and life in Canada.

The construction of the stories. To find the voice in the story, each story was constructed around a particular time, place, or setting (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I

engaged in hand work analysis to create the stories. The transcribed data were analyzed according to the following steps.

- The stories were constructed one at a time and in the order in which the participants were interviewed (e.g. Pata, Panna, Anita...).
- The transcripts for each interview were read and re-read to identify the key events. The events were coded by hand in the margins of the transcripts (e.g. global family).
- The full set of interviews for the individual participant was then coded. The coded transcripts were then re-read and then coded sections were developed (e.g. Life in the homeland). I created a new file in my computer for each participant with a name (e.g. Pata's story). Coded text was blocked and excised from the data base and relocated to this new file. I then wrote around each particular coded event.
- Participants did not articulate their life stories in a nicely organized way. Therefore, I had to cut and paste the events according to particular time, place, or setting (e.g. reaching Canada was situated after leaving the homeland). Once the "story-frame" was created, the texture of the story was further developed. Field notes and my personal "researcher journal" contributed much detail in construction of the story.
- Finally the introduction and conclusion to each story was written.

Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method of analysis that works both to unpack and reflect reality. Thematic analysis is independent of any

particular theoretical approach; it can be used across a range of theoretical and epistemological positions and is compatible with both realist and constructivist paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The second level of data analysis of this qualitative interview data was obtained through six different phases of thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first phase I looked across the five stories which were the products of first level narrative analysis. In the second phase of thematic analysis, I commenced initial coding to organize the data into meaningful groups or components and collating data relevant to each code. The third phase started when all data were initially coded and collated. During this phase, I aggregated different codes into potential categories and combined them to form overarching themes. In the fourth phase, the themes were reviewed and refined and a thematic map of the analysis was generated. In phase five, the themes were defined and named as they were presented for analysis. Sandelowski and Barroso (2002) argue that the report is ‘a dynamic vehicle that mediates’ between researcher and reader, rather than a factual account of events after the fact. In sixth phase the scholarly report was produced which generated the accounts about immigrant women’s experiences. It is to be noted that I closely worked with my supervisor (Dr. David Gregory) during the process of analysis and also sought feedback from other committee members as appropriate.

Demonstration of Trustworthiness

Sandelowski (1993) argues that ‘trustworthiness’ in qualitative research is a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist makes the practices visible and, therefore, auditable. Sandelowski (1986) also refers to this process of auditability as ‘leaving a decision trail’, where the reader would be able to track and verify the research process.

Therefore, a study is trustworthy if the reader of the research report judges it to be so (Rolfe, 2006).

Trustworthiness has been further divided into credibility, which corresponds nearly with the positivist concept of internal validity; dependability, which relates more to reliability; transferability, which is parallel to external validity; and confirmability, which is largely an issue of presentation (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Creswell (1998) has provided eight verification procedures to achieve trustworthiness. His suggested procedures encompass the trustworthiness criteria presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which are: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing, negative case analysis, member checks, providing thick description, compiling an audit trail, and producing a reflexive journal (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Creswell, 1998). As I adopted a qualitative research approach, I established trustworthiness of my research by implementing some of these techniques to meet the criteria.

Credibility. Credibility ensures that the interpretation presented by the researcher reflects what is intended to be communicated by the respondents. Sandelowski (1986) argues that credibility is enhanced when the researcher describes and interprets his or her own behaviour and experiences as a researcher in relation to the behaviour and experiences of the participants. Scruby (1999) suggests that the researcher's point of view should be described and treated as part of the data; and interpretations of observations by the researcher should be validated by and shared with the participants. I established credibility by implementing following techniques:

Member-checking. In my study the transcripts were reviewed and validated in subsequent interviews by the participants through member checking. Guba and Lincoln (1989) regarded member checks as ‘the single most critical technique for establishing credibility’ (p. 239).

Peer debriefing. Peer debriefing was used where my supervisor and thesis committee members reviewed the findings to enhance the accuracy of the accounts (Creswell, 2003).

Prolonged engagement. Repeated interviews were conducted among each participant. Each interview lasted for approximately ninety minutes or more. This resulted in prolonged engagement with the participants. Therefore, it enhanced credibility.

Transferability. Transferability may be thought of as parallel to external validity or generalizability for checking the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The researcher can not specify the transferability of findings; he or she can only provide sufficient information that can then be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my research I established transferability by providing “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the women’s experiences.

The “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) entails an extensive and careful description of human behaviour in such details that it explains not only the behaviour, but the context, cultures, histories, and politics that shape the behaviour and thusly it becomes more meaningful to an outsider. In this study, I explained resilience by examining the participants’ life stories within their own culture, and society as well as in Canadian

context. Therefore, it provided rich and detailed accounts of participants' experiences in order to facilitate transferability judgements on the part of others who may wish to apply the study to their own situations or in which they have an interest (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Dependability. Dependability is concerned with the stability of the data over time. Dependability can be achieved through the detailed and clear description of the study from problem identification, research participants' selection, interview transcripts, data analysis, and discussion. These aspects were sufficiently detailed in this study.

Confirmability. Confirmability ensures that the process is done correctly and acted in good faith. To achieve confirmability in my research, participants' own words were used to substantiate the interpretations of the data.

Summary

In this chapter I provided an overview of the research methodology that was adopted to address my research phenomenon of interest and to answer the research questions. My research study focused on recent Canadian immigrant women and explored their resilience in overcoming the adversity and crisis experienced during the process of immigration and integration within a new society and culture. Qualitative methodology was used for the research study. The aim of such inquiry is to seek information about the reality of the person or group being studied. Where investigation relates to the perceived reality of people, qualitative methods have been reported to be an effective way to conduct research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The qualitative researcher's task often consists of understanding and describing people and groups' particular situations and experiences in such a faithful way that the people having the experience

can recognize it from those descriptions or interpretations as their own (Sandelowski, 1986). Therefore, an understanding of these immigrant women can facilitate and support other immigrant women in their transition and integration process into Canadian society.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

In this chapter, I present the stories from each of the five participants which were the products of narrative analysis. This level one analysis preserves the life stories shared by each participant. In level second-level analysis, I looked across the five stories using thematic analysis. This level of data analysis revealed what was common and what was unique to the women's journeys. The major themes arose from the stories through thematic analysis.

The Participants

A brief description of the five participants is provided in advance of their stories. Five women: Pata, Panna, Diana, Anita, and Caroline volunteered to participate in this study. They were originally from four different countries. The countries were as follows: Bangladesh, India, Jordan, and Nigeria. The participants ranged in age from 31 to 44 years; the average age was 37. The participants came from different religious backgrounds: Three of them were Muslim, one was Hindu, and one was Christian. All women were married and had children. The participants accompanied their husbands. However, Caroline's husband returned back to Nigeria. With the exception of one participant, their children followed their parents to Canada. Anita's eldest daughter did not accompany her and stayed in India at the time of her interview.

Three participants lived abroad before immigrating to Canada. Pata lived in Germany to pursue her postgraduate degrees, while Panna and Diana lived in Japan and the USA respectively with their husbands. Anita and Caroline lived in their own countries before they came to Canada. Four participants immigrated under spouse/dependant

category. Only Anita immigrated as a skilled worker; and she was the principal applicant for immigration. With the exception of Anita, all participants had their siblings or their husbands' siblings living in North America or in other countries.

All participants were highly educated. Three of them held masters degrees, one held bachelor degree, and one held PhD degree. With the exception of Panna, all women had a professional career before immigrating to Canada. Diana, Anita, and Caroline were teachers. Pata was a scientist. Panna was a housewife. Three participants (Panna, Anita, and Caroline) worked survival jobs in Canada which were not aligned with their formal education. Pata worked in her area of specialization, while Diana took computer and language training to upgrade her skills. Outlined in Table 1 is the general demographic data of the participants.

Table 1: General demographic data of participants

Name	Age	Country of origin	Education	Religion	Immigration category	No of years in Canada	No of children
Pata	36 yrs	Bangladesh	PhD	Islam	Spouse	4 years	01
Panna	34 yrs	Bangladesh	Masters	Islam	Spouse	4years	02
Diana	31 yrs	Jordan	Bachelors	Islam	Spouse	2 years	03
Anita	44 yrs	India	Masters	Hindu	Skilled worker	10 months	03
Caroline	40 yrs	Nigeria	Masters	Christian	Spouse	9 months	04

A detailed description of the participants is presented in their stories. Within the stories, the source of the data is identified. All quotations from the participants' transcripts were coded with the following system.

Int=Interview number (e.g. Int 1, 2, 3)
p=Page number of participant's transcript (e.g. p 3, 4)
ln=Line number of participant's transcript (e.g. ln 35-39)
FN=Field notes

The stories

The five stories were the product of a first-level analysis that revealed the experiences of immigrant women and their resilience. Each story addressed life in her homeland, her journey to Canada, and her life in Canada. The women's stories, as presented in this chapter, were revealed in their reflections about their respective journeys. The stories were also constructed based on the women's experiences as told to me in their own words.

Pata: Life in the Homeland

Participant as Person

Pata is a Bangladeshi woman in her late thirties. She is a very confident, determined woman and she has a pleasant personality. She is easy to talk with and is always willing to share whatever she has. Growing up in a well educated family, Pata learned to value education very much. Soon after her graduation in Plant Genomics, she went online (Internet) and applied to a German university for her second master's degree in Horticulture. She received a scholarship from the German government. Later on she also pursued her PhD at the same university.

The early years. Pata grew up in a Muslim family with love and affection; she was the youngest of five children. Her father was a divisional accountant in a government organization in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. She has two brothers and two sisters who are highly educated and successful professionals in their fields of education.

During her early adolescence, she witnessed her father's sudden death which she accounts as a great loss in her life. After the death of her father, Pata and her siblings were raised by her mother who was a housewife. A very strong and dynamic woman, Pata's mother never let her children experience economic challenges after her husband's death; his pension and the savings in the bank helped them to lead a decent life.

I couldn't remember that we had problem with money. We didn't think that we had problem with money. May be my mother felt that she had problem but she never let us know that we had some problem. Even I did not face any type of difficulties during my study at university. Because—then my brother, he finished his bachelors and started to work. So he supported me a lot. (Int 1: p 5; ln 94-98)

Pata's eldest brother, an agriculture graduate, is a very supportive and caring man who shares the family responsibilities with his mother. He takes care of his younger brother and sisters and makes decisions. In effect, he serves as a surrogate father in the family. As Pata says, "...actually we asked my elder brother, what to do, so, he always gives us suggestion, till now, that what will be good or not" (Int 1: p 19; ln 408-409). She observes her brother's authority in the family. Even when Pata and her husband immigrated to Canada, her brother participated in their decision making process.

So he just asked my husband, go to Canada, may be my sister will stay here, you will get the house, get the apartment, get the job, then she will go. She will join you. But I don't allow you to bring her there and make trouble. (Int 1: p 20; ln 432-434)

Before recovering from her father's sudden death, Pata experienced another tragedy in her life. Her eight year old nephew whom she described as "our first son in our whole family, my sister's elder son" (Int 1: p 8; ln 173-174), was diagnosed with Aplastic anaemia and died within six months of his diagnosis.

The Later years. Pata met Abeer while she was completing her undergraduate degree at an Agriculture University in Bangladesh. He was a room-mate of one of Pata's

friends. Abeer was a brilliant student; caring, responsible, and very different from many other men she knows.

He was caring, very much caring, and very much responsible compare to some of my friends, I have many other friends in the university and compared to them he was not like them. (Int 1: p 11; ln 248-249)

Pata's decision to marry a man of her choice did not please her mother. As a traditional Bangladeshi mother, she wished her daughter to have an arranged marriage with either an engineer or a medical doctor; a man of status and good income.

My mother was not happy with my choice and she wanted me to marry either to a doctor or an engineer as my other two sisters, one married to a doctor and the other married to an engineer and my husband graduated in agriculture and my mother used to think that it was not a prestigious field to study....my mom forced me to marry to other person of her choice. (Int 1: p 10; ln 211-216)

Pata defied her mother's choice of an arranged marriage and decided to leave the country for further education. She was working as a scientific officer in an institute of Nuclear Agriculture. She planned to go to Germany to complete another master's degree. However, her mother arranged her wedding within seven days of Pata's intent to leave the country and marry the husband of her choosing. Her mother would have Panna marry another man whom she had never met in her life. The family would arrange the marriage. Pata resisted. She defied the betrothed family and upset the entire family dynamics. She stopped the marriage and left Bangladesh.

So I called the guy's brother and told him that I am engaged to another man and my parent is forcing to marry your brother. The guy insulted me a lot over phone but the wedding was cancelled. I went to Germany. (Int 1: p 10; ln 221-224)

Abeer went to Germany six months following Pata's departure from Bangladesh. He was accepted into a PhD program at another German university which was 600 km from the city in which Pata was living. Her mother was angry at Pata's defiance and

stopped talking to her. Pata's mother thought that they would get married in Germany and would never return to Bangladesh.

Life in Germany. Pata went to Germany in 2001 to pursue her second master's in Horticulture Science, funded by the German government. She was alone, worried, and upset when she embarked on her life in Germany. The challenges were many and included struggles with language, food, culture, and even the weather. Eventually she became accustomed with the changes in her life.

We are not used to this type of social and cultural events in Germany, so I was really worried and upset. I moved there, I was alone.... At the beginning I had trouble with the language and everything because we are not used to speak English. (Int 1: p 2, 26-27; ln 35-36)

There was a large Bangladeshi community in the city where Pata lived; however, most of them were not "professional" and many of them came to Germany without legal status. Pata visited them occasionally to get an opportunity to communicate in her language or to have ethnic food with them. Pata made friends with a few members of this community.

They are not professional, because they came to Germany as an asylum people and some of them don't have their papers....I think they liked us because we are students, but sometimes they don't want so much friendly with us....may be they feel shy or not comfortable. But some of them are really nice and I still have communication with them. (Int 1: p 4; ln 69-70, 74-76, 78-79)

Marriage and family. Abeer's family sent an official proposal to Pata's mother once Pata and Abeer came back to Bangladesh after two years of living in Germany. This time the mother gave her blessing. The wedding unfolded with family members and friends in attendance.

Pata and Abeer left Bangladesh only seven days after their marriage and started their new life in Germany. Pata moved to the city where Abeer was completing his PhD and she was admitted to a PhD program after six months. Life was blissful but simple; they were content but busy. After one year Pata became pregnant. During her pregnancy she developed gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia. She became unwell physically and mentally, and was disappointed with the emotional support she received from health care providers.

I had my doctor, a female doctor, at the beginning she was very nice, but was not caring like our country's doctor. I know that doctors in our country are very much caring, they provide advice about what to do, what to not. But there, they never said anything about the problem. (Int 1: p 1; ln 281-284)

Pata was admitted to the hospital ICU during her 32 weeks of pregnancy as her blood pressure became dangerously high and needed to be controlled. The physicians found her foetus (baby in the womb) lacking oxygen and decided to intervene with surgery to save the baby's life. She was born a tiny, little girl of only 1.6 kg. She was premature and was low-birth weight. The baby girl, Zara, was evacuated immediately after her birth to the children's hospital for incubation and further treatment. Zara was a patient there for five weeks.

She was pre matured and (her) weight was so less.... She was there (hospital) for 5 weeks. It was a big hospital, the biggest hospital in Germany and also very famous in world. Children's hospital....1200 Euro for her incubator but I didn't need to pay because I had a very good insurance. Every body in Germany had to pay insurance, that's why treatment in Germany is very, very good compared to Canada." (Int 1: p 13-14; ln 296, 298-301)

Pata was sad and distressed at seeing her baby girl in the incubator. She was so tiny, so fragile. Her weight was like a feather. How could she raise her poor little baby?

Though she was anxious, she was confident with the medical treatment and was never worried about Zara's health. Her faith in the German medical system helped her to cope with the stress she was experiencing as a mother.

“It was really frustrating, because when I saw the normal babies, I felt very bad, because my baby was not normal. But I never thought that it will be dangerous for her, because I was in a good country, I was in a good hospital in a good medical treatment, so I didn't think about the—about her health, but I was just thinking that she was very small, how I will raise her, but I was confident that she would be ok, fine. (Int 2: p 1-2; ln 18-22)

Pata and Abeer were overjoyed the morning they received a phone call from the children's hospital. Zara was ready to come home. The home was not ready to receive the baby—no bath tub, no baby cot, no toys. Pata was sick after the Caesarean Section and Abeer was busy with his PhD, taking care of his wife, and visiting their daughter in the hospital. They did not find time to arrange for her arrival. Pata was thrilled, but at the same time nervous, with the thought of holding her premature baby. There was no one available to support, not even any Bangladeshi. They rushed to the hospital.

because she was born so early we didn't have any kind of preparation what we need to buy, any time to go there as I was sick after the operation, and my husband was very busy to see her daughter, to see me, we didn't have anything....then we rented a car, with a small car seat, then we went to the hospital to pick our baby (laugh), I was asking my husband how I will hold her because she was so small—I don't know how to—I was very scared actually, even no one was with me. There is completely no one, even no Bangladeshi. (Int 2: p 2; ln 30-36)

Zara was growing well and gaining weight. It brought joy to their life; they were happy. However, only after two weeks Zara's paediatrician found a hernia in one of her inguinal regions which necessitated an operation. With dismay Pata started crying. Zara was too small. How could she bear the load of surgery? Abeer consoled his wife. His solace facilitated her coping with the stress and frustration of Zara's situation. Pata prayed to God. Her faith also offered her comfort.

That was really terrible, she was very small, and she needs again operation. I was just crying there, but what to do.... very bad time I passed and....I always prayed, I try my best to pray five times a day....and he (husband) is stronger than me and just convinced me that it will be fine, don't worry.” (Int 2: p 3-4; ln 60-61, 72, 79-80)

Pata's supervisor was very kind and permitted Pata to bring her baby to the lab.

Pata was content with the support she received from the institute. Zara received plenty of gifts from both the departments where Pata and Abeer completing their PhD.

My boss, my supervisor, my professor was very nice. So he allowed me to come with my child to the lab.... I got support from my institute, from my department. And what they give to me a set of clothes and I think she wore those clothes up to 3 years, so many clothes. Even my husband's institute, they gave the stroller; they gave the bathtub, so they were very good. (Int1: p 17; ln 376-377, 380-383)

Pata's mother came to Germany when Zara was six month old and she stayed with them for three months. Pata was relieved when her mother took over all of the responsibilities. Everything seemed wonderful and perfect with the attendance of her mother. Zara started gaining weight. She looked fresh and became more beautiful.

I didn't think about anything, what is going on, so my mother tackled everything. She could handle everything. In three months, my daughter looks like a different baby....She was not like as three months ago. So after three months even I could not recognize my baby, really very, very beautiful, gaining weight, looking fresh, really very nice. (Int 1: p 17; ln 370-374)

The Journey to Canada

Decision making. Pata and Abeer completed their PhDs in 2007. They started searching for new jobs in Bangladesh while they were in Germany. Their goal was to be professors at a Bangladeshi university and build their careers in academe. Teaching was their passion. They wanted to teach at the agriculture university from where Pata and Abeer had graduated. It was the best agriculture university in Bangladesh.

We were trying to get a job at the university, only at the university because our aim was to get a job at university. Only at my university, because it is a very big university in Bangladesh. (Int 1: p 18; ln 398-400)

Pata and Abeer were so passionate about their careers in academe that they did not explore other employment opportunities. At the same time they were aware of the systemic and political barriers that existed in Bangladesh. They applied to obtain immigration to Canada as a backup plan should their attempts to build a career in academe in Bangladesh not work out. Their second choice was to live in was Canada, the 'land of opportunity'. They did not want to stay in Germany or any other non-English speaking country.

Pata and Abeer obtained Canadian immigration within nine months of submitting their application while they were in Germany. They came back to Bangladesh with little Zara in 2007. They wanted to be with their family for a while, to stay with them, and to relax.

We came back to Bangladesh in 2007.... that time I already got the immigration. It took me only nine months....we are trying to English-speaking country. Germany is not English speaking. So, we never tried for that. (Int 1: p 18, 19; ln 394-396, 414-415)

Pre-Immigration knowledge of Canada. Pata and Abeer knew a little about immigrants' lives in Canada. They had heard of unemployment among immigrants; however, they did not realize its severity. As Pata said, "We knew that but we didn't realize actually" (Int 1: p 19; ln 422). In contrast, Abeer's brother's version about Canadian life was encouraging. Abeer's elder brother was a citizen of Canada. He moved to Canada from the United States after completing a post-graduate degree in Engineering. He had a good job and professional associates. He had not experienced the hardships that

many educated professional immigrants encounter. Abeer's brother's description also influenced Pata and Abeer in their decision to start a new life in Canada.

My husband's brother, he is an engineer, and he got experience from US. When he came here in months he got good job. So, his surrounding I mean association is very different. He did not know about any problem....they have almost fifteen friends from the same university, and they all are doing professional jobs here, all are really very good. They never know what is happening here in Canada. (Int 1: p 20, 19; ln 450-452, 454-456)

Moving to Canada. Once Pata and Abeer made the decision to move to Canada, they started exploring opportunities through the Internet. After investigating different websites, they decided to move to Windsor, a city in South-western Ontario, which was one of the fastest growing cities in Canada at that time. Windsor is also known for the reputation of its University and its agricultural college. Pata and Abeer have specialized in the area of agriculture. Therefore, Windsor would be the best place for them to start a new life.

There is a big university and our subject is related to agriculture and Windsor is a very big university in general, but agriculture faculty is very big. That's why he came. (Int 1: p 20; ln 437-439)

The decision to move to Windsor was influenced by three factors. First, the university had a Faculty of Agriculture. Second, Abeer's elder brother and his family lived in Oakville which is closer to Windsor. Finally, they want to stay in Ontario—a vibrant Province of Canada and the hub of the Canadian economy. Pata and Abeer knew a little about other provinces and regions of Canada.

...also my elder brother-in-law is in Oakville so it's nearer, that's why and also we want to stay in Ontario....and at that time we didn't know much. (Int 1: p 20; ln 442-443)

Abeer came to Windsor in May, 2007. He came alone to settle down first and explore the opportunities in person. Pata and Zara followed him after four months in September.

Leaving the homeland. Leaving one's home country and families is always difficult and painful. However, Pata had the experience earlier when she left Bangladesh and lived in Germany for six years. Additionally, Pata was thrilled to begin a new life in Canada and have her own family. In Germany, Pata and Abeer were students. Now, in Canada they would build their new life and home as a family. Pata had a dream of her own home.

I was thinking that now I will get my own family. Because in Germany we were not a family, we were just a student. So may be here I will have my own family life. So, I was a little bit excited. Even I bought many things, like curtain for my house, so I have a very good dream for my own family. It will be my own, because, I will start my own family life in Canada. So, with my little daughter, I was really, really very happy. (Int 1: p 21; ln 459-463)

Pata packed up to move halfway around the world to begin a new life in a foreign country. She left behind her beautiful motherland where she grew up. She left behind her family with whom she grew up. Pata carried with her only her graduate certificates, her wedding jewellerys, and some pictures from her childhood. The most precious thing she brought was her memories.

Only my certificates (laugh), lot of certificates and my jewellerys, some pictures of my childhood, family, university. I bring my memories. (Int 1: p 22; ln 478-479)

Reaching Canada. It took twenty two hours to fly from Bangladesh to Canada. Pata and Zara arrived in Canada during the autumn of 2007. Pata had been waiting excitedly to meet her husband. She dressed her daughter, Zara in a Bangladeshi

traditional dress to show her father how beautifully she had grown up. Zara ran to her dad's arm once she saw him at the airport.

I was just waiting to show my daughter to my husband. Because in several months, she grew fast, she was looking very nice and even when I landed in the airport, I took the luggage, I went to the washroom, to dress my daughter with shelwar-kamij (Bangladeshi traditional dress) I just wanted to show her to my husband, how your daughter looks like—full Bangladeshi. He was very happy to see his daughter and when my daughter saw him, she just ran to him. (Int 1: p 22; In 487-491)

Pata reached Windsor; her new home. The rented apartment was beautifully decorated with some used furniture that Abeer bought through Kijiji. Pata and Abeer began their new life in a new country.

Life in Canada

Initial days in Canada. As with many immigrants, Pata experienced quite the opposite of what she expected. To her dismay, Pata found that entering the professional community was not going to be easy. Abeer's first work was with Cargill, a beef company. His second job was with a computer company. Both of these employment situations were survival jobs in a foreign country. Abeer's advanced qualifications did not help him to secure a good job in this 'land of opportunity'. They did not come here out of desperation, rather to build their future careers. Pata was disappointed.

He was working...in Cargill, a beef company, so he got the job, odd job, not a good job. He has to find a survival job. He worked there for two months. Then in September, when I came he got this job, it was not really a good job, but in a computer company. It was a survival job too. (Int 1: p 24; In 528-532)

It was autumn in Canada. The leaves began transforming into stunning shades of orange, red, and yellow. As the brightly coloured tree contrasted with the grey skies, Pata found her new life very pale in contrast to her colourful dream. Life in Canada was

not simple; at least not for these new immigrants. Canada with its big open spaces, extreme weather, and different way of living made life complex (FN 2).

Pata did not have a car. They had to use the city transport for day to day activities such as doing grocery, shopping, physician visits, and other outside activities. It was cold and Pata had to wait for long periods of time on the street for the bus to arrive. Pata was unfamiliar with these new life events. She was upset. She felt like a “street beggar”.

It was fall, it was very nice weather....the bad experience I had was the transport. I don't have car....one day I went to shop in Wal-Mart and it was cold, and I was just waiting and bus was not coming, even they don't know when the bus will come. I don't have this type of experience before....in my home, we have our own car. So we never have this type of problems, I felt like a street beggar. I was really very upset. (Int 1: p 23; ln 502-509)

Pata was raised in a middle class family in Bangladesh. They did not live a life of luxury, but they had a contented life. They had supportive and caring family members. Pata was saddened by her situation in Canada. Pata resisted. She compelled her husband to buy a car, “I asked my husband, I am not going any where else until you buy a car” (Int 1: p 23; ln 509-510). Abeer was a thoughtful and caring husband; he bought the car.

He bought the car in the same month (Laugh), in September, and I had that bad experience for two weeks. Because he knew that how I was raised in my family and how my brother took care of me. Even he had some work in office; he left the car for me. They were very much caring. So my husband knew that I can not tolerate this (laugh). (Int 1: p 23; ln 516-519)

Disappointments in life. Pata and Abeer obtained their PhDs from Germany, a country in the central Europe. The universities of Germany are internationally recognised for their high standards of education. Pata and Abeer were optimistic to have a better career in Canada with their advanced qualifications. They applied for a research grant once they decided to pursue a post doctorate fellowship. To their dismay, neither of them

could secure any grant. The rejection brought significant disappointment in their lives.

They considered going back to Bangladesh.

....none of us got this. That was the most frustrating time for us. He (husband) was just crying—what I will do now, we were just waiting for this, only for this. We both applied; at least one can get this.... we two are having PhD, at least one can get this, and none of us got it. It was frustrating...it was really very frustrating and also we were thinking to go back to Bangladesh. (Int 1: p 24-25; ln 543-550)

Abeer was enrolled in a college to obtain a certificate in environmental engineering. The college was located in another city, a one hour drive from Windsor. At the same time, he had been continuing as part time worker in the same computer company he was working to support the family and pay the bills. The hope was to obtain an employment once completing the one year certificate program. Abeer could not secure any employment. Another disappointment in life.

the whole time...it was very frustrating, what we will do with our education, so we planned to—by this time my husband enrolled to a college, for environmental engineer preparation and there is a chance for co-op, so if he got the co-op, then he could join the company again. But he didn't get co-op. because he was, may be—I don't know why he didn't get, because in his batch, in his college there were some Indian people, no body got this....He struggled a lot....he did so many things, he didn't get any. (Int 1: p 27; ln 592-597, 601, 607)

Pata stayed at home and raised her child. She was not working. She was not ready to accept jobs which were not aligned with her education. Pata was sad; her heart was broken.

Life events and discontent. Pata experienced several miscarriages once she came to Canada. When she was unsuccessful in obtaining a post doctoral fellowship, she planned to stay at home and have another baby. She wanted to conceive. Pata had negative experience with her previous pregnancy. Although she was aware of the risk of complications in successive pregnancies, she found that her physician was not very

concerned about her. Moreover, waiting for several hours in emergency room jeopardized her health.

....in Windsor, I need to go to hospital, two times, I had miscarriages, I called emergency and I went there and I had to stay in the emergency six hours without any treatment... I was crying, because of pain...., in Windsor, when I got pregnant I explained everything to him because I had bad experience for my first child.....He never checked my blood pressure, he never checked my....anything, he never checked anything. (Int 1: p 14; ln 303-311, 323)

The miscarriages had a profound effect upon Pata. She became depressed and physically sick. She developed acid reflux which caused severe abdominal pain and vomiting. Pata and Abeer did not have a drug plan. She could not afford to purchase the medicine she needed.

There are several groups of drugs I think....two dollars for each tablet. And first time he gave me ninety, ninety tablets (laugh) and we don't have drug plan. Even I don't have job. He has the job only. So, I had to buy all the medicine....I couldn't afford so much money; even I don't want it. (Int 2: p 8; ln 148-152)

Pata felt lonely and frustrated. She could not obtain the job she had envisioned. She conceived thrice and lost her babies. Her dreams were turning into nightmares. She called her sister in Bangladesh to share her sorrow. She had no family or friends around to offer her support. She was shattered with these painful life events. She wanted to go home, stay with her mother, and comfort her soul. Pata went back to her homeland in December, 2009.

My experience was very bad, because when I didn't get any work, I think then now I could have a baby, so I was trying to conceive, that was not successful, because of miscarriages I didn't have baby, I tried three times, three miscarriages, and then I stopped. Then I asked my husband that I need to go home, back home, I wanted to stay with my mom for some days. (Int 1: p 26; ln 587-590)

Not giving up. Pata is a very strong and autonomous woman. She was determined in her quest to survive such unforeseen challenges. She became actively involved in

searching for career opportunities through the Internet and at different universities from across Canada. At the same, she was sending a blitz of e-mails to make connections with professional people (i.e. professors, researchers) who were the gate-keepers in her field of specialization. She took the advantage of technology. Extreme weather, different culture, or geography could not prevent Pata from her active involvement in searching for opportunities. Pata was not ready to concede defeat.

I have started to write to all the scientists. I started writing in 2008, in my field, so most of them no fund, some of them said I have some funds coming up, so keep in touch. I wrote them 3 or 4 times, 2008 and 2009....They have a website, in my area....they have 16 centers throughout Canada, I applied. (Int 1: p 26; Ln 568-572)

Like many immigrants, Pata found it challenging to secure work in her profession in this new country. However, the day to day challenges could not thwart her from her active agency in life. She never gave up. In addition, she helped her husband apply for better employment as Abeer was burdened with family responsibilities.

Every time I was pursuing, pursuing, writing to the scientists, writing to the professors, I was just like glue, I think three months and then I was writing to the same person, just to remind him, even I wrote letter on behalf of my husband too, because he didn't have time, he had to take care of the whole family, I had to write for him. (Int 2: p 10-11; Ln 209-213)

Pata kept looking for ways to build her career in Canada. Pata took several driving lessons and obtained her licence. She observed that having a driver's licence was an important criterion for many occupations. "I just passed driving in once. I took ten lessons, and passed. It was first time driving...." (Int 2: p 9; Ln 172-173). As a Canadian professor advised her, "you have to come and knock on the door to the professors and say I am here" (Int 3: p 10; Ln 188-189), Pata sustained her efforts to connect with the gate-

keepers, the Canadian mentors in the system who might help her. She sent out e-mails as if they were darts, hoping they land somewhere and someone would respond.

I really did that. I went to the university very often....I started to write to the professors as master degree or whatever they offer me. And I went to meet several professors to give me a chance. (Int 3: p 10; ln 190-194)

Pata is a survivor. She strives tirelessly for her dreams. She is determined in every day of acts of resistance. She knew that she would never end up her career with menial jobs. If needed, she would complete another master degree and start her career in another field.

I never tried to go to Tim Horton. I never think about it actually. I was trying to get my professional one. If I didn't get, I may be--I would start from the beginning. (Int 3: p 10; ln 197-198)

Given an opportunity. Pata received an e-mail from a professor of University of Windsor. Pata had sought his help and he was one of the recipients of her e-mail darts. The professor offered her a position as a research assistant in his lab even though Pata did not have previous knowledge or experience in this particular field. It was a wonderful opportunity; one that she had been waiting for during the last two and half years. After working hard for two months in his lab under his supervision Pata started working and doing research independently. She worked with him for 5 months until she obtained the post doctoral fellowship at a research centre in Lethbridge and left Windsor.

The professor was very much kind. I didn't have any experience, but when I said that I didn't have any job, and I want to get some experience....he took me as part time research assistant, working in the lab....(Int 1: p 26; ln 578-580)

Pata believes that having a Canadian mentor is important for immigrants to enter in the Canadian system. Canada is a growing country. Opportunities for immigrants never come easily and without active agency. As she says, "Canadians don't say job

seeking, they say job hunting” (Int 3: p 18; ln 371). Immigrants need to be very optimistic, active, and resilient in the every day acts of living.

So you have to hunt your job here, so you have to be very, very active, very much concerned.... if you get disappointed and just leave it then you will not get anything. (Int 3: p 18; ln 372-375)

A new start at Lethbridge. After a long wait, Pata obtained a post doctoral fellowship at a research centre in Lethbridge. It took her three years to acquire the fellowship. Pata and Abeer had to compromise—which ever one of them would get a better job, the other will be supportive. Pata’s new job is a visiting fellowship in a government laboratory which has a professional designation. Her new position is better than the one held by Abeer. Therefore, Abeer has come along with her to Lethbridge.

We had a compromise, actually I had a compromise with my husband, because both of we are qualified, if anyone got a good job we will go for that. So if I get any he will come with me. Here, my job is better compared to his job. So he just came with me. (Int 1: p 29-30; ln 657-660)

It was fall in Lethbridge. The city and surrounding landscape were coloured in various shades of yellow and gold . Pata finds her life here bright and colourful too.

Pata moved to Lethbridge with her husband and daughter in 2010. Their new journey begins. At last Pata is happy now as she has a professional job. “I am feeling very good, this is my professional work; my boss is very nice and very hard working. I am enjoying my work” (Int 1: p 31; ln 702-703). However, deep inside her, she admits that coming to Canada may have been a wrong choice. Pata recommends that people should come at their young age and before obtaining advanced academic credentials. Consequently, they can benefit from Canadian education and experience, and be adequately prepared for a successful career.

Still I think it was a bad decision coming to Canada....I felt very badly. It was our mistake to come here without any job....and the other things—if we give

suggestions to other people—if they want to come to Canada they should come in the early stage, they should not do this academic career outside but from Canada, they should come much early.... And then they can start....they can even start under grad then they will get their experience, education then they will get a good job. (Int 2: p 11-12; ln 218, 226, 230-236)

Abeer is unable to find employment in the field related to his education and expertise. He has followed Pata to Lethbridge. It is a difficult decision to take; however, Abeer is thoughtful and supportive. He is helping Pata to be successful even though he is under a lot of stress. The constant worry in their daily life does not reportedly affect their relationship.

...all kind of support, even he helps me to write my CV (laugh), even to publish my articles, even my thesis, so every where, correction, edition. Even mailing and sometimes I think that my English is not good so he did the correction, writing my cover letter (laugh). (Int 3: p 10; ln 207-209)

Pata and Abeer had to overcome many hurdles. However, they are supportive of each other. Though, Pata's present job is not a permanent one and she may have to move to another place in search of a new job. Pata is also concerned about Abeer's career.

If I don't get a permanent job then I have to move to wherever I get the job. But still I need to think about my husband too. I don't know if he gets a job here permanently or not. So, if he is here, if he gets permanent job, then I will try my best to get a job here. (Int 3: p 4; ln 74-76)

Post immigration experiences. As with many other immigrants, Pata and Abeer came to Canada to advance their careers, to offer their daughter a good future, and to obtain a secure life for them. In contrast, they found little opportunity for their career advancement.

We said ok we will go to Canada, a big country and we are going to Guelph it's a very big university, hopefully we will get some thing there. We will get a good job, my husband will get a good job, and my daughter will find a good environment....so that was the dream. (Int 3: p 18; ln 359-362)

In addition to the barriers that Pata has faced to advance her career, the sudden change in environment, lack of emotional ties with others, and her cultural and religious concerns relating to childrearing practices greatly influence her new life in Canada.

Growing up in Bangladesh, Pata spent a wonderful childhood in a culture which was richly family-oriented. During her childhood, Pata used to engage in every social and religious event with her family and friends. Pata maintains this connection. She calls her family in Bangladesh every Sunday. “Sunday at home, cooking, and talking to my family.... I have a very good relationship with my brothers and sisters and in laws because I always try to communicate to all of them” (Int 2: p 23; ln 456-459). This communication is crucial in her life and enables her to be resilient in the face of loneliness. It is with the family that she finds solace. Pata finds this connection invaluable.

When I had no job, I, we didn't have good time, I asked my husband that I have only one demand to you. I don't buy any thing, I don't need to buy anything, I have everything—no jewelleries, I don't need to buy jewelleries, make ups like that, so my only expense is talking to my country. (Int 2: p 23; ln 471-474)

Pata finds the Canadian way of living completely different to her way of living. She finds Canadians not so friendly. “One difference is social life, which is completely different from us. Sometimes the people are not so friendly, even in my office” (Int 2: p 19; ln 381-382). Pata mostly socializes with others in her own ethno-cultural community. This socialization centres on celebrating religious festivals, pot lucks, or barbeque parties. She also socializes with women from other ethnic groups whom she worked with; however, these women are work colleagues and not friends.

They are actually from my work place. Some of my colleagues, some of my technicians, they are my friends, we work in the same place and they help me a

lot. I went their house and some of them came to my house too. (Int 3: p 8; ln 147-149)

Pata has a strong sense of belonging to the culture of Bangladesh and wants to share it with her daughter, Zara. Pata insists Zara speak her language at home, “Bengali. Bengali, she speaks with me, sometimes with her father and she speaks too much. With her toys, her babies, she always speaks English. Sometimes she wants to speak English but I force her not to” (Int 2: p 21; ln 420-422). Here in Canada, children are not exposed as much to the traditions and customs. Pata creates opportunities to educate Zara about her family heritage, her customs, and her culture so that she does not forget them.

My kid is missing many things. In Bangladesh, children are celebrating festivals with their parents and relatives.... they are celebrating their birthdays with families, and there are lot of occasions, meeting with people....which is much more than here. So, here our kids, they don't mix up here.... They are not learning to respect other; particularly to respect the elderly....That is what our culture is. Now I have to practice this culture here so that my daughter will learn to show respect. She has to learn to call to her grandma, aunt, uncle to get blessing on different occasion....So it's my responsibility to teach her. (Int 2: p 19, 20; ln 384-395)

Zara attends mosque with her father. She knows that she is a Muslim and needs to eat Halaal food (Halaal means “allowed”. Halaal foods are foods which are permissible to eat according to Islamic law). Pata ensures that her daughter learns to practice her faith. At the same time, she wants her daughter to learn the good things inherent in Canadian culture. Pata wants to connect the two cultures in such a way that no damage or harm happens to her daughter.

During Christmas my daughter asked me why we don't celebrate Christmas. It's difficult to answer the question. It's difficult to establish in her mind that we could not, well we could but the first priority is our own festivals. Now she knows like Indian people she said Hindi, Canadians—they are English, and we are Muslims. (Int 2: p 22; ln 432-435)

Pata sometimes feels tired of the tyranny of her routine life. She has many responsibilities. In addition to the role of a mother and a wife, the nature of her work as a researcher makes her family life difficult. In addition, in adjusting to life in Canada, Pata has to negotiate and juggle her many additional responsibilities. Pata finds no time of her own or for herself.

Family life in Canada is a little bit difficult here. I come back normally at 4:30 to 5. Just come and shower, praying, then I have only 1 or 2 hours with my daughter. Then I become busy with cooking. Then at 8 to 8:30 we go for dinner. At 9:30 she is in the bed. Very bad time actually, busy and same routine everyday. I feel bored. In Friday I really feel exhausted. (Int 3: p 1; ln 3-11)

Pata observes that racism and discrimination exist in Canada. Pata feels that her country of origin and brown skin colour sometimes place her in a disadvantaged position. Even her six year old daughter turns out to be the victim of discrimination by her friends.

My daughter faces lot of trouble here in school....Sometimes she complains me that some boys said that they didn't like her. Even some girls too, they didn't want to play with her. And the teacher was also not having good behaviour with them. (Int 3: p 15; ln 299, 301-303)

Pata receives little support from Bangladeshi community. To her disappointment, Pata discovers that some Bangladeshi immigrants, who achieved success in their professional fields, are not supportive to other new immigrants as expected. Pata finds that her ethno cultural community mostly offers social and religious ties.

My husband went to visit one of the professors...from Bangladesh, and he....worked at the university....He just said that 'I don't know anyone and I can't do anything for you'. That was very disappointing. No one has done actually—to get a job or to get any support, or even advice, like do it, go there—never. (Int 3: p 11; ln 220-221, 228-232)

Suggestions for new immigrants. Language is the most important vehicle for immigrants to reorient themselves in their new context. Therefore, Pata suggests that immigrants learn one of Canada's two official languages before coming to Canada.

Immigrant women need to be smart and intelligent and share their knowledge with others. “Try to be smart and intelligent too....you have to expose yourself that what you are....you know much better than many other Canadian people” (Int 3: p 9; ln 171, 173-174).

Immigrants need to compromise in making adjustments to the host country. They need to strike a balance in keeping their own culture and at the same time accepting Canadian culture, “your social culture, try to keep this but not so tightly and you have to accept Canadian Culture, but beside we have to keep your own culture, right?” (Int 3: p 9; ln 167-169)

Pata discovers higher education as a major barrier in order to adjust to life in Canada because of the difficulties in finding employment. Pata recommends obtaining some Canadian education or training.

If you have education in your own country, try to get some more from here. There are lot of colleges and universities, or some vocabulary training from training institute, if you want to get job. Don’t go to McDonalds or to the Tim Horton, just for work and pay check and try to do some thing good. (Int 3: p 9; ln 177-180)

Pata finds that immigrant women in Canada can be more vulnerable and possibly in abusive situations because of their socio-cultural position, language barriers, dependency on husbands or family, and fearful of the legal system. According to Pata, women need to have their own voice, to have their own position in the family and society, and to be aware of their rights.

I want to say—women should have some voice of their own. They should have their position in their family and society....Women should be aware of their rights. (Int 3: p 19; ln 389-392)

Major achievements in life. Pata works in a large organization. Soon she will attend some international conferences where she will present her research work. Pata also

plans to publish her research work in some international journals. Working with many reputable scientists in this organization is a great achievement for her. Pata believes that her present experience will help her to obtain a better career in future.

The journey continues. Pata and Abeer came to Canada with a dream to have a secure life, successful career, and good health care. However, the transition process of immigrating to the new country was not easy. To adjust to life in Canada, Pata has to negotiate many things. Yet, Pata is optimistic about a better future. Overall, Pata is happy with her life in Canada.

We are happy because we are not going back....we got used to Canadian life, we don't want to go back to home. (Int 3: p 19; 382, 385)

Panna: Life in the Homeland

Participant as person. Panna was born in a Muslim family in a small town in Bangladesh. A sober and humble individual, Panna mirrors typical Bangladeshi women who are mostly subservient, modest, and remain silent in the presence of others. Panna is a petite woman, small in stature, and having a kind, soft personality.

Panna is the youngest child of her parents; having three sisters and one brother. Her elder sister lives in Australia with her family. Her two sisters and one brother live in Bangladesh. Panna grew up in a small town where she attended high school. She left the town and moved to a larger city to attend higher education at the university there.

The early years. Panna comes from an extended family. She used to live with her own parents, her grandparents, her uncles and aunts, and some of twenty cousins. Her extended family is an integral part of her daily life where every one shares every matter with each other. The family runs their inherited business. The family has its own culture; the eldest member makes the decisions on behalf of the family. After the death of her

grandfather, her grandmother became the head of the family. It was only when Panna was twenty two that her father and six uncles began to live independently. This decision was supported by the grandmother. One of her uncles moved to Kuwait. Panna treasures her childhood memories.

I like this life, because lots of sharing....that time I share with my cousins, sometimes with my aunt-uncle, and I respect all the time my grandma (Int 1: p 3; ln 62-64)

Panna speaks of a wonderful childhood. The locus of the family is love and affection for one another. Being the eldest daughter-in-law in the family, Panna's mother has to carry out many responsibilities as is the custom of the family. "My mother was the elder daughter-in-law; so she has to follow some duties and responsibilities, such as she had to make the tea and breakfast for my grandma every morning" (FN 1). Panna enjoys the ritual of her family. She grows up as a woman who is polite to others, who sacrifices for others, and who shows respect to others.

The later years. Panna moved to a larger city to complete her higher education. She lived at the university dormitory. She had many friends with whom she had spent most of her days. They had fun together, they enjoyed parties, and they celebrated festivals together. Panna cherishes those days she spent with her friends at the university.

I feel bad, I miss that. When I was in the university, and I wore sari and put flowers (laugh) in my hair, and I went to the mela (exhibition) with my friends, lots of talking, fun, and this and that, those were wonderful, I miss those days. (Int 2: p 12; ln 352-354)

In respecting to her family traditions, Panna agreed to an arranged marriage with someone whom her parents had chosen for her. Shakur was Panna's second cousin and she had met Shakur only once before she was officially engaged to him. Shakur was pursuing his PhD in Japan when his parents sent an official proposal to Panna's family.

The decision was made by her parents; Panna had no choice. “My parents asked me, you have any choice? Then I told, no, I have no choice. Your choice is my choice” (Int 1: p 5; ln 96-97). They were engaged over the phone while Shakur was in Japan and Panna was in Bangladesh.

Marriage and family. Panna was twenty six years old when she married Shakur. The wedding ceremony took place with almost one thousand invited guests in attendance. The marriage brought major changes in her life. Change in relationship brings change in responsibilities. Panna was very attentive to her in-laws.

After marriage....I was very attentive to my father-in-law and mother-in-law, and also sister-in-law, and brother-in-law too (laugh), because my parent’s family and my in-laws family are different. I mean, I got married; the relationship became different, changed. (Int 2: p 3; ln 80-83)

Shakur came to Bangladesh from Japan to get married and he was there for only eighteen days. Panna describes those days as most exciting of her life. It was very short period of time for a newly wed couple who did not know each other. Though Panna could not go to honeymoon with her husband, those days seemed celebratory to her.

So fantastic—(laugh), everything was nice, because it was very short time, my husband and me we together—only eighteen days—everyday was like honeymoon (laugh) (Int 2: p 3; ln 95-96)

Shakur left Bangladesh eighteen days after his marriage to Panna. From Japan he sent all the documents that were necessary for Panna to obtain her visa. Her husband made the decision for her and Panna followed her husband to Japan after three months. Pata was worried as she had never traveled alone. Her parents were sad. Pata was ambivalent about her future and she was anxious.

My husband sent all documents from Japan, as I need to apply for visa, then I got visa, and I was little bit worried—where I am going, my husband was there but

where I am going? Because I didn't know anything about Japan, then my mom, dad, everybody is in Bangladesh, I feel nervous, my parents were sad, they cried a lot. (Int 2: p 4; ln 99-103)

Panna became pregnant after a few months and gave birth to her first son in Japan. She found the Japanese people very friendly and family-oriented. Sanda, a Japanese lady helped her throughout her pregnancy and took care of her as a mother. "I am like her daughter. When I become pregnant, that time she called me all time, and came to my place, and...lots of help she did" (Int 2: p 5; ln 125-130).

Panna found the health care service in Japan very good, modern, and supportive. The health care service was free and there was no need to wait for a prolonged period of time at the ER to obtain the treatment. "In Japan, health care services are very, very good. If you go to the hospital, emergency, no need time, I mean no waiting....it is too fast. I am happy with the service" (Int 2, p 7; ln 181-183). She stayed one week at the hospital after the birth of her child. The health care providers showed her how to breast feed, care for her child, and even how to bathe the baby. Panna was happy.

This is a Japanese rule that when my son was born, then I stayed one week at the hospital, and they taught me everything how to shower, breastfeeding or how to change the dress and how to carry the baby, everything. (Int 2: p 7; ln 186-188)

Life in Japan. Panna began her family life in Japan. A new beginning in a new country; Panna found everything different and difficult. Panna needed to learn the language to communicate with people, to do grocery shopping, and to use public transportation.

I learnt a little bit Japanese language, I can talk to people, I need to do grocery, buy grocery, for transportation so I need to talk to them. (Int 2: p 6; ln 161-162)

Panna was not fond of Japanese food. The local stores did not provide her ethnic food. Therefore, Panna had to order her ethnic food over the phone with some

Bangladeshi grocery stores in other cities and had the groceries delivered to her apartment. Panna preferred to cook ethnic food most of her time.

Panna lived in an apartment where she found two other Bangladeshi families as her neighbours. Whenever Panna felt lonely, she could call or visit them. They were the source of her emotional support in this foreign country.

I had Bangladeshi neighbour, so sometimes I felt lonely but when I feel alone I called them, and could go them, or they come to my home....yes I got support from them. (Int 2: p 6; ln 169-170, 179)

In Japan, Panna worked as teaching assistant in an English medium elementary school. She participated in an English course and was offered the job. It was in a kindergarten where Panna assisted teachers of grade one to three.

I did work. They have an English medium elementary school, that's like kindergarten...so I work as a teacher, looks like teacher- an assistant to the teacher. (Int 2: p 6; ln 172-174)

Shakur completed his PhD in 2003. After living for four and half years in Japan Panna and Shakur came back to Bangladesh with their only son, Shafin.

Coming back home. Panna and Shakur started their life in a small town in Bangladesh. Shukor was a professor at the local university. Life was simple and pleasurable. Their only son, Shafin, was growing under the infinite blue sky. Shakur was ambitious. He was searching for a better opportunity for himself and his family. Shakur secured a job at Dhaka University, the most reputed university of Bangladesh. Shakur moved to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Panna and Shafin followed him.

In fact my husband was planning to move to Dhaka University....then he got the job at Dhaka University. I think it was in 2005, March or April. So we moved to Dhaka. (Int 3: p 1; ln 11-14)

Panna was a housewife. Her husband was a professor at a university, a man of status and good income. They lived in a middle class neighbourhood. Panna was happy and content. She had conceived again. Robin was born in 2006 and completed the family picture.

The journey to Canada

Decision making. While doing PhD in Japan, Shakur planned to settle down abroad. They decided to immigrate to Australia as Panna's elder sister was living there. However, immigration to Australia did not work for Shakur as he could not fulfil the required criteria for Australian immigration. The second choice was Canada. The Canadian immigration system is different where skills of immigrants under the economic category are measured by a point system. Shakur met the criteria for Canadian economic immigrant category. Therefore, the decision to immigrate to Canada was made in 2001 when Shakur was in his 2nd year of PhD program.

Shakur went to Germany to attend an international conference in 2003 and there he met a professor from Canada. The professor showed interest in his research work. They continued the communication through the Internet. In March, 2003 Shakur completed his PhD and returned to Bangladesh with his family. Shakur applied for permanent residency (immigration) for Canada before he left Japan.

When my husband was a PhD student; and in his 2nd year in 2001 we decided to apply for immigration to Canada....we applied in 2nd week of March and our flight (to Bangladesh) was on March 27, 2003. (Int 3: p 2, 1; In 38-39, 4)

Pre-Immigration knowledge of Canada. Like many other immigrants who come to Canada every year, Shakur and Panna had heard that Canada offered security in life and a very good education system. There were no political issues that affected day to

day life. In contrast, life in Bangladesh was full of tension, insecurity, corruption, and political unrest. Life was peaceful in Canada. It was heaven on earth.

First - life security is good and education system....in my country, there are lots of political issues happen, here is no political unrest, nothing, I like that. And police activity, I mean, law enforcement, that is very active and I like that. This is too much active, the police, in my own country, this is very much slow, the process, so life is peaceful here. (Int 1: p 7; ln 141; Int 2: 8; ln 215-218)

There is also down side of immigrants' life in Canada. Panna knows that it is difficult to have a professional job and life is challenging for some people who do not get jobs as expected. However, jobs requiring less education or 'odd jobs' are available.

Immigrants' life - some people did a hard passing life and some people's life is good...there is bad and good. Some people getting good job, respectable job, some people is not getting job, expecting job. But odd job is available. (Int 1: p 7; ln 158-161)

Moving to Canada. Panna and Shakur received Canadian immigration in 2007.

At the same time Shakur received an offer for a post doctorate fellowship from the Canadian professor he met in Germany at the international conference. The professor was from the University of Lethbridge. Shakur accepted the golden offer. Shakur and his family came to Lethbridge in 2007.

In 2006 December or January the professor told my husband about post doc. So....when my husband told that he is ready for this position then the professor sent mail and said okay you can come. (Int 3: p 1-2; ln 30-34)

Before coming to Canada, Panna spoke with her sister and uncle who live abroad. They encouraged Panna in her decision making to come to Canada as the country offered a lot of opportunity for a good life.

Leaving the homeland. Panna possesses a strong love for her homeland. She feels connected to her culture; a deep rooted sense of belonging. She longs for her family.

She misses them. Panna feels sad. “I feel sad, I miss all—my parents, friends, and everything my culture” (Int 1: p 8; ln 180).

Shakur came to Canada on a study leave from the university where he was working. He took a three year leave to explore the possibilities he might have in Canada. If he could not secure a better job after completing the post doc, Shakur and Panna would go back to Bangladesh. The job at Dhaka University was the safety net for his indefinite future. Panna left all her belongings in Bangladesh unsold; hoping that she would be coming back home again. The only things she brought with her were some traditional clothes and books.

I have lots of furniture, lots of electronics and lots of show pieces....and I didn't sell anything. He (husband) took study leave and three years study leave....so, he—we are thinking --ok when post doctoral fellowship done, then we are going back home. (Int 1: p 9, 10; ln 198, 210, 214-215)

Reaching Canada. It was summer. Panna came to Lethbridge with her family. While crossing the coulees, Panna was amazed with their magnificent beauty. The pure fresh air and the serenity of its surroundings rendered her completely speechless.

Shakur's supervisor was waiting at the airport to receive them. A university residence was arranged for them. Panna found her new apartment clean and tidy. Food was ready in the kitchen. Shakur's supervisor also provided her with a few kitchen utensils. Shakur and Panna greatly appreciated the warm welcome they received at upon arrival to a new country. Panna and Shakur began their new journey in Canada.

Life in Canada

Initial days in Canada. Panna and Shakur started a safe life in Canada. Shakur's post doctorate fellowship offered them security for life in a foreign country. In addition, the initial necessities such as housing, furniture, and household bits and pieces were

coordinated by Shakur's supervisor. Moreover, the warm reception from the supervisor also afforded them emotional support.

He did all support...first he arranged university dormitory- for one month—and when—he picked my all family-he picked from airport—and I came in Lethbridge and I went to dormitory - when I saw ready - all food, bread, milk, I was excited. (Int 1: p 14; ln 307-309)

Panna did not deal with a life of economic struggle and hardship once she had come to Canada. However, loss of family and friends, social isolation and loneliness, extreme cold weather, and difficulty in communication strained her every day life.

During her first year in Canada, Panna confined herself at her home. She was alone and no-one else was there for her. The city was new and she felt apprehensive. Lack of proficiency in communicating in English and extreme weather also limited her ability to use public transportation and out door activities. Shakur remained busy at his work. He took her out occasionally once a week or once every two weeks. Panna felt lonely.

When I came in Lethbridge—I stay one year in my home, I didn't come outside--- so sometime I need to go outside---then I need to go bus—then winter is....and sometimes I want to go anywhere, mall, I want to buy something but I didn't. So life is boring....this city was new, and when I go outside, everything was not comfortable to me. So, transportation, language, and weather everything was difficult, and also I have a baby. (Int 1: p 12; ln 260-263; Int 2: p 8; ln 245-246)

Language was one of the salient obstacles for Panna in reorienting herself to this new context. English was not her first language and Panna did not speak English back home. Therefore, she faced challenges in communicating with people. “Sometimes I want to say something, but what I can say—that people didn't understand—because accent is different—I became frustrated” (Int 1: p 15; ln 331-333). She could not obtain any employment because of her language barrier. She could not attend the parent-teacher

meeting at her son's school because she could not communicate with his teacher and others. Panna felt isolated and disconnected. Panna became absolutely dependent on her husband in her every day act of living. Panna was frustrated.

When I came here 1 year I stayed at my home. That time....my elder son was student of grade 3 and sometimes parents-teacher interview then that time my husband all the time faced this interview but I didn't go....(Int 3: p 2; ln 46-49)

The weather in Canada was too extreme for Panna. She grew up in a tropical monsoon type climate with warm temperatures throughout the year. Canada has long winters; it was too cold to survive. Panna felt like going into hibernation. The cold weather restricted her to going outside even in extreme need. Panna hated winter.

too much cold and I faced some emergency---my younger son sometimes get sick and I need to go to doctor, need to buy medicine, that time I need to....transportation—the bus—this is long process. And cold out—and if I call taxi, this is expensive. (Int 1: p 12; ln 149-151)

Panna did not have a car for first two years. Shakur did not drive in Bangladesh. It took a long time for Shakur to learn to drive and to buy a car. All through this period it was quite difficult for this couple to go outside, socialize with people, and even do grocery shopping. Panna could not use the bus during the cold winter. Panna considers transportation as a challenge for new immigrants who do not know how to drive.

My husband got a learner licence, but he did not drive in my back home—or in Japan, so he needs to hold one year, so he—could not drive and then one year waiting....and when he got a licence that time he bought a car. After that my life is easy....I thought this a challenge for immigrants. (Int 1: p 12; ln 253-257)

Disappointments in life. Shakur had aspirations for a career in academia. He had been a professor at a university in Bangladesh for ten years. Teaching was not only his aspiration, but his passion too. Shakur was actively in search for a job in academe while doing his post doctorate at a Canadian university. He had been searching for

opportunities through the Internet and applying to different universities from across Canada for faculty positions. He also applied to the United States for the same opportunity. To his dismay, he received few responses in return and only one call for an interview. Shakur could not obtain the employment he desired. His qualifications and experience did not help him to acquire a job in his field of specialization. Shakur was distressed. His dream for a flourishing career had been dashed. Panna could sense his misery. Panna felt sad.

My husband was a university professor....when we came here that time. Then he tried to get a job at different universities. Almost two years he tried for university position. (Int 3: p 3; ln 75-77)

Panna considered volunteering or working to improve her language skills. Panna had a bachelor degree. She wanted to work or volunteer in an area related to her education. She looked for a job at an agriculture farm. Unfortunately she found out that all the farms were far-off from the city. Panna did not know how to drive. She could not get the job.

I told okay I can do any volunteer work at agriculture farm, or any job I am ready to work. Then she told me, can you drive. I said, "No, I can't". So she said that the agriculture farms are outside of the city and city transport and I have to drive. So this side is closed for me. (Int 3: p 6; ln 182-185)

Shakur came to Canada on study leave. He had a prestigious job in Bangladesh. He came to Canada to advance his career and to secure a good future for his children. Shakur was unsuccessful in achieving his goal. Shakur and Panna planned to go back to Bangladesh.

For first three years, from 2007-2010, he didn't leave his job in Bangladesh, and all the time we were thinking to leave Canada. (Int 3: p 3; ln 89-90)

Life events and distress. While Panna was struggling with her day to day life in a foreign country, the news of her father's cancer diagnosis was a great shock for her. Panna's father was diagnosed with gallbladder cancer. He was taken to Singapore for his cancer treatment. He is currently undergoing chemotherapy.

Panna felt sad and miserable. She was at such a distance from her family that she could not be with them in this crisis. Panna wanted to be with her father but it was very expensive to fly back to Bangladesh. The distance complicated her life. She wanted to ensure that her father was free from pain. Panna made phone calls almost everyday to comfort her father. Panna plans to go home once she can afford the expense and manage the time.

I feel very, very bad, it was very bad time, because when I came—I came in 2007, and in 2010 I knew this news and then I am frustrated all the time and very, very frustrated. My husband sometimes support me and I make ph call all the time—what happened to my dad, all most every day I make ph call and talk to my dad and my mom, my sister. (Int 2: p 1; ln 19-22)

Not giving up. Panna is a woman with optimistic personality. She embraces life's challenges. She actively involves herself to triumph over obstacles. Panna does not give up.

Panna felt that language was a major barrier for her to adjust to life in Canada. Her lack of skill in English had isolated her from the community. Panna wanted to learn ESL (English as a second language) to enable her to understand and respond to Canadian spoken English. Panna knew that if she could learn English she could further her education in the future. "If I did any language course this will help me go to college...if I go to college then first I need to do again English course" (Int 3: p 8; ln 223-225). Shakur was busy. He had no time to help her. He was not supportive of her plans. Panna resisted;

she went to ESL center and completed the level test for English learning. Panna made the decision.

I did everything alone, I did a level test for English learning which is ESL, I did alone. My husband was busy; he said he could not give me time. I told him to make a phone call to the ESL and he said no he could not. So I prepared myself what I will ask them and then I called....I asked my husband to come with me because I had my little son.... I gave the test. (Int 2: p 9; ln 253-258)

Panna wanted to learn how to drive. Panna realized that the ability to drive a car was important to have freedom, autonomy. Panna absolutely depended on Shakur. Panna was confined at home for one year because she could not drive. “This limits your movement if you don’t know driving” (Int 3: p 6; ln 159-160). Panna needed independence. However, Shakur did not encourage her. Shakur had no interest to lend a hand to her. Panna did not give up. Panna took her learner’s licence exam for driving and passed. Panna did it alone. Panna did it by herself.

I also gave the driving test in last summer. My husband said that I will never pass, and I told him to show me the online exam practice, but he didn’t have time to show me. I don’t know how to use....before my exam day, he showed me. I practiced the whole day—then on the day I took my son with me and went by bus alone. My husband didn’t come. The test taker, they were nice, and they gave color pencils, crayon and paper, lollypop to my son, and I did the exam and I passed. So I did it alone, I went alone to the driving test center. (Int2: p 9; ln 263-268)

Panna is optimistic. Her determination to overcome the obstacles she faces in her every day life is her strength. Hopes and promises of the future keep her going. Panna is a resilient woman. She looks to the future with optimism and hope.

When I came here, I was waiting for time, I was thinking okay I can pass this time, and then I will get everything. I was looking for future....that’s why I didn’t feel depressed. (Int 2: p 9; ln 252-253, 273)

Moving forward. Following almost two years of intense job searching, Shakur realized that there were no jobs available similar to the one he had just left behind. “Our

first dream was for my husband to have a job at the university. He tried for the first two years. That was our first target to get a job there but he didn't get" (Int 3: p 8; ln 236-237). The experience was indeed bitter for Shakur; however, he did not give up. Shakur kept looking for other opportunities. Shakur took some online courses through the Internet to open up new doors for him. On a late summer evening, Shakur received a job offer letter. Shakur started his second career in a new field.

Panna is now working in a day care centre. Robin, their younger son also goes to the same day care. After one year of living in Canada, Panna found this job. Though her work is not aligned with her previous education, Panna is happy as because she can spend time with her son at her work place. Panna accepts this reality. Panna and Shakur decide not to return to Bangladesh.

It's not my education related job, but as I have to do odd job, then it is better for me because....I got the job in the same day care with my son. (Int 3: p 7; ln 190-192)

Post immigration experiences. Panna and Shakur began their lives in Canada with promises of the future. Shakur's dream was to obtain a job in academia. This came as a big disappointment when Shakur could not find a job. Promises of the future were but shattered dreams.

Panna grew up with an extended family which was a primary source of support for her regarding life events. Panna shared a special bond with her extended family members. Her life in Canada is different now. Here, she lives with her husband and children. This nuclear family has the nurturing environment where there is love, emotional support, and time to spend her children and husband. Panna enjoys her family life in Canada. Her husband has become her primary source of support.

I like the life when I was in a joined (extended) family, this is one kind of good—but now I am alone, here is my husband and me, but this is different but good, two ways are good, I can spend more time with my husband and children....And I share all with my husband. (Int 2: p 2; ln 51-55)

Shakur is a highly educated person. He is very responsible, religious, and honest.

However, he remains busy with his own job and does not feel the necessity to support his wife. In this foreign country, where Panna faces many challenges in her day to day life, the lack of emotional support from Shakur impedes her capacity to move forward. In addition, his lack of encouragement delays Panna from exercising her active agency in life. Shakur's sudden anger surprises Panna most and disappoints her when she has no family members around her to provide her with emotional support. "Sometimes, he gets angry, sometimes, I think why he is so angry? I don't understand, I don't know what makes him angry? But he is angry" (Int 2: p 4; ln 109-110). Panna believes that compromise and understanding between husband and wife is important to maintain harmony in marriage. "Compromise, all the time it's compromise" (Int 3: p 2; ln 58). However, Panna does appreciate Shakur's support in her day to day household activities and taking care of their children. Panna's thoughtfulness and appreciative attitude helps her to maintain a good marriage.

When I am in the work place and my husband's work time is 5:30 am to 2:00....then he went home and he ate something and then he went to the school and picks up my sons....when I come—I come at 5:30 then I saw every thing is ready for me. Sometimes he washes all the dishes. (Int 3: p 2; ln 59-62)

Festivals and celebrations are integral part of Bangladeshi culture. Since childhood, Panna enjoyed the cultural festivals with family and friends. There are only a few Bangladeshi families residing in Lethbridge. Therefore, Panna cannot celebrate those cultural events in Lethbridge. Panna feels bad and relishes her memories.

My culture is related to religious. But we have many other cultural events....language day....our victory day....Bengali New Year. I feel bad, I miss that....lots of talking, fun, and this and that, those were wonderful, I miss those days....here Bangladeshi community is not big. So we can't do this. (Int 2: p 11, 12; ln 333-337; 352-354; 350)

Panna's identity is rooted in Bengali culture. Panna wants to preserve her culture among her children. She teaches them about her culture. "My elder son knows some. Sometimes I told him that in my country we had this program, event and all the time I use Bengali at home, so that they learn the language and culture" (Int 2: p 12; ln 356-357). Panna wants to keep alive her language, tradition, and heritage. She considers it as her responsibility to transmit her own culture to her children. Panna wishes that her sons, Shafin and Robin, will know about their origins.

My duty is to let them know my language, my culture, my heritage. So if he ever goes to Bangladesh, he will not have any interest or feelings about his own country or culture. I want that my sons will know about his origin, his root. (Int 2: p 15; ln 441-443)

Panna prefers to cook ethnic food most of the time. Moreover, as Muslims, they need to have halaal food. Though Shafin and Robin like both Canadian and ethnic food, Panna wants them to always have halaal food. Panna also helps her children to practice their religion. Shakur and Panna take part in different religious events. Shafin and Robin attend mosque with their father.

I practice my religion, I participate in religious program, and sometimes—every Sunday—maximum Sunday, my husband went to mosque, and my son learns some 'Surah' from Quran, then how to do prayer....I want them to practice their religion. (Int 2: p 12; ln 361-363)

Panna feels that her children need to adapt to Canadian way of living. They need to know the Canadian culture as well as their own culture. They should learn to speak English. At the same time they need to know Bengali. Therefore, they can adopt what is

good for them. Panna wants to nurture both cultures in such away that the boys benefit from both.

They should know this culture and can pick some from here. At the same time, he should know my culture. It's not that he has to follow my culture; again he doesn't need to follow Canadian lifestyles completely. So he can pick some here whatever he likes and good for him and he can choose some culture from my one....It's not that he has to be Canadian only as he is living here. (Int 2: p 15; ln 436-444)

Panna finds Canadian society sexually promiscuous. Gratuitous sex and single parenthood in the society disappoints her most. Panna is fearful about her children and wants to protect them from an environment that is much more sexually open and from her perspective immoral.

When I came here I saw free sex....lots of children they have no dad....This is sometimes I thought disappointing. I do not like this culture---and my sons grown up here—that culture—and sometimes I worried. (Int 1: p 13; ln 278-279, 282, 284-285)

Panna has no friends in Canada to support her emotionally. She makes friendship with her co-workers. However, these friendships are limited to her workplace only. Her ethno community sometimes helps her with grocery shopping or giving her a ride to the hospital. They meet in social gatherings and for cultural events. Panna calls Bangladesh to speak with her parents or she calls Australia to speak with her sister to assuage her loneliness.

When I was alone and felt lonely, I made call to Bangladesh, my sister, my parents, and talked to them. (Int 2: p 9; ln 275-276)

Panna is burdened with her daily responsibilities. The day to day structured work within strict time lines makes her exhausted. Panna's every day starts with sunrise. It becomes late at night when she goes to bed. On top of her errands as a wife and mother,

Panna performs additional duties as an immigrant woman who bridges the two different cultures in her home. Panna feels tired.

In week day, I get up 6:30 and I then I make three boxes of lunch for my kids and for me. Then I did breakfast and there is hurry and hurry....Then I come back home at 5:30. When I come home, then its supper time and I prepare supper, take care of the kids. Every day is same for the five days. In Saturdays I do cooking for the next week, do groceries, laundry, and vacuum. (Int 3: p 3: ln 94-99)

Panna had many friends in her country of origin. Now Panna does not have time to contact her friends who are in Bangladesh. The burden of household work and job takes away most of her time and leaves her little for leisure. Panna remains busy everyday.

I have lots of friends (smile)...I am too much busy, so, now in Canada I can't have contact. When I first came here, then one year I was not doing any job, then I did contact but now after one year I stopped all (laugh), I don't get time. (Int 2: p 3, 4; ln 58; 65-67)

Panna has very little time on herself. However, Panna saves Sundays to rest, to relax, and to boost her energy for the upcoming week. "Sunday, especially Sunday I save this day (laugh), I need to rest... sometimes, watch movies, talking to my kids, or lying in the bed" (Int 3: p 4; ln 111-113). On these lazy afternoons, Panna feels lonely. Panna longs for her parents, her sisters. Panna longs for her country. Panna makes several calls to family members in Bangladesh.

When I am—especially Sunday I feel little bit lonely, when all my works done, and I am free. That time I feel for my parents, my other relatives, and most of the time I make phone call. (Int 3: p 4; ln 115-116)

Panna believes that Canada is not free from ignorance. From her perspective, the non-recognition of foreign education is one kind of discrimination. Her husband could not obtain a job that was commensurate with his skills and expertise. Panna also thinks

that the need for Canadian experiences as a condition of getting a job is a kind of oppression for new immigrants.

He [husband] has a degree, PhD degree, but when he applied and other Canadian people apply so the first preference goes to Canadian people. The Canadians get the job. But my husband is no, though he is more qualified, he doesn't get the job. So this is discrimination....all positions need 3-4 years or more Canadian experience. But we came here new, we need a job first and then we can have experience. This is not a justice. My husband has 10 years teaching experience, but not in Canada, in my own country. Here when he came in Canada, this experience has no value. So, this is not good, this is not justice. (Int 3: p 5, 6; ln 149-156)

Living in liminality. Remaining in Canada is a complex decision for Shakur and Panna. Shakur had a good career in Bangladesh. Living in Canada means he has to leave his secure career and enter into the world of the unknown. However, they have already left behind so many emotional ties, material things, and spiritual connections, and now, neither can they go back nor find it easy to continue to stay in Canada. Panna and Shakur find themselves betwixt and between; they are in a liminal landscape.

However, Panna is a positive woman. The promises of the future inspire Panna to stay in Canada. She believes that Canada will offer a gifted future to their two sons. Canada's high standard of education will open up doors to Shafin and Robin and they will achieve success in future.

His [son] life will be smooth, he will not struggle, he will have Canadian education, and then he can go anywhere in the world, US, Australia, any country-- his education will be recognized everywhere. So if you are from Bangladesh....you have to struggle, but if you are in Canada, all doors are open for you. (Int 2: p 8; ln 236-240)

Panna is also positive about her husband's prospects. She is hopeful that good times will come and that Shakur will be promoted to a superior position in the future.

Now here, my husband got the job, and then he may get better position, he may be promoted to manager, he is a qualified man and he has his credentials, his education, he is just waiting for the good time to come. So he can move forward. (Int 2: p 8; ln 231-234)

Suggestions for new immigrants. Panna discovers that language is one of the major obstacles for new immigrants as they adjust to life in Canada. Therefore, new immigrants should learn English and develop their communication skills. Panna also observes that being able to drive is important to get a job and to remain autonomous. Independence is important for immigrant women to fit into Canadian society. Finally, Panna suggests upgrading education.

First step is language develop. Second important step is driving because this limits your movement if you don't know driving....and then upgrade my education. (Int 3: p 6; ln 159-164)

Major achievements in life. Panna notes that she has developed confidence and transformation of her personality as part of life in Canada. Panna is now able to make major decisions that affect her life. Panna overcomes her language barrier and confidently communicates with people. Panna is taking driving lessons and she is hopeful about getting her driver's licence this summer. Panna is much more independent now.

But I am little bit changed (laugh). When I was house wife....I didn't move anywhere for example when I came here 1 year I stayed at my home. That time....my elder son was student of grade 3 and sometimes parents-teacher interview then that time my husband all the time faced this interview but I didn't go. Now I feel I can go and face this interview. So now I think I can go and talk. (Int 3: p 2; ln 45-50)

The journey continues. Panna has engaged in a long journey. Her initial days in Canada were not easy. She experienced many hurdles in her life in Canada. However, Panna kept looking for ways to overcome these challenges. Panna surmounted many

obstacles. Now, her modest circumstances seem to spur her ambition. She works hard and dreams her dreams. Panna is happy.

I am making plans all the time and this is my dream (laugh)...I am looking for a way where there is lots of job...yes, I am happy (laugh)...with my husband, my children, I am happy. (Int 3: 8, 9; ln 246-247; 254-255)

Diana: Life in the Homeland

Participant as person. Diana is a tall, slender woman from Jordan. Her pale fair skin has a radiant glow as many Arab women possess. Her long dark hair descends to the middle of her back. At an initial glance, one first notices her large dark eyes which are full of life. An elegant beauty, Diana is in her early thirties. She appears to be an articulate, well-informed person. Diana is soft spoken and always offers a friendly smile.

The early years. Diana was born in a city in Jordan. Growing up, she described her early life as simple and her parents as loving, caring, and passionate. She speaks of a very good upbringing. Given the primacy of family in her life, Diana developed a strong affection and bond for her parents and siblings. Diana feels proud of her wonderful childhood.

The main thing that I really proud of my family is that my dad teaches us that we have to love each other and care about each other—which is I don't really feel in the new generation. (Int 1: p 1; ln 17-19)

Diana is a sixth born child of working class parents. She has six sisters and one brother. Her father began his career as a teacher and later reached at a very senior position in education system in Jordan. Diana's mother was also a teacher. Her four sisters follow the philosophy of their parents and chose the field of academia as their careers. Diana and her siblings value education most.

My dad used to be a—first a teacher then—principal then...he works until he reaches a very high level position in education system...My mom used to be a

teacher too. So, my dad's philosophy was to let us all to be like a teacher. (Int 1: p 1; ln 7-10)

The later years. Diana belongs to a global family. Her two sisters live abroad.

One of her elder sisters lives in Montreal, Canada. Her youngest sister has been relocated to Saudi Arabia once married because of the earning potential of her husband. Her other four siblings live in Jordan. Diana completed a bachelor in education and started a career as a teacher in Jordan after her marriage.

Diana was a person full of fun and cheerfulness. She was very sociable and always surrounded by many friends. Diana and her friends were prominent among the students while at university. Her friends were the source of amusement. Diana still remains in touch with them through the Internet.

I used to have fun more than enough....we used to like mock people—and you know laugh at their dress, give everybody a name—these things. Even in university—everybody knows us....we were very much famous then—you will be surprised to know that I still have contact with them on face book—Skype all the time. I like them very much. (Int 1: p 8; ln 139-145)

Diana wed Hussein when she was twenty two years old. It was an arranged marriage, as was the culture in Jordan during that period of time. “I don't say I fell in love—no, I felt like he is acceptable as a husband. That is the way it used to happen in my country back like ten years ago” (Int 1: p 2; ln 38-39). Hussein's sister was Diana's friend. While socializing with friends, Diana met Hussein on several occasions. Hussein could never draw her attention because of his “nerdy” and serious look.

I never liked him (laugh). He just—you know—has glasses—and he was—he looks serious, he looks nerd. (Int 1: p 2; ln 29-30)

Hussein's family chose Diana for their son, Hussein. They sent an official proposal to Diana's parents. However, Diana was not prepared to marry Hussein. Her

family arranged several meetings for Diana and Hussein in their presence. It was only then Diana agreed to his proposal. She discovered Hussein to be a mature man who was responsible, ambitious, and had aspirations for a good future. Hussein's tall, good-looking features also prompted her decision.

He [Hussein] is good looking (laugh) though he wears glasses, he looks handsome (laugh) and other thing I just think—I want a tall guy and he is tall (laugh)--that's funny. And then the other thing I know that he has a master degree and then he seems like to me he is an ambitious man and so I told myself that maybe he doesn't look like a teenager—you know—he is serious, matured, he looks responsible and he with—he seems have a good future for himself. (Int 1: p 3; ln 47-52)

Marriage and family. As plans for the wedding took shape, Hussein and Diana played active roles in every step of the wedding preparation that included buying new clothes and jewellery for the bride, and building a new house with new furniture for the newly wed couple. Diana experienced considerable stress because of the uncertainty of the future.

Excited and scared. Because I don't know what will happen, you know. It was like a....I can remember I lost weight a lot....because I was—don't know what's a feeling like—between excitement and scares. Don't know what is going to happen. (Int 1: p 5; ln 85-87)

Diana became pregnant the same year she got married. Throughout her pregnancy, Diana remained depressed and sad. Diana felt distant and isolated from her husband. From her perspective, Hussein could never understand her depression or loneliness.

All my pregnancy I don't know I used to be very much sad, stressed, and I always feel lonely during this time....I keep crying—my husband doesn't really realize. He didn't realize and he didn't know even. He didn't know. But you know the stress—it was huge. I was under stress. (Int 1: p 10; ln 187-190)

Diana had three children, two daughters and one son. Her eldest daughter was born in Jordan. The younger daughter and her only son were born abroad. During all of her pregnancies Diana felt lonely and sad. Hussein had been distant in terms of the pregnancies. He was not as romantic as Diana wanted him to be. Hussein was busy. Hussein was pressured to focus on other priorities for him and his family.

I would say lonely, but your husband –when you are pregnant I don't know if you experience that that your husband is really romantic. Or I would say he doesn't –uh sometimes you want someone to feel how you feel, he just he doesn't care. Or you say—see my baby is moving, he says that's okay. It doesn't affect him....sometimes you want like after delivering the baby that you want him to be romantic and close to you but—you know he is away—cause he is busy. (Int 1: p 14; ln 271-278)

However, Diana was in Jordan when her first child was born. The family was around her to provide emotional support. “I wasn't really that stressed with my first pregnancy because my family was there around me” (Int 1: p 10; ln 192-193). Diana had her parents and acquaintances to support her to look after her family and her new born child.

Life in the USA. Hussein was an ambitious man. He planned to come to the USA for his higher education. Three years after their marriage, in 2004, Hussein received a scholarship from the US-Jordan government to pursue post graduation at a university in the USA. It was a unique opportunity for Hussein to advance his education as well as his career. Hussein decided to go to America.

My husband, I told you he got a scholarship to come to study here. He was looking for this and he got it....I would say that it was him who was planning to come here. He started studying for the TOEFL....Then the other one they called GRE....so, I was like step by step he was doing these. (Int 1: p 15, 16; ln 297-298, 312-317)

Diana felt lost when she heard of Hussein's decision to move to America. She felt an enormous emptiness inside her that even took hold of her sadness. "Frankly I was—you know sometimes you feel blank? How would you experience that?" (Int 1: p 17; ln 328-330) Diana was a very sensitive and emotional person who cared for her parents and family. The decision to come to the USA had a profound effect upon her. Her heart was broken to hear her mother saying, "I am sure you will not come back" (Int 1: p 17; ln 30). Diana promised her parents that she would come back.

I was sure that I will come back. I want to live with them. I will finish and come back (laugh). I told my parents—I am not going to stay there. No, no. (Int 1: p 17; ln 340-341)

Hussein came to the USA in 2004. Diana had been teaching at a school in Jordan while Hussein moved to the USA and was pregnant with her second child. Diana and her eldest daughter followed Hussein one month later. Diana thought that Hussein would come back to Jordan after completing his study abroad. Therefore, Diana did not resign from her job and took a maternity leave to come to the USA.

I didn't resign my job I just took a maternity leave, I came to Tennessee and I was planning to go back after the maternity leave was over. (Int 1: p 15; ln 298-300)

The plan changed once Hussein was admitted into a PhD program at another university after he completed his master's degree. He decided to have his wife and children remain with him in the USA. Later on, Hussain planned to stay at the USA; eventually he decided that they would move to Canada. Diana ostensibly sacrificed her own career for her husband's future career. She gave up her plan to return to Jordan and live with her family in her homeland.

Then the plan changed that I have to stay with him till he finishes his school. Then I stayed with my husband another two years or three years. Then my husband said no, we won't go back to Jordan, we have to go to Canada because it

has good life there. So I imagine that (laugh)—you know the thing that is different, things change, this is why—yeah. (Int 1: p 15; ln 305-308)

Diana was very sad and felt alone once she came to the USA. She became nostalgic and longed for her parents and family. Diana missed them; she cried every night. However, Diana never shared her loneliness with her husband. Hussein wanted her to leave her family and homeland for brighter horizons and put everything into the future for them. “My husband thinks that...I care a lot for other. We should care for our future—you know—you have good future, so, just ignore everybody and go yourself” (Int 1: p 17; ln 332-333). Diana laments over Hussein’s preference of not going back to Jordan. His decision left Diana feeling numb.

Didn’t know how I was feeling....because it is like strange feeling....the feeling is like plain, flat feeling, exactly plain—you are not excited, you are not happy, you are not scared. Just like surprised, no--just watching. (Int 1: p 18; ln 365-368)

Diana was pregnant and gave birth to her second daughter two months after arriving in America. She was new to the country and culture, and the health care system was unknown to her. However, Diana received remarkable support from her religious community. Members of religious community rallied around Diana and supported her. Diana is a religious woman. She believes that it is God’s way of extending His help with her situation. Diana was content.

I was new to that country, new to the system—didn’t know anything. Then my—you know, God helped. Lots of people come and help us. A lady—she went to the mosque and she told the other ladies....So she brought me food, and they cooked for me almost for one week. Then they kept taking us to the doctor appointment, driving us. I don’t know how come every thing happens—I don’t expecting that. (Int 1: p 11; ln 201-206)

Diana was confined at home for initial six months of her living in the USA. Hussein had a work routine from morning to evening that created an absence in the home.

Diana was living a cloistered life in her small apartment and had a little interaction with the world beyond it. “I just walk alone around my apartment and it is very much feeling lonely. I felt lonely... I am alone” (Int 1: p 17; ln 346-348). Diana experienced severe isolation and loneliness during these initial six months. However, her world started to open up once Diana went to the Mosque and made friends. She started taking ESL (English for Second Language) classes. It provided her opportunities to make friendships. She started driving. This helped her develop her independence and autonomy. It afforded Diana freedom and permitted her to engage in the world around her.

I am alone....So it was like you don't have any sense of your country....I felt lonely for I would say for first six seven months till I went to the mosque and I start driving....I miss them until I start making friendship and I start taking English classes. Even I have my baby I am not happy here, until I found friends. Friends make up my life. (Int 1: p 17-19; ln 372, 376-377, 349, 369-370)

The weather in the USA was a great challenge for Diana. The hot, humid summer with lots of rain and lightning; and very cold winter surprised Diana for the first couple of years. Diana and Hussein also faced challenges in their daily acts of life as with transportation, physician's visits, and grocery shopping until they bought a car. “We didn't have a car so we used to walk to the grocery and bring our grocery—we put the grocery on our daughter's stroller. I (laugh) feel sometimes funny and sad” (Int 1: p 20; ln 400-401). Hussein bought a car. Diana obtained her driver's licence. She secured her freedom and autonomy.

Diana faced difficulties in communicating with people in the USA. She could not follow the American accent and felt disconnected. It was almost one year after her arrival she took English language classes to develop her communication skills. Diana began to work as a substitute teacher of grade one to eight at local schools in the USA. She

enjoyed her new work in the new country. However, there were students who took advantage of her accent and her situation as a foreigner. “I would say as because I have an accent that....let some students to listen to me and let some students just to take advantage of me” (Int 1: p 23; ln 461, 463-464). Diana also experienced unfairness while working at the school because of lack of understanding among her colleagues and administration staffs about the Muslim religion. As a Muslim, sometimes she found herself in a disadvantaged position and was displaced from one school to other.

I went to work there as a substitute teacher and I was covering my hair. There they tried to put me in trouble....So unfortunately we are weak, it's not our country, and I am a foreigner. So I just stopped going to that school (Int 1: p 24, 25; ln 478-479, 518-519)

There was a large Muslim community in the city where Diana and Hussein used to live. Every Friday night Diana attended the mosque and socialized with people from different countries having same religious belief. Diana enjoyed their company.

They have Friday nights—each Friday night they have lesson for women, lesson for men, and they care for the kids....It was really a nice time to go out. Each Friday—you know it's humongous. (Int 1: p 13; ln 260-263)

Diana became pregnant for third time. During her expected date of delivery Hussein and Diana needed to move to another city where Hussein was admitted to a PhD program. Diana resisted going to a new place before her delivery. She did not want to deliver her child at a new hospital with unfamiliar health care providers. She wanted to have her friends around her who could provide support to her and her other children. Diana resisted.

Actually my husband was confused shall we deliver the baby here or there. Then I said no I had to deliver here because we make everything for admission. I told my husband that here I can have my friends for taking care of my daughters. (Int 1: p 12; ln 224-226)

It was a lonely day. Diana drove herself to the hospital to deliver her child. She was all alone. “I drove to the hospital and my husband kept on packing...I parked my car, I went to labour room—I walked by myself.” (Int 1: p 12; ln 235-238) While walking to the labour room, Diana felt lonely. She found nobody around her to worry about her or her baby. Hussein had to pack up and move. He had no friends to help him. He was stressed and pressured to focus on moving. Hussein was caught up in the responsibilities he had for his family. However, it distanced him from his wife and took him away when Diana needed him most. Diana found her friends were also busy. This time, members of her ethno-cultural and religious communities were not available. Diana felt sad, isolated. She missed her parents, her friends, and her husband. Diana was alone.

I was very sad. Because I felt like nobody around me—I am alone. It’s like—I was missing every body, even my friends. Every body was busy—no one comes to me. It likes somebody—when a woman is in delivery everybody is there, every body worries about how it goes. My husband—may be he is worried about me but he was worried moving, the truck—because you know...you pack all your stuff by yourself. Nobody helps you. (Int 1: p 13; ln 240-245)

The journey to Canada

Decision making. Hussein decided that he and his family would move to Canada because of the high standards of living the country offered. It was in 2006 when Hussein applied for Canadian immigration. He expected to complete his PhD prior to that date. Diana found her other friends also planned to undergo Canadian immigration. This motivated her to support the decision. Meanwhile, Diana made adjustments to life abroad. She returned to her homeland in her second year in the USA and visited with her family for two months. Her parents also visited them in the USA. Diana missed her country and her parents; however, she could live without them. Diana became

accustomed to being alone. Diana involved herself in making the decision to come to Canada.

Let me tell you something. The first thing you don't want to leave your family. The first year was hard. The second year is less, I went to visit them. I visited them for 2 months. I come back here then okay I can live without family now. It's like get used to being alone or being away from them. Now I really don't care. I miss them, I love them, I call them every week but I don't mind to stay away to them. It is like my feelings regarding being alone. (Int 1: p 27; ln 537-541)

Pre-Immigration knowledge of Canada. As with many Canadian immigrants, Diana and Hussein moved to this new country with very little knowledge about living in Canada. They came here to live a “good standard life”. However, Diana did not know about the day to day hardships immigrants faced once they left their countries and moved to Canada. She did not know the challenges immigrants experienced to have their credentials recognized and obtain a professional job.

I found that it's not easy to find a job and I told you before that even you have transcripts and certificate its not easy to get job....Actually I didn't know before coming here. (Int 1: p 29; ln 586-587)

Canada is a well developed country. Canadian citizenship would permit Diana and her family to go to any other country around the world. “If you are having two citizenships I am free to go wherever I want, right? You know Canada is well developed country” (Int 2: p 13; 250-251). In addition, there was terrible political situation in Middle East. In Canada it was quite the opposite. Therefore, Canada would offer a secure life for Diana and her children.

You know what is going on in Middle East these days? It's horrible. So, I am sure many people they wish to be in our position, they want to be the citizen. So it's like security for me and my kids. I would say well developed life, standard, you know. (Int 2: p 13; ln 251-253)

Moving to Canada. As soon as Hussein and Diana received their immigration papers, Hussein started searching for career opportunities through the Internet. He applied to many provinces to secure a job aligned with his education. It was like throwing a dart to see where it landed. Hussein did not have any personal contacts in Canada. He was hoping that something would come about. Therefore, Diana and Hussein were not sure about where to go.

My husband applied for many jobs and we didn't know where to go. And even when we moved from United States my husband told me, where do you want to go---from east to west (laugh)? Really, till the last 3 to 4 days we didn't know where to go. (Int 1: p 30; ln 606-608)

Hussein and Diana planned to go to a place where they would find some friends or Arab people who might help them to rent a house and/or to obtain a job for Hussein. Therefore, Hussein and Diana decided to go to Toronto, a city where many Muslim Arabs lived.

We heard that Toronto was a good place to stop as we have friends there....we knew that there are many Arab people who live there who could help us, who could help my husband to get a job, at least to get any kind of job. (Int 1: p 30, 31; ln 611-617)

Reaching Canada. It was early-summer when Diana and her family left America. They drove to Canada. While entering Canada, Diana was enchanted by the panoramic view of the majestic waterfalls at Niagara Falls. The mild cool summer breeze, the sunlight streaming through the green leaves, and the smell of the rain from the night before was emphasizing on the beauty of her new home. Diana began her journey in Canada. (FN 2)

Life in Canada

Initial days in Canada. Diana and Hussein began their life in Canada with uncertainty. Their future was ambivalent; no address, no job. Hussein, Diana, and their three children stayed in a hotel before they found an apartment. They rented an apartment on the twenty second floor of a multi-storey building. Diana found many Muslim immigrants as her neighbours. Diana was surprised with the diversity of culture and people sharing the same community in Canada.

Mainly it is the variety of communities, you know. It is really different communities living with each other, share the same society, you know. It is little bit different. We are used to see same kind of people. But here is multicultural. (Int 2: p 1; ln 6-8)

Hussein had been suffering from a severe toothache which needed a root canal. It was very expensive to see a dental surgeon in Canada, especially when he did not have a job or insurance coverage. Therefore, Hussein decided to go to Jordan to get his treatment. It was only seven days after coming to a new country that Hussein flew to Jordan, leaving Diana at her new apartment with their three children. “We just arrived and he found me an apartment and he left me (laugh)” (Int 1: p 31; ln 624). Diana, being a stranger to this new country, was again left alone by herself.

Diana and Hussein were very optimistic about Hussein’s employment opportunities as he obtained his education from the USA. It was after two months that Hussein obtained a job in Lethbridge. “We lived there for 2 months. He knew that he was going to get a job. So we were very much optimistic, you know. Then they called us from here, in Alberta” (Int 1: p 31; ln 631-632). Diana and Hussein packed up again and moved to their new destination, Lethbridge.

It was Christmas Eve, in Lethbridge, and it was extremely cold. It had snowed and the city was covered with snow. The Christmas lights added more loveliness to this beautiful night. Hussein, Diana, and their children flew to Lethbridge. Hussein's colleague, Ashley, came to the airport to receive them. An apartment was temporarily arranged for them. Diana and Hussein were very happy with Ashley's warm reception. Ashley was playing piano for that night but managed to come to the airport and welcome this new family to Lethbridge.

It was Christmas Eve; we came here in Christmas Eve. My husband called his colleague and she came to pick us from airport and we are thinking how come she came to pick us as it was Christmas Eve for her....So she was like playing piano on Christmas Eve and she finished playing and she came to pick up us. (Int 1: p 32; ln 645-650)

Disappointments in life. The greatest disappointment that Diana experienced in Canada was its extreme cold weather. Diana never experienced such cold in her life. Diana and Hussein were not aware of its severity. She had to protect herself, her children, and even the car by plugging in at night from this tremendous cold. Diana hates to shovel the ice. Diana hates winter.

It's mainly the weather and still now. I think Lethbridge is very cold and I never had such experience of cold environment. It's very challenging, yes. You have to prepare yourself, your kids, wear so many clothes, even the car to plugged in at night, yeah, shovel the ice. (Int 2: p 1; ln 10-13)

Diana was optimistic to obtain a job aligned with her education. To her dismay, Diana found it very challenging to achieve her goal. "I was thinking, I told you before that I will be able to get a job easily; I am talking about professional job. Mainly this is the only thing that disappointed me really" (Int 2: p 1; ln 16-17).

Being unable to find a professional job, Diana started searching for more menial jobs. However, Diana could not secure any employment. "I actually applied to Safeway,

Tim Horton, and Winners. I put my CV but no one actually contact me.” Diana was disappointed. She was in the state of liminality. She was too qualified for the menial jobs; however, she did not have credentials for professional employment. Diana became lost between these two worlds.

My experience is very much away from doing all of this [Tim Horton]. They know that I am teacher and then a substitute teacher. There is no relationship. I think I shouldn't put those things in my CV....highly qualified for Tim Horton, but not for teaching (laugh). I am like lost in between. (Int 2: p 36; ln 719-723)

Life events and distress. Diana was in Lethbridge when the heartbreaking news of her best friend's accident arrived. Sophia, Diana's best friend lived in Saudi Arabia where she experienced a dreadful car accident. Her husband died. Her two children were in a coma, living between life and death. This terrible news greatly affected Diana leaving her with a sense of profound trauma. “It affects my life very much. I stayed may be for three weeks in shock—what happened” (Int 1: p 8; ln 160-161). Diana was in emotional shock; she had to make sense of the senseless. She had to try and understand this terrible accident and what happened to her friend and her friend's family. This was a tragic circumstance for Diana. Diana wanted to be with her friend to share her pain and console her but she could not afford to travel to Saudi Arabia. Instead, Diana made phone calls almost every day.

This is really bad—it affects me a lot....I couldn't talk to my friend. After till two weeks. I didn't want to talk to her. I don't know why. I couldn't say any condolences, or anything. No—I don't know. Now I keep talking every day for almost two weeks. Calling every day—it's costly but I couldn't leave her alone. (Int 1: p 8, 9; ln 152, 162-165)

Not giving up. Diana is an optimistic woman. She looks to the promises of the future. Life in Canada is not easy for new immigrants. However, Diana hopes for a better life, she plans on that, and looks for ways to make it happen.

Upon her arrival in Canada, Diana changed her driver's licence and acquired a Canadian one. She asked her husband to buy a car. Diana knows that she needs freedom and autonomy—to have a good life in Canada. Hussein is thoughtful and supportive. He bought a car for Diana.

At the very beginning I changed my driving licence and...I asked him to give me a car, used and small, yeah. It's very cheap; you can find a cheap car. I didn't mind, because you know it gives me you know freedom to go out. (Int 2: p 10; ln 192-194)

Though Diana does not find it challenging to communicate with people in Canada, she plans to improve her language proficiency. Diana believes that learning is a never ending process and she will benefit from learning. Diana insisted that her husband support her register for the English language classes. Diana is a strong and an intelligent woman. She knows that going to a college will open up the world around her. It will open doors for other opportunities.

I insist that I have to improve my English more, 'cause you know learning doesn't stop and I learned a lot when I went to the college here. I hadn't computer skill, I didn't really use it. I try to do it. (Int 2: p 10; ln 92-94)

Diana started to receive computer training. She wants to develop her skills to secure a job; Diana believes that such training and skills will enable her to obtain employment. She actively involves herself in searching for opportunities. She is hopeful for a better career.

Now I am getting some training to find a job or for study you know. Because I think I missed, I don't have the skills to obtain a job like computer skills. (Int 2: p 3; ln 57-58)

Diana has a back up plan. Diana and Hussein came to Canada to prosper. They want a secure and good life for themselves and their children. She does not want to spend their lives struggling, or working at a job that does not recognise their education and

training. Therefore, Diana has a backup plan to return to Jordan should their attempts to build a life in Canada not turn out. It gives her autonomy in making choices of her own.

I still don't know I will be staying here. I don't know. But I plan that I want to have—as long as having secure life I will live here and if good standard life I am living here. If I don't have a good life and my husband doesn't have a good job I will not live here. It depends on having my husband a good job and having a good secure life mainly. (Int 1: p 28; ln 564-567)

Post immigration experiences. Diana never planned to live permanently in a foreign country. She had caring parents and loving siblings in her country. She had a nice family and friends who cared for her. Diana had a good job and used to earn a high salary. Hussein would also be able to secure employment at the universities in Jordan after completion of his PhD from the USA. That was how Diana envisioned their future. However, Hussein's ambition for a prosperous future led them to Canada. Diana followed her husband.

My job in Jordan was really good. I used to have good salary....my husband—after his school and come back to Jordan again and to be a doctorate in any university. That is really a good life. This was what we imagine for our future. Then the plan changed. (Int 1: p 15; ln 303-305)

As with many other immigrants, Diana faced many challenges in her day to day acts of living. Extreme weather, isolation, and the inability to obtain a professional job were a few of the hurdles that Diana came across throughout her journey as a Canadian immigrant woman.

During the initial days in Canada, Diana and Hussein faced economic challenges. Hussein did not have a job at that time. Therefore, Hussein and Diana were anxious about their uncertain and insecure future. Hussein applied to many provinces for a job and was waiting to have one. Hussein stayed at home as he was not working. He became frustrated and depressed. This placed tremendous stress on their relationship.

Not having a job leads to less money. The relationship was bad with me like it affected my relationship with my husband 'cause he is stressed because he is sitting at home. Like he wants to be alone, sleeps more or not to talk a lot or not communicate a lot with us or others. He was kind of depressed. So it affects me because I don't want him to be depressed. I want him to take care of his kids, doing his jobs—duties as a father. So that's why. (Int 2: p 7; ln 118-123)

Diana finds systemic barriers in the Canadian work force that hold back immigrants to advance their careers in the field of their expertise. Diana was a teacher. She had bachelor's degree in teaching. However, she found out that she needs to be certified in Canada to work as a teacher or even a substitute teacher. "I went online and found that I have to be certified" (Int 2: p 4; ln 62). Diana accepts the reality that being a foreigner with language difficulties reduces the opportunities to be a teacher. However, she can expect to work as a substitute teacher. Diana is disappointed.

I am a teacher....It's not easy and I don't expect to be a teacher, as I have an accent but at least to be a substitute teacher, why not? Okay don't let me be a teacher, 'cause a teacher has to have very fluency in English, no accent, nothing. But why can't I be a substitute teacher. (Int 1: p 29-30; ln 593-596)

Life in Jordan was stressful for Diana. There were many social ties and family bonds that sometimes made life difficult. "When we were in Jordan our life was more stressful. You know, family and relationship, like uncles and aunts, and these things you know" (Int 2: p 5; ln 93-94). Here in Canada, Diana is independent from her family. She does not need to maintain these complex social relationships. In addition, rising tension in politics also affected family life in Jordan. Diana finds Canadians more family-oriented; they enjoy life with their families, go for vacations, and have fun.

We always have problems, political problems, religious problem....our men are not relaxed, and they are always stressed. If they don't have problem with you, they have problem with news. They are....always watching the news....sometimes it affects your family life....Canadian men or American—they care about sports, having fun, going for vacation and things but everything about their life. (Int 1: p 14; ln 282-287)

Although there are some down sides among immigrant life in Canada, there are also many facilities that Canada offers to immigrants. Diana finds these services very helpful for new immigrants to survive in a new country and eventually have a good life.

When I come, I find out that there are many facilities that I can take...like having English classes, having computer classes, and the medication is free, you know. These things are nice. I would say these things....you can survive and have a good life. No matter your income. Income is not really a big deal because you can have other facilities to support you like government support, social support. (Int 2: p 1, 2; ln 19- 23)

Hussein is very supportive and always encourages her to work independently. He helps her become self-sufficient, confident. "He [husband] always forces me that I have to learn. I have to do and I should not rely on him. Do your things by your self in order to be more confident" (Int 2: p 11; ln 203-204). Hussein is also a very kind person. He loves Diana; he cares about her and supports her in household work. However, Hussein is not romantic. He does not show his feelings. Given her tremendous stress, Diana sometimes needs his attention.

He is helpful, I would say he is very much helpful, not romantic (laugh). He is not romantic at all. I am very much different (laugh) and very much romantic. He is, sometimes, well he is a very kind person, he loves me and he cares about us a lot but doesn't show his feelings. (Int 2: p 5; ln 86-88)

Diana lives a very busy life. In addition to her household work, Diana looks after her children, takes care of the bills and banking, attends language classes, and goes to computer training courses. "Life keeps me busy....I don't keep myself busy" (Int 2: p 8; ln 147). This provides a glimpse of the demanding life Diana lives. She has a very little time on her own. It is only when the children are asleep at night that Diana finds free herself from the tyranny of her daily life. Diana spends her time reading a book, studying, or chatting with her friends on the Internet.

Diana does not feel lonely anymore. Her intense daily routine keeps her busy. However, she still misses her parents, her beautiful childhood, and her country where she grew up. Diana calls her home to speak with her parents every week.

Still I miss my mom and dad. Yeah, I miss them a lot. I don't feel lonely....I think loneliness comes whenever you don't do anything or....your mind is not busy. When your mind is busy you don't have time to feel lonely. (Int 2: p 8; ln 142-145)

Diana is a friendly woman. She is social and makes friendship very easily.

“Actually I have lot of friends. I am a kind of person like social person. I have lot of friends when I was in United States and here too” (Int 2: p 8; ln 139-140). However, all of her friends belong to her ethno- cultural community; they speak her language, and none of them are Canadians. Diana does not feel comfortable to make friends with Canadians. She is hesitant about how Canadians feel about immigrants.

I don't really put myself to them [Canadians]. But if they want me to talk to them, to come to them, to go outside with them then, yes. But I really don't start. Why, because I don't know how they feel about me, may be they don't like to talk to immigrants. (Int 2: p 9; ln 160-162)

Diana is a Muslim woman and she wants her children to follow the Islamic faith. However, Diana believes that immigrating to Canada has some impacts on practicing the religion. There are many religious events like Ramadan and Eid that they can not celebrate as they used to do in Jordan. Diana also stopped wearing her head scarf one year before she came to Canada. She resists some traditions around wearing the scarf. Therefore, visible signs of being an immigrant Muslim no longer exist.

I stopped a year before I come to Canada. I took it off....I think okay it's not a big deal, it is what inside me. (Int 1: p 26; ln 531, 529)

Diana and Hussein are a part of large ethnic community in Lethbridge. Every Friday they go to mosque to pray and meet people. There are many celebrations, social

gatherings, and collective meetings where Diana and Hussein attend with others. Being with people from their ethnic community helps Diana to face her day to day challenges and to make adjustment to life in this new country.

They have lots of meeting, celebration, you know. Every Friday we go to the mosque, especially my husband to pray. I would say having them with you it helps. Like some body having same beliefs, any questions about how to solve problems, how to manage life adjustment. (Int 2: p 11; ln 11-14)

Moving forward. Diana is content with her standard of living in Canada. Diana also feels that her economic situation improved after coming to Canada. In Jordan, it was beginning of their family lives. Building a new house at the time of his marriage caused Hussein to take on considerable debt. Therefore, Hussein and Diana faced economic challenges while they were in Jordan. In the USA, Hussein arrived as a student. Therefore, they had limited sources of income. Now, Hussein works at the local research centre in Lethbridge and earns a good salary. In addition, other supports provided by the Canadian government enable Hussein and Diana to live a good life. Diana is happy with her life.

I lived with my husband almost two years and it was our very beginning of our lives. We had lots of debts because we had to build our house. So I can't really compare between here and there. Then my husband was a student in Tennessee and now he just got this job. We just start out life. (Int 2: p 6; ln 100-103)

Suggestions for new immigrants. Independence and autonomy are the most important milestones in the lives of woman immigrants. Independence affords them freedom and permits them to engage in the world around them. Diana considers a driver's licence as key to independence. Immigrant women will not be able to be independent if they do not know how to drive. Without a driver's licence, women are confined to the

home and they become isolated from the society. They also then rely heavily on their husbands. Therefore, getting a driver's licence is very important for immigrant women.

The most important thing I think she has to be independent. She has to have her driving licence in order to be able to communicate, cause if needs to rely on her husband she won't go out, she will be stressed, she has to spend most of her time at home. (Int 2: p 10; ln 180-182)

Language is another major barrier immigrant women face in their day to day acts of living. Diana suggests that immigrants learn English and do not feel shy to speak up even if they have any accent. Diana finds that it is very important to develop communication skills to get a job, to raise children, and to remain connected with people. Diana also recommends immigrant women to try to overcome lack of recognition for their credentials and upgrade their skills.

Major achievements in life. Diana is making an effort to become independent. Diana improves her language skills; she learns about computers. Diana can drive. Diana is now able to move outside the home independently. She can make appointments, do banking, and pay bills. This is a major shift in her life. Diana considers these as major achievements throughout her journey in Canada.

I am modernized housewife, right? I know Microsoft 2007. I know how to work on computer, I know how to drive I know how to communicate with people. I know how to raise my kids. So, I think I am a good wife (laugh). (Int 2: p 11; ln 197-200)

The journey continues. Diana is a courageous and strong willed woman. She has endured tremendous hardships. She is determined in her quest to overcome the hurdles she faces while living in Canada. Diana has a dream to build her career in the field of her specialization. She is aware of what she needs to be successful in Canada. Now, Diana looks to the future—with hope and optimism.

Anita: Life in the Homeland

Participant as person. Anita was born and raised in a Hindu family in India. She is in her mid forties, medium in stature, and she has a classic Indian look. Anita is a lively woman. She has a warm, kind, and gentle demeanour; and has a playful sense of humour. Uncertainty in future frightens her most. Anita believes in Lord ‘Shiva’, the auspicious. Her faith, trust, and love for God provide her with courage and hope on her journey to Canada.

The early years. Anita was born in a small town near Delhi. She was the first born child to her parents. Anita has a sister who is six years younger than her. Anita’s father served in the Indian Army and retired as Lieutenant Colonel. During her childhood, Anita and her family were constantly on the move because of her father’s military service. Anita’s father died from a heart attack in 1999.

Anita’s mother was a housewife, who had a less education. However, Anita describes her as a wonderful mother and was very supportive of her children. She lived with Anita after Anita’s father died. Her mother was diagnosed with advanced stage skin cancer. Her mother was admitted to the army hospital to provide her the best treatment possible. Anita’s mother died in 2007. Her death devastated Anita who was very close to her mother.

My mother lived with me and I got her treated at the army hospital (crying) but it was her last stage in cancer. Then she did not survive. (Int 1: p 3; ln 43-44)

The later years. Anita completed her master’s degree in education and moved to a larger city in India. She obtained a government job and began her career as a teacher in a school. Anita loved children. Teaching was her passion.

I did my masters and bachelors and then I became a teacher...I have started....got my job in 1988....and till 2010 I was in the same school. It’s a long

time and it was a very good experience because I love little kids. I want to; it's my desire to become a teacher. (Int 1: p 1; ln 11-12, 6-9)

Anita was very selective in making friends. Therefore, she had only few friends during her childhood and adolescence. However, she considered them as 'real friends'. Anita relied on her friends and shared her feelings with them.

I didn't have a lot of friends because I am not that much social. But I had some. You can say as real friends....We were very best friends. We used to share our ideas. (Int 1: p 3; ln 56-58)

Anita married Rajesh in 1989. It was an arranged marriage. Rajesh was a mechanical engineer and worked for a well-known company. He left his job after few years and started his own business. Within couple of years, Rajesh became very successful in business. He turned out to be a business magnate among his associates. He earned good money. With an increase in her husband's income, Anita's status changed also to upper middle class society.

He is a good business man. You can say he was a business tycoon....and he was earning very good, the income increased to lakhs (1,000,00 Rupees) and the class also changed from middle class to higher middle class and still we are high middle class in India. (Int 1: p 10; ln 188-189; Int 2: p 1; ln 11-13)

Marriage and family. Anita did not know Rajesh before marriage. Her uncle (maternal) orchestrated the arranged marriage. He placed an advertisement in a local news paper for a suitable husband for Anita. He found Rajesh; an eligible bachelor and his family as perfect in-laws. The wedding unfolded with traditional rituals and celebrations that continued for several days. Anita began her new life. She found her husband was just right for her and her in-laws very compassionate.

My mama (maternal uncle) gave the advertisement in the newspaper (laugh) to get a good match and he really did a good job for me. He found a very good suitable match for me. Good in-laws, very supportive family. (Int 1: p 5; ln 82-84)

Anita spoke of a wonderful married life. She lived in an extended family with Rajesh's parents and his siblings. It was a three storey building where all the family members lived together. After couple of years, Rajesh and his younger brother moved to the southern part of the city as their business expanded. Rajesh's parents were not prepared to live on their own at their advanced age. Therefore, they sold their house and moved to live with their youngest son. Anita bought her own home in 2005. It was an old house. Rajesh and Anita spent large amounts of money to renovate it to make a high-quality house. It became the most beautiful house in the area. The house was extravagantly furnished, giving an essence of the Victorian era. Anita was content with the luxury of life in India. Anita still misses her home.

We bought an old house and we got it renovated like a new house. He spent around 8 to 10 lakhs [rupees] on that house and it all just came out like a good house....All the furniture.... wooden furniture and the house are so beautiful that whosoever comes to our house they just say "oh this is one of the best houses in this area". I just miss my house. (Int 2: p 2; ln 34-42)

Anita experienced several miscarriages. Rajesh was content with their first child. However, Anita wanted to have another child to be her daughter's companion. The second child was again a daughter. Anita and her parent-in-laws wished to have a son. Anita was a woman of faith. She prayed to God to give her a son. She made an oath to God that she would become a vegetarian if she had a son. This time it was a boy. The birth of her son brought pleasure in her life. It was the happiest moment for Anita.

That was the happiest moment. I have no words to explain....I made an oath to the God that I would become vegetarian if you give me a son. (Int 1: p 9, 17; ln 174, 344-345)

Anita has three children, two daughters and one son. Her eldest daughter, Pooja, is twenty one years old. She was studying engineering at a college in India when Anita

and Rajesh received their Canadian immigration. Pooja decided to complete her studies and therefore, did not accompany her parents to Canada. The other two children accompanied their parents to Canada. Anita's youngest daughter, Priya is seventeen and her son, Adit, is ten years old. Both of them are studying in local public schools in Lethbridge.

The journey to Canada

Decision making. Rajesh was fascinated with a life abroad. Though he had a successful business in India, he decided to move to Canada for a better future for his children. "He has taken a big risk for his family, for the benefit of his children, that is why we have shifted to Canada. Not for money but for the future of our children" (Int 1: p 7; ln 122-123). In India, life became difficult because of pollution, crowded population, and corruption. Summer was too hot; and food and water were not pure. Moreover, education for the children became extremely expensive and competitive. Anita was also disappointed with the unpleasant life in India. Therefore, the prospect of better future for her children inspired Anita to support Rajesh in his decision making to move to Canada.

In India it's very hot, very hot. There are almost eight months in summer. And very hot and moreover it is not safe for girls....too crowded. Pollution everything and there the eating stuff is not that pure as it in Canada. The water that is not pure. People are more space less. So we were having a good house and good job; but in the hearts of heart I was not that much happy. Because I was seeing that we are not getting the full benefit of money but we are paying....we have spent our life, only one third or one fourth of life is left. But for the children the whole life is there. So we wanted to begin their life, good life here. So that is for our next generation. (Int 1: p 11, 12; ln 216-222, 227-229)

Pre-Immigration knowledge of Canada. Rajesh searched on the Internet to know about the country once he decided to come to Canada. However, he was not

satisfied with the information he acquired from the Internet. Therefore, before making a final decision, Rajesh decided to visit Canada to explore the opportunities there.

We were not able to make up our mind if we should come here or not, so only to explore the things, to see the country, and just to have a trial we came here. (Int 3: p 1; ln 5-6)

In 2008, Rajesh and Anita visited Canada. They stayed in Toronto for one month. During this short stay in Toronto, Rajesh and Anita met many people who emigrated from India. None of these Canadian immigrants talked positive about their lives in Canada. However, nobody had returned back to their own country, India, even though they were not content with their lives. “We met many immigrants in Toronto. They were saying they are not happy but at the same time they are not going back; like they are staying and not happy” (Int 1: p 12; ln 232-233). Rajesh and Anita also met many Canadian people in government offices while completing their paper work for landing; however, they did not ask these Canadian people about job opportunities and the way of living in Canada. Although, Rajesh and Anita did not receive positive feedback about an immigrant’s life from their ethnic people, they finally decided to move to Canada. They believed that they would find their own ways to live and prosper.

Nobody gave us the positive results and that they were saying that they are struggling here and not getting good job and nobody gave us the positive side. Nobody showed us the positive sight of them. But still we felt that we should move here, because we will find things our own ways. (Int 1: p 12; ln 234-237)

Moving to Canada. Rajesh and Anita received their immigration papers in 2008. It took almost two years to make the final decision to leave the homeland and start a new life in a new country. During this period of time, Rajesh gathered information from the Internet and maintained a notebook where he noted down all information, important contacts, and future plans. Rajesh was a “good planner”. He decided to move to

Lethbridge as he had a friend living there. In addition, Lethbridge is a small, peaceful city; and even though there are fewer job opportunities—a smaller city is better to raise children. Therefore, Rajesh and Anita moved to Lethbridge in July, 2010 with their two younger children. Their eldest daughter stayed back in India to complete her bachelor degree in engineering.

It's my husband's decision because one of his friends live here....and it's a small city, peaceful city, and my husband was deciding its better to go in a smaller city in the beginning.once you get mixed with the environment, you are friendly with the environment, with the culture. Only then you can move to bigger city. (Int 1: p 12; ln 240-246)

Leaving the homeland. Leaving the homeland and family was not easy. Rajesh's parents were very sad and distressed about the departure of their son and his family.

Anita was also sad to leave her country, her family, and her home that she decorated with fondness. However, the excitement of embarking on a new life surpassed her sadness.

Anita brought many household things that she would need to begin her new life. Anita brought her photos; a keepsake of her beautiful memories. Anita brought her Gods—Lord Brahma, the creator; Lord Vishnu, the preserver; and Lord Shiva, the destroyer—the Gods of her faith who would provide with her strength and courage on her new journey to Canada.

Only household things, like clothes, some money....my parents photograph and my Gods which I worship....whether I have moved here, I want to be in my own. And to do whatever I used to do in India. (Int 1: p 15, 16; ln 307, 309, 322-323)

Reaching Canada. It was a perfect summer day. Anita and Rajesh with their two younger children reached the Calgary airport. The sun was shining bright; and the mild cool summer breeze was blowing. The air was filled with magical light. Anita was amazed with the magnificent beauty of vast blue sky meeting the Rocky Mountains. Anita began her new journey with sheer pleasure of a wonderful life (Fn 1).

Life in Canada

Initial days in Canada. Canada is a beautiful country. The vast openness; the pure, fresh air; and the tranquility of the surroundings surprised Anita most. In contrast to her homeland, Canada appeared as a heaven with its better climate, safe and security in life, and purity of things.

The initial experience was good at that time, It was good, the surrounding was good, a beautiful country, everything is pure, this thing still fascinate us....And it's just like a heaven when we compare that summer to India. It's a heaven here. (Int 1: p 13, 18; ln 253-256, 365-366)

Rajesh and Anita rented a small, tidy apartment. Bit by bit they started to buy things which were necessary for their daily lives. They purchased a used van to drive. Anita and Rajesh did start their lives again from the scratch.

Upon arriving to Canada, Anita faced challenges in communicating with people. Language was one of the major obstacles that Anita experienced in this new context. "The problem is the language problem, of listening, understanding" (Int 1: p 13; ln 255-256). Anita could not understand the Canadian accent. Therefore, she did not feel comfortable speaking with the people. Anita felt disconnected.

When I move to Canada, I had problem in listening to their accent and understanding them and still there, the problem is still there. So I don't feel that much confident in talking to them because, I don't understand clearly what they are saying (Int 1: p 23, 24; ln 476-479)

Anita found public transportation expensive. Therefore, they preferred to walk if the distance was short. "Public transport seemed very costly to us. Just two dollars fifty cents wherever you want to go....whether you go just to next place you have to pay two fifty" (Int 1: p 18; ln 369-370). Moreover, waiting for the bus in the cold weather was not pleasant. Therefore, Rajesh purchased a second hand van within two months of their arrival. Unfortunately, Rajesh had a serious accident while driving the van in the city.

The van was badly damaged and Rajesh needed to buy a new car. It was a great financial loss for these new immigrants at the time when they did not have any earnings. It also caused mental stress for Anita. She felt nervous while driving as a consequence of the accident.

Unfortunately we met with an accident; collision. The car was badly damaged....And then after fifteen days my husband bought a new car. So it was a loss. Monetary loss for us as well as a mental loss also because still when I drive a car, I just, I didn't, I am not out of that incident, the collision. I am still scared on the road. (Int 1: p 19; ln 373, 375-378)

Disappointments in life. Anita gave up a well-to-do life in India with expectations of a better life in Canada. Upon arrival, Anita experienced quite the opposite of what she anticipated. To her dismay, Anita discovered that her twenty years experience of teaching had no recognition in Canada. "I was pretty sure that I would also get a job but unfortunately when I came here I found out that there was no job for teacher" (Int 3: p 2; 25-26). Being a teacher was central to her identity. She found her identity denied in Canada. Anita was sad and disappointed.

Bad experience was that I'm not getting that job that I'm interested in. They are not giving the advantage of my twenty years of experience in India. They are not giving any advantage. They just tell me to go to the university and took full year course and then we will see whether to hire you as a teacher or not. (Int 1: p 18; 359-362)

Anita planned to enrol in a college to obtain a certificate in early childhood education. Anita applied to secure a bursary/grant to support her study and meet the associated expenses. Anita did not fulfill the criteria to obtain financial support. Even though Anita and Rajesh did not have any real earnings in Canada, the money they brought from India for their future security disqualified Anita to obtain a grant or bursary. Therefore, Anita gave up her intent to further her education. Another major disappointment in her life.

We have money in our bank what we brought from our country....for our security. Those were our own money earned from another country....I didn't get any financial support from the college because we had enough funds in our account (laugh)....So they rejected the funding. So I dropped my idea to go for early childhood education.... Then I was totally upset..... It's quite harassment for the immigrants. (Int 1: p 14; 272-277)

Anita's eldest daughter, Pooja will move to Canada to join her parents once she completes her graduation in engineering from India. However, Pooja's bachelor degree will not be recognized in Canada. She will need to study another two years at a Canadian university to acquire a bachelor degree. Therefore, it will be a loss of two more years for Pooja. This frustrates Anita.

That's frustrating for us, because she has already completed four years study in India to become bachelors in engineering....and she has to go for more two years, to become a graduate over here....So these things make me upset. (Int 1: p 21; 423-427)

It is also a reason for Anita to give up her dream to continue her education which is costly without any financial support. Pooja's education takes priority over her mother's education. "I think it is the time for my daughter to go to the university" (Int 3: p 3; ln 58-59). Therefore, Anita missed the chance to become more educated. Anita sacrificed her plan to make a career in teaching for her daughter.

So, I have my daughter who are coming in June, who will go to university, we have to pay for her....Oh, it will be a lot of spending over her then how can I go for my education? (Int 1: p 15; ln 293-295)

Being unable to obtain a job as a teacher, Anita started searching for more menial jobs. Following only two months of searching, Anita obtained a job at a retail (grocery) store. The cultural differences and language barriers made Anita uncomfortable at her workplace. In addition, she found her employer impolite to her. Anita left her first job only after one month.

That was a new place for me, and it was not cooperative over there. The manager was very rude, and I was on the cash, I was not able to recognize the vegetables that looked the same, but had different names... I was not that much comfortable over there....I didn't like the culture over there, and then I left. (Int 1: p 22; In 440-443, 436)

Anita found work at a fast food chain restaurant. Anita wanted to work to have some Canadian experiences. She also wanted to overcome her language barriers. However, as an employee she needed to mop and clean up the dirt of other people at the restaurant. The nature of this work embarrassed Anita. In India there was a class system. Mopping and cleaning up after other people degraded her class. "In India there is class in the society, employee will do the cleanliness and who is class one he will sit on the chair and will order" (Int 1: p 27; In 541-542). Although Canada had the dignity of labour, Anita could not share her Canadian work experience with her in-laws in India. Anita would lose "face" if she told her family and friends. People in India would see that she had not been successful in Canada. Anita felt humiliated and scared.

The first time my manager told me to clean the tables, take this cloth. I was just so scared; I was wishing, I was just thinking this earth to open and I should go inside the ground. So, there were tears in my eyes but I didn't disclose to anybody....I didn't tell my in-laws that I do mopping....I never told to my relatives in India about what we are doing here. No, No, they will laugh at me. They will say why do you go to Canada? You have everything in India. (Int 1: p 26; In 534-537, 521-523)

Rajesh obtained a job as manager at a convenience store. As with other employees, he also needed to clean the store. It broke Anita's heart. They used to avail maid service for fifteen years while they were in India. Anita did not want her husband to mop and clean the store. It was distressing for Anita to have her husband to clean up after other people.

I don't want to see him mopping. I myself can mop but I don't want him to see me mopping and wiping. Because it hurts, we don't disclose to each other but in

our hearts it hurts. In our heart it hurts that my husband or my wife is doing that because in India we used to have full-time maids for fifteen years. (Int 1: p 26; ln 527-530)

Not giving up. Anita has sacrificed a great deal to be in Canada. She has sacrificed her professional career; she is now working part-time at a fast food restaurant and she is cleaning up other peoples' dirt. However, these life challenges do not thwart her from living. Anita is determined in her quest to move forward. Anita prays to God to give her strength to overcome the challenges. Anita finds peace in her faith.

I just pray to God, that you are the only one that will make things possible, make the impossible things possible for us you are the only one' I just pray to god. (Int 1: p 18; ln 358-359)

Anita is worried about the uncertainty of the future. Anita is anxious about the losses she is experiencing. However, her frustration could not prevent her from exercising active agency in life. She keeps engaged in life. Anita remains busy with her job. She looks to the promises of the future. Anita does not give up.

I am happy with my job because I get busy over there. When I come back to home again the exhaust is in my mind....I just want to convince myself that it will take time here to make the things go my way but I have to wait for the time....it's not even a year, it will take time to make our dreams come true. So we can't regret. It's too early for us to say that our dreams have not come true. It will take time. (Int 3: p 18, 19; ln 361-362, 373-374; Int 1: p 20; ln 411-412)

Rajesh is a confident man. He is very positive and determined person. Rajesh never gives up. He is giving himself a two year deadline that within two years he will have things settled. Rajesh reassures his wife, Anita.

I get frustrated about this things and....my husband is saying, be happy, it will take time to have lavished life here , don't be in a hurry....everything will go fine if you have patience.... my husband always tells me that wait for two or more years to get things settle here. (Int 1: p 9; ln 169-171; Int 3: p 6; ln 106-107)

Post immigration experiences. Rajesh and Anita arrived Canada with expectations of a better life. Rajesh had a flourishing business in India. Anita had a career in teaching. They had a life of status in India. Rajesh and Anita gave up much to be in Canada to offer their children a better education and prosperous future.

We have spent our life, only one third or one fourth of life is left. But for the children the whole life is there. So we began to, wanted to begin their life, good life here. So that is for our next generation. (Int 1: p 12; In 227-229)

Canada offers high standard education. Anita is very pleased about the schooling of her children. The public schools are free of cost. Moreover, the children are participating outdoor and indoor activities. Anita finds her children happy; and they are enjoying their schools. In India there were loads of studies at home and school. Anita's children do not want to go back to India anymore. Anita is pleased to find her children happy.

Here education is really good, far, far better than India.....I am happy with the education system....they are getting good education, but not with that burden that they used to have in India with the tons of books and lots and lots of home works and test and competitions, students often commit suicide in India. (Int 2: p 7, 8; In 129,135,149-152)

Every country has different ways of living and cultural mores. Anita appreciates the independency and responsibility that develop among the Canadian children as they grow up. However, there are some social values that Anita does not wish for her children to follow. From her perspective, Canadians are not trustworthy in marriage. Anita also perceives Canadian cultural values to be less respectful to elders. Anita wants her children to follow the good values of both Canadian and Indian culture and avoid negative values.

Canadians, like the couples are not that trustworthy to each other, even if the husband is not there, the wife is living with a boyfriend and the husband is living

with his girlfriend....I don't want my children to become like this....I want children to be independent and at the same time they respect their parents also. So this is the mixture of Indian culture and Canadian culture, independent living from the Canadians and a respect for parents from the Indian (Int 2: p 4; ln 67-70; 78-80)

Anita wants to preserve her culture among her children. They came from India as grown up children and their culture is entrenched in their hearts. She wants her children to remember and follow their Hindu religion; and retain their Indian self-identity. At the same time, Anita also wishes her children to adapt to Canadian culture to fit into this new society as they are going to live here. Anita helps her children integrate and feel part of Canadian society.

Hindu cultures are well rooted in them because they are grown over there. They are quite grown up when they come....so Indian culture is well rooted in their blood. I don't want them to forget their Indian culture....But we want our children to be acquainted with Canadian culture because they will be living their life in Canada for future (Int 2: p 3; ln 55-58, 61-62)

India is amazingly rich in its tradition and heritage. Growing up in a culture of liveliness and festivals, Anita spent her life in the warmth of family relations and celebrations. With the burden of responsibilities of life in Canada, Anita is beginning to forget about the festivals. Her family back in India remind her. The gradual loss of her culture upsets Anita.

India is a land of festivals, every time there is something happening. So here we just forget. Yesterday was this festival? Today is this festival? They just tell us on the phone. So this is the things that upsets me, this things upsets me. (Int 1: 20; ln 406-408)

Anita is a woman of faith. She wants to preserve her religion and practice her prayers everyday. "I daily do the prayers, read some books, religions books and light a lamp in front of God and I want to do this practice, I don't want to leave" (Int 1: p 16; ln 324-325). Anita finds no temple in Lethbridge where she and her family can go for

worship. Anita misses having a place of worship. Anita celebrates the religious events at home as best she can and calls her family in India.

We just celebrate a little bit at our homes....we just remember the day....we just talked to our parents on the phone, just like this. There is no Temple here. That's the thing I miss here. No religious place here. (Int 1: p 16, 17; ln 327-331)

Anita also senses that immigrating to Canada has some impacts on practicing her religion. Anita became a vegetarian when she gave birth to her son. She made an oath to Shiva that she would become a vegetarian if she had a son. Anita kept her promise for ten years in India. Now, Anita works at a fast food restaurant where she serves hamburgers made of meat. Anita broke that oath she made to God and began eating meat.

I made an oath to the God that I would become vegetarian if you give me a son. For 10 years I was vegetarian but after coming here I thought that I can't survive here if I am vegetarian, because even if you are buying fries, like potato fries they are all cooking in the same oil. So there is no use of being vegetarian, so I turned non veggie. (Int 1: p 17; ln 344-348)

Parenting in a different social context is difficult and challenging. Anita's experience is no exception to that. She needs to keep track on her teenage daughter, Priya and protect her from this open society. "Most difficult challenge is to protect our children from this open culture here, this is one of the most challenge here, to keep an eye on their work, where they are going, what they are doing" (Int 2: p 12, 13; ln 152-154). However, Anita has to negotiate her mothering practices and values in a new environment.

My daughter always tells me that you should have a trust for me....Sometimes she sits on the computer till midnight, sometimes I wish I should come and see what she is watching....I have trust on her that she will not look into the wrong things. (Int 3: p 9; ln 170-174)

Rajesh still runs his business in India. He is obliged to visit India very often to take care of his business. Therefore, Rajesh quit the job he started at the convenience store in Lethbridge. "He was working....He didn't get the leave....so he quitted the job"

(Int 1: p 25; ln 514-516). On the other hand, Anita could not obtain any job commensurate with her experiences and qualifications. Anita has accepted a part-time job. Therefore, they earn less than what they spend. The family keeps drawing on their money from India, but at a lesser exchange rate. It creates tension in the family and in the marriage as it is unsustainable over the long term. Anita feels anxious.

We are earning less and spending more....we have brought our money from India and whenever my husband goes to India, he brings some money from his business. If you calculate Dollars into rupees, then yeah it will be big headache. We are spending \$1 it means we are spending 45 rupees in India. Yeah 45 rupees is equal to one dollar, so if we spent \$10 its 450, so we never calculate, it brings frustration for us that we are spending so much money. (Int 3: p 4-5; ln 79-87)

Rajesh plans to start a business in Canada. Anita dreams to join his business. They want to buy a franchise. They wish to buy a beautiful house for themselves. However, the reality is different. Rajesh is not doing well financially in Canada. He does not obtain employment. Anita works part-time at a fast food restaurant. The bank will not provide them a mortgage to purchase a house. Anita feels sad.

My husband is more interested in Franchise but we still don't have that much money we are interested in buying own house but the bank is not giving us any mortgages because my husband is not having any jobs....I always feel sad....I am sad. (Int 3: p 17, 18; ln 336-339, 347)

Anita had luxury in her life in India. Upon arrival to Canada, Anita found herself at the lowest stratum of the social ladder. Anita is promised by her husband that in time everything will work out. Anita becomes impatient. It is difficult for her as the family is starting over again. It will take time. "I want the things to happen immediately I don't want to wait, I don't have that much patience, and I want the things that I used to have in India here immediately" (Int 3: p 18; ln 351-352). Anita gets frustrated, she shouts at her family members. The constant worry in their daily life affects their family relationship. Rajesh tells her to go back to India.

My son is young, he gets scared of me and my daughter doesn't want me to get involved in her things....Sometimes my husband gets angry with me when I do things like this....he says you are silly, these are stupid things you should go back to India, I will take care of the children, you back in teaching job over there and be happy there. (Int 3: p 8, 18; ln 147-148, 347-349)

Anita is socially isolated. She has no neighbourhood friends. She is not familiar with the culture. Anita is not confident to speak with Canadian people. Her fearful and shy demeanour keeps her from making friends with Canadians. This sense of isolation affects her most. This solitude is so prevalent in her life that Anita becomes more dependent on her husband.

You don't see people on the roads....If you want to sit in the balcony, what to see? So this is the type of isolation, and no neighbourhood friends because they are busy with their own culture....So this type of isolation, when my husband is here then it is okay....and when he was out in India two months. That was a horrible time for me. (Int 1; p 20; ln 395-402)

Her living in seclusion makes Anita frustrated. Anita misses her eldest daughter, her parent-in-laws, and her family in India. Anita misses her country. Anita makes phone calls to India. "I miss my in-laws, my aunts and uncles, my sister....we talk on the phone, and sometimes on the Skype....to my in-laws and my daughter who is in hostel" (Int 1: p 20, 21; ln 404, 417, 420-421).

Rajesh believes in networking to get important information, to have good references, and to obtain a good job. Rajesh has figured out that references from Canadian people are more supportive to get a good job or start a business. "There is a references list that we made for our job--all are English people" (Int 3: p 13; ln 259-260). Therefore, Rajesh goes to church to build relationship with Canadian people and establish a good network. However, these relationships are limited only to church or the phone.

Rajesh and Anita do not socialize with these Canadians. They are not really their friends.

Rajesh and Anita do not have any Canadian friends.

We don't have that much time in our hand, just to talk to them on phone, by going to church....church friends, all are church friends. (Int 3: p 13, 14; ln 253, 262)

Anita has little support other than her husband in her day to day household activities. Her children are not used to helping out at home; therefore, they do not assist her mother. Anita becomes angry. Anita shouts and then regrets her outbursts. "I wash the dishes every day, mop the floor everyday, I get tired, I shout (laugh), I shout at my children, I shout why I have come here, who told me to come here, I regret" (Int 2: p 9; ln 179-182). Anita feels trapped with the tyranny of her routine life. In addition to her household work, Anita manages her job; and stumbles with the daily stress of raising children and the strain of starting a new life in this country. Anita promises to change herself to make adjustments to life in this new context.

My husband sometimes helps me....My children are not used to work because of full time maid. Now my daughter she hardly does anything for me because they are not habitual of doing....So I have to do everything....but I am that of that kind of person that I can change myself for the circumstances. (Int 2: p 8, 9; ln 163-169, 177)

Moving forward. Rajesh had aspirations for starting his own business in Canada. He was actively in search for an opportunity to buy a franchise. Rajesh could not secure any mortgages from the bank. There were also some systemic barriers that obstructed him from starting a business. Rajesh re-calibrates his original plan. Instead of starting his own business, he will find a job.

My husband after he comes from India will look for a job....he has applied for many jobs till he gets his own business....My husband is looking for job opportunity. (Int 3: p 5, 17; ln 87-88, 329)

Although, Anita could not obtain employment of her choice, she wants to continue working at menial jobs. She believes that her work experience will provide her opportunity to integrate with the new culture, improve her language skills, and build her confidence. Anita looks forward.

I am not happy with my job but I am still going to get involve with people to have, I have language problem, improve my listening, talking to people to be exposed to the people, if you go outside you will get more job opportunity...if you go out then you will gain confidence by talking to people. (Int 3: p 5; ln 310-312, 317-318)

Suggestions for new immigrants. Language is one of the major challenges for immigrant women that create misery and isolation. Lack of communication skills also prevents new immigrants to find jobs. Therefore, Anita suggests that immigrants to go for ESL training; go out to mix with people; and work to improve their communication skills.

If she has a language problem she should go for ESL first because if you have good command on the English then you can go for long ahead....if you don't know English you can't work anywhere, to have a good job you should have good command on English. (Int 3: p 16; ln 305-308)

Anita discovers that education is very important for immigrants to sustain in Canada. Women need to be literate if they plan to come to this country. Anita also suggests immigrant women further their education in Canada to obtain a professional job.

If one is professional in his or her own country, then he or she should improve his own professional education here, go to the university or go to the college and study for two or three years to get certified here. (Int 3: p 17; ln 323-325)

Major achievements in life. Anita is making an effort to improve her communication skills. She has gained some confidence, especially speaking English. Anita becomes independent. She can go to any place by herself; and she feels confident to go for interviews. Anita does not hesitate to speak with people. Her children have

improved their language skills. They do well in their schools. They are making friends with Canadian children. Anita finds her children successfully integrating in this new country. Anita considers these as major achievements throughout her journey in Canada.

I have gained a little more confidence....I can talk, now I don't hesitate with talking to people....if I get an interview call from any of the places, I can go there and face that interview....my daughter she has become more confident....my son also, he has gaining English accent, whenever he is speaking he has Canadian accent and I feel very good. By the next coming year he will become a full Canadian....So this is the achievement. (Int 3: p 22; ln 430- 441)

The journey continues. Rajesh and Anita arrived Canada with a dream to have a successful life of their own and prosperous future for their children. They have encountered many hurdles throughout their journey. However, Anita is an optimistic woman. She dreams of her husband successful in his own business in Canada. Anita's happiness depends on the possibility of her husband's business. Anita dreams of something better for their children. Anita looks to the future—with optimism and hope.

Caroline: Life in the Homeland

Participant as person. Caroline is in her mid forties. She is from the eastern part of Nigeria. Caroline is tall, medium in stature, and she has a friendly demeanour. She looks younger than her age. Caroline is a woman with pride and grace, combined with charm, wit, and intelligence. She speaks with confidence. She laughs loud and zestfully. Growing up in a Christian home, Caroline is a spiritual woman. Her faith in God helped her to remain calm and strong during the initial hurdles Caroline came across while moving to Canada.

The early years. Caroline speaks of a wonderful childhood. Her father was a police man. From her perspective he was a great man and a wonderful father. Caroline observes that a man who has problems with his wife eventually will have problems with

his children. Caroline's father loved his wife. He took care of his children and guided them to grow up as good persons.

My father is a very lively man, he is good, he loves his wife and he loves his children. You know if you love your woman it will transfer to your kids. Most man have problem with their family, their wives, at times they have problem with their children too. I have a very good father, he is lovely and we grew up in his presence. (Int 1: p 8; ln 152-155)

Caroline describes her father as a lively man. He served as a male role model through his attitude and behaviour within the family. While she was growing up, Caroline always prayed for a husband who would be like her father.

When I was growing up, I always believed in God for a husband that will be like my father, because my father was a perfect man. He is a very good husband....So I have always prayed to God that he would give me that kind of a man. (Int 1: p 5; ln 82-84)

Caroline's mother was a business woman. She owned and ran a big cafeteria. Besides her business, Caroline's mother looked after her family and cared for her children. Caroline grew up with her other siblings with love and affection. Caroline treasures those childhood memories.

I was born into a Christian home, I have wonderful parents, my mommy was superb, and my daddy when we were growing up, my siblings and I said my father loved us most. Now we understand that our mother loved us too. Yeah I have a very wonderful father, I love my parents. (Int 1: p 1; ln 8-11)

The later year. Caroline is the third of six children. She has three brothers and two sisters. Her two brothers and one sister live in the United States of America. Her two other siblings live in Nigeria. Caroline grew up in Lagos, the capital city of Nigeria where she attended the college and university. She obtained her bachelor and master degrees in English. Caroline taught English at a high school before she immigrated to Canada.

Caroline met Joseph at church. Joseph was an engineer. A tall big man, Joseph was kind and compassionate. He was spiritual and very affectionate to his family.

Caroline found him as the perfect man she had been waiting for. Caroline fell in love the moment she met Joseph.

My father is a tall man and my brothers, everybody in my home is tall....so I was praying God that I want a tall man....and so when I met my husband it fitted up very perfectly, my husband is a very tall guy....he is really good....and I saw him as somebody who has fear of God. (Int 1: p 5; ln 85-90)

Marriage and family. Caroline married Joseph when she was twenty five years old. They knew each other for nine months and decided to marry. The wedding unfolded with traditional rituals at the village from where Caroline and her family originally came. “The traditional wedding in my country is done in the village, where you have come from original....it is always a big ceremony, depends on how comfortable you are” (Int 1: p 4; ln 67-70). It was a big ceremony extended with family members and friends in attendance. After the traditional wedding, a “white wedding” took place in the church at the city where Caroline and Joseph lived. Caroline began her new life. She was happy and content. Caroline found her husband, Joseph, was just perfect for her.

He is just perfect, he is okay....I thank God for giving him to me, I am happy for this past seventeen years of marriage, I never regret anything. And my friends in Nigeria, my family, my parents they all felt a lucky marriage. (Int 1: p 5; ln 92-95)

Caroline has four children, three sons and one daughter. All of her children were born in Nigeria. During her pregnancies, Caroline’s family provided her with physical and emotional support. Caroline’s mother stayed for three months with Caroline each time when she gave birth to her children and helped with the newborns. Joseph also supported her with her household works.

Whenever I had babies, my father would come for about two weeks, then after two to three weeks, he would go back and my mom would have to stay with me for two to three months. That is my culture in Nigeria....if you have a mother or older sister, you no matter what, they would come and take care of you and the baby for at least two months. (Int 1: p 8; ln 145-148)

Being a mother is an amazing experience for a woman. Caroline described her motherhood as “awesome”. She was very pleased to find her husband and family happy and cheerful. “I don’t know how to explain it. It was splendid....when I look at my child, so this guy has been inside me. Even my husband almost went crazy. Everybody was just too happy” (Int 1: p 7; ln 128-130).

The journey to Canada

Decision making. Joseph was a thoughtful father. He wanted to secure a good education and better future for his children. The education system in Nigeria is good; however, there are limited resources. Conversely, Canada is a developed country that offers high quality education for children. Therefore, Joseph decided to immigrate to Canada for the betterment of his children.

He is the man that loves his children so much, he wanted a better quality education for the kids. He always believed that he will train his children so that they should at least go to university and have good education....So the main thing is to give my kids the quality of education. (Int 1: p 9; ln 168-170)

Caroline is an ambitious woman. Though, Caroline taught English at a high school in Nigeria, she had aspirations for a career in nursing. As a result, when Joseph planned to move to Canada, Caroline saw it as an opportunity to accomplish her dream.

I have been waiting to be a nurse when I was growing up. My mom used to call me a nurse. So, when I was going to university, I say no I don’t want to be this, even though I wanted to go to university my head was going to that you know being a nurse. Then when I get this opportunity to get here then see if I can achieve that. (Int 1: p 9; ln 181-184)

Pre-Immigration knowledge of Canada. Like many other immigrants who come to Canada each year, Caroline and Joseph had very little knowledge about living in Canada. The only thing they heard about this country was its extreme cold. “I just know about Canada, that it is a really cool region. That was my only fear” (Int 1: p 11; ln 208) Caroline thought that it would be easy to get a job and begin a new life in this new country. She did not know the challenges immigrants experienced to obtain a professional job and live a good life.

I did not know, I thought it would be easy; you come and get a job, you know....Actually I never knew in Nigeria, but when I came, I find out lot of struggling from other immigrants. (Int 1: p 11; ln 221-224)

Moving to Canada. It took almost two years for Joseph and Caroline to make a decision to immigrate to Canada. Another three years were required to receive their immigration papers. Therefore, almost five years were spent to reach the final decision to leave their homeland and start a new life once again.

While they received the immigration papers, Joseph and Caroline searched on the Internet to gather information about Canada. They were aware of extreme winter in this country. Caroline and Joseph went on the Internet and found Lethbridge as the sunniest city of Canada. Moreover, they had some Nigerian friends who lived in Lethbridge. Therefore, Lethbridge would be the best place for them to begin their journey in Canada.

I never believed that there would be “sun”, so we went on the Internet and find out. Originally we were suppose to go to Vancouver because the weather there is that it is better but second thought we found out Lethbridge that it is the sunniest city in Canada. So we say okay lets go to the sunniest city in Canada. (Int 1: p 11; ln 212-215)

Leaving the homeland. It was not easy to leave her homeland. Caroline felt deep rooted sense of belonging to her culture and country. The decision to come to Canada had

profound effects upon her family. Caroline was distressed at hearing her mother say, “America took three of my children, I am praying for them to come back....and now you are going” (Int 1: p 10; ln 194-195). Caroline promised her parents that she would call them every week.

Oh, it wasn't funny anyway, when we went to tell my parents my mommy started crying....I explained to her, and then she became fine. I make sure I call them every week, or every other week. (Int 1: p 10; ln 201-202)

Caroline felt lonely and sad the moment she left her country. The fear of the unknown made her uncomfortable. The sense of uprooting frightened her. Caroline realized that she began a journey in an environment where she would be the only black among all white people. Caroline was worried and anxious.

You know you are leaving your loved ones, your family; it's not something that is funny....The reality of that was scaring me....oh I am not going to see this person for a long time, my environment will be filled with people from different colors. I will be the only black and all the other people will be white. Am I going to get their accent, you know? I was so scared, but I just had to go. (Int 1: p 12; ln 236-239)

It was a six hour flight from Nigeria to Frankfurt. The plane was full of black people. Caroline was comfortable. However, the scenario was reversed when Caroline and her family boarded on the plane for their journey from Frankfurt to Calgary. She found all white people around her on the plane. She struggled to understand their tone of voice. Caroline started to feel uncomfortable with her own color. Caroline stepped into her new life with deep concern and uneasiness.

In the plane from Lagos to Frankfurt were comfortable because a lot of black. Literally 95% was black, only few whites, it was okay I thought it was going to be that way too. But when we went to Frankfurt to Calgary, we were the only black in the whole big plane. I just look at that white and look at myself oh my God where have I put myself into. So it was from that point, the reality began and I came to know what I am going to face and it was not easy you know (Int 1: p 12 ln 239-244)

Reaching Canada. It was late summer in Canada. The green summer leaves turned to autumn shades, Caroline and her family reached Lethbridge. The apartment was rented from Nigeria through the Internet. Her friends, who lived in Lethbridge, bought some used furniture for them. Food was ready in the kitchen. The warm reception from her friends eased Caroline's anxiety. Caroline and her family embarked on their new lives. (FN 1)

Life in Canada

Initial days in Canada. Upon arriving to Canada, Caroline found it almost similar to Nigeria. Calgary city was smaller than Lagos, the city, where Caroline came from. "So when I saw Calgary, it was okay it's much smaller than Lagos, where I am coming from" (Int 1: p 14; ln 273-274). However, the vast openness of the country, less population, and an organised system impressed Caroline most. In addition, Caroline observed that the Canadian people were very friendly, accommodative, and welcoming. The generosity and friendliness of the people around her afforded her emotional strength. Caroline was happy.

Within couple of weeks I found out that the people here are friendly. The people here are lovely; so many people want to talk to you...when I went to the bank the person would open the door for you, I felt so impressed and happy. (Int 1: p 15; ln 298-299, 303-304)

Canada is a developed country. All of its government offices work within a very organized structure. Caroline was surprised with the efficiency and coordination of these government services.

So many things work in the system, like we filled up so many papers, say for health card, we filled up some applications. Before we came, the papers are here. We filled the application for kid's allowances and it came so fast. (Int 2: p 1; ln 6-8)

Caroline was anxious of being a black woman. She thought she would not be accepted well by the white Canadian people. "I told you when I was coming I think as a black, people will look down at me... we are black people they wouldn't like us" (Int 2: p 1; 9, Int 1: p 15; ln 306-307). Caroline discovered that Canadians were very receptive; and they loved strangers. The feeling of cordial acceptance by the Canadians eased her anxiousness. Caroline felt comfortable.

The people are very receptive. They have value for which I am being....they are good, they are good. I like Canada. It's a good place to be in....I told my husband....these whites are good, yes they are good even I am black. So it's kind of erase my mindset that I came with. So, lots more relaxed now. (Int 2: p 1; ln 10-13)

The cold weather in Canada was a great challenge for Caroline and her children. In Nigeria, the weather is relatively hot throughout the year. In contrast, Canada has an extremely cold winter and heavy snowfall. Caroline was terrified seeing the first snowfall. She thought that she would not survive this intense cold. Her children also struggled with the cold. Caroline hated winter.

The very first day was very horrible; I put on four five winter coats even to my kids....I had to call my friends to say are the people still going to school today? She started laughing, yeah. So, they get ready and go to school. My kids missed the bus because my daughter fell down. She fell on the ground, so they missed the bus and I came back home, gave them tea, I thought the world was coming to an end. (Int 1: p 18; ln 353-356)

Caroline found language as another major obstacle to adjust to life in this new context. She could not understand the Canadian accent. She faced challenges in communicating with people. Therefore, Caroline was not comfortable to speak with Canadians. Caroline wanted to disengage herself from the community.

It was a very big challenge. The challenge I had....it is not gone actually, but I am learning. That time I did not understand the accent, so if I want to go out then I know I am gonna meet people and talk. I prefer to stay at home than going out. (Int 2: p 4; ln 72-74)

Caroline was optimistic to obtain a job aligned with her education. However, the reality was quite different than she expected. Soon after her arrival, Caroline came to know that many immigrants did not succeed to obtain employment commensurate with their qualifications and expertise. Caroline lost her interest in obtaining her Canadian credentials in teaching.

When I came I planned to get a job may be continuing what I trained for, but I was told the restrictions. Then I was told that someone who studied in US, Michigan....she has to start all over again. If some one from US has to start all over again then what about me from Nigeria (Laugh)? They won't even look at me! So I didn't try for that. (Int 2: p 6; ln 115-119)

Disappointments in life. People from all over the world come to Canada with dreams and hopes. As with many other immigrants, Caroline and Joseph also dreamt of a wonderful life for them and her children. However, the experience was bitter-sweet for them. To her dismay, Caroline discovered that there were no jobs available similar to the ones she had just left behind. Caroline was disappointed.

I thought that I am moving here, put my kids in school, get a good job as a teacher you know maybe I will go back to school for two three years and do my nursing. Life would be wonderful....because we were told that they need professionals....we didn't know it would be this way. (Int 1: p 11, 12; ln 225-229)

Joseph is an engineer. He was employed by a reputable company in Nigeria. He earned good money. Joseph came to Canada to advance his career. However, he could not obtain a job that was aligned with his skills and expertise. Non-recognition of his foreign education and experience became barriers to secure employment in his profession. Therefore, Joseph would need to study further at a Canadian university. Unfulfilled promises of jobs gave nothing but a tarnished view of Canada. Joseph returned back to Nigeria after three months, leaving Caroline with her children in the land of unknown. Caroline felt lonely. Another major disappointment in life.

He said if he could get a good job here that will qualify the kind of a job he was hoping to get he will stay...when he came he found out by himself that he has to spend some years in the university again. And then they will see his skills and other thing. Then he said he will come back and go to the university after we are settled you know and start all over again. (Int 1: p 16; ln 323-328)

Caroline was living a secluded life in her small apartment while Joseph left Canada. She experienced severe isolation and loneliness. "I was kind of left alone, it wasn't funny you know staying alone" (Int 2: p 10; ln 188). When the children left home for school, it created an absence in the home. Caroline was not working. She stayed home all alone. This sense of isolation affected Caroline tremendously.

I felt lonely when my husband left. I wasn't working, I wasn't going to school, I was lonely. In the morning my children leave for school, I just sit all alone, I would do cooking if I need to do cooking, then I go out to the park, walk half an hour come back, take my shower, watch television. No body to call because that times every body will be in the office working....Uhh it was so bad....you go up, you come down, nothing to do and you just look at your life you are wasting in a way. (Int 2: p 10; ln 189-195)

Caroline became depressed and frustrated. The stress of her husband's geographical distance contributed to the isolation she experienced, as she had no family or few friends to provide her relief and emotional support. The constant worry of starting a new life in a new country was coupled with this strain of isolation. Caroline called her husband in Nigeria. She wanted to return home. The loneliness was killing her.

I just tell my husband I want to come back to Nigeria. He said no, you can't leave your kids all alone there. I said how can I continue to live this way? No, loneliness is getting too much, its killing me! (Int 2: p 10; ln 195-197)

Not giving up. The initial experiences were not pleasant for Caroline and she faced many challenges upon arriving to Canada. However, extreme weather, challenges with communication, and even emotional and geographical distances from husband did

not prevent Caroline from her active search for opportunities. She was resolute in her quest to survive such unanticipated challenges. Caroline looks forward for the future.

Soon after she arrived in Canada, Caroline went through the process to obtain her driver's licence. Caroline realized that a driver's licence was essential for her independence and autonomy. In addition, waiting for bus in extreme cold discouraged her from using public transportation. Caroline acquired her driver's licence. Caroline bought a car within two weeks of her stay in Lethbridge. Caroline started driving.

When I came, I went for computer based test for my class seven, I did that once and I passed that one. I did the exam and I passed it. I was given the paper that I was able to drive, but I have to have someone by my side. And then I submitted my original licence from Nigeria, it was sent to Ottawa or something that they said. I was driving about ah three, four months. (Int 1: p 18, 19; ln 370-373)

Caroline realized that the systemic barriers in Canada would not allow her to obtain employment in the field of her specialization. She also understood that Canadian education was a key to finding a professional job. Therefore, she decided to change her profession and build a second career in nursing. Caroline applied for admission into the nursing program at the local college.

When I came and I found out that I can't continue with my profession, I can't have any employment anywhere, I have lot of limitations here, if I want to go to my profession I would need to about four/five years to get me at that level again. I don't think I can do that to go all over again and I said instead of going in that way let me go to other way. Let me go to nursing. If I can do nursing at least I am sure I am getting a job. I don't have to compete with any other in getting a job. (Int 2: p 8; ln 145-150)

Post immigration experiences. Caroline had a wonderful life in Nigeria. She had a happy marriage. Joseph was an engineer and Caroline was a teacher. Caroline gave up much to be in Canada to offer her children a better education and prosperous future. "I

had to leave everything to come to this place” (Int 2: p 21; ln 432-433). Caroline left every thing for brighter horizons.

Caroline is happy with the education system for her children that Canada offers. She finds that the teaching at school is of high standards. Caroline also observes that it is easier for the students to pass their tests at school. In Nigeria, the children have much more school work; and it is harder to pass the examinations.

In my country—if you go to school you would have two to three exams in the whole year. Here you would do lot of exams and it will add up into your final exam. In my country they take two to three tests. If you fail in one exam you actually fail. But here you can afford to pass in number one and two and can fail in number three, but you will be fine. So it is easier to pass here. The system, the way they teach is good. (Int 2: 18; ln 361-366)

Caroline understands that every country has its own way of living, and it has some good and bad ways. From her perspective, Canadians are focused on their goals. The country has resources and the government supports its citizens. Therefore, goals are achievable. “They are kind of focused....have every resource to achieve what you want to achieve. The government is helping you” (Int 2: p 14; ln 289-288). However, Caroline perceives that Canadian society provides excessive liberty to the children. In Nigeria, children grow up with the strict guidance of their parents and neighbours. Nigerian children follow the norms and values of the family and society.

They [Canadians] are giving too much freedom to the children....No, we are not brought up in this way. I told you that if I do something wrong, some one will catch you and say no you can't do this. Any body can correct a child. In my country, every body is a teacher. (Int 2: p 15; ln 305-307)

To be a mother in Canada is different for an immigrant woman because of the added tasks involved in negotiating cultures and creating new parenting frameworks. Caroline wishes her children to adapt well to Canadian way of living. However, she

wants her children to follow only the good values of Canadian culture and avoid negative values. “They will take part of it. I will try as much I can. I will not allow them to take those things which are not comfortable—that’s not come from the culture I have come from” (Int 2: p 16; ln 311-312). Caroline creates opportunities to educate her children about Nigerian customs and cultures. Once they become Canadian citizens, Caroline and her children will visit Nigeria once in every year to preserve her cultures among her children.

After three years when we will get citizenship, we plan to go to Nigeria at least once in every year. They will see their grand parents, meet with people, and know the culture. (Int 2: p 14; ln 287-289)

Growing up in Nigeria, Caroline enjoyed a wonderful childhood. Her family was a primary source of emotional support for Caroline. With coming to Canada, she feels a vacuum in her life. She makes phone calls to her family in Nigeria every week. This connection is invaluable for Caroline to be resilient in her loneliness.

Nigeria has many cultural festivals and ceremonies. People come from different places and participate in masquerades with colourful attires. The Nigerian festivities are full of music, dance, and colour. Since childhood, Caroline enjoyed the cultural festivals with family and friends. Caroline relishes those memories.

There is lot of merriments. There is lot of cooking, and people come from many places to celebrate. We have a kind of culture festivals, festivities. Some people participate in masquerades, they cover up their face with masks, they dance, and this is kind of a culture. Some of the masquerades....their attires are of so many colours. The people who participate wear colourful dress. We come, dance, it’s a kind of culture very, very colourful. (Int 2: p 12; ln 241-246)

Christmas is the time for reunion with family and friends. In Nigeria, people go to the villages, the place of their roots. They meet people, they wear beautiful dresses, and they dance. Christmas is full of fun in Nigeria. Caroline found Christmas too cold and

quiet in Canada. Caroline could not celebrate Christmas in her traditional way. Caroline misses the enjoyment of Christmas.

Christmas it is the time for getting together in the village where you come from. This Christmas here I spent [sigh] I felt it, you know, here Christmas is so cold you can not actually have fun the way we do over there. I remembered what used to happen in the Christmas. In the village square you see people dancing, young ladies beautifully dressed dancing, so many festivals, so many things are happening same time....So, I miss it for sure, I miss that Christmas period and Easter. (Int 2: p 13; ln 260-267)

Caroline is not happy with the Canadian health care services. The prolonged wait time, unavailability of family physicians, and the high cost of medications are some of the reasons for Caroline's disappointments regarding the Canadian health care system. Caroline feels that limited inaccessibility to a family physician may jeopardise health if someone gets sick. "If some one is really sick and if it takes so much time to get an appointment the person might die" (Int 2: p 11; ln 215-216). Caroline has high blood pressure. She feels vulnerable. The health care system in Canada worries her.

The health care service in Canada is....I am not comfortable with it. They serve free, the doctor you see is free. But you have to buy your medication and to me it is very expensive. It is expensive. Another thing is to see your family doctor. It is two months I booked to see my doctor....It is difficult. It's too long. They give you a very long appointment. And you are not feeling fine, you have to wait. It's not found in my country. I don't know (Int 2: p 11; ln 211-214, 225-226)

Being unable to find a job aligned with her education, Caroline started searching for more menial jobs. She was actively engaged in looking for employment opportunities on the Internet and also in person. "I was busy looking for jobs every where, going to drop my applications all over" (Int 2: p 6; ln 113). It took few months to obtain employment in the Christian ministry. Caroline was employed at a home for mentally

challenged people. The home is outside of Lethbridge; and it takes thirty minutes to drive from her home to the work place. Caroline works part-time.

I applied for so many jobs—some of them didn't get back at me though they promised that they will. I looked for few months for same type of jobs in different homes. Then I saw this one, a friend told me that they are taking people and I applied on line and within a week they called back to me. They took for about 2 months finally to give me an appointment letter. (Int 2: p 6; ln 108-113)

Caroline is enrolled in a college to accomplish the prerequisite for nursing program. She struggles with her communication skills. However, Caroline finds her instructors very helpful. In addition, Caroline gets support from student café, a department that provides support to the students whom English is a second language. Caroline enjoys her study.

I am doing the prerequisite, it is very easy....I enjoyed my instructors. So many friends I make, they are really very helpful. My instructors guided me how to get back to my study because I went to them I place myself I had problem with my accent, I still do have now. So at that time I will be in the class, the instructor talk something funny and every body will laugh. I wouldn't laugh because I don't understand what he says.... there is a department that is called student's café. It's actually for immigrants particularly those who have problem with accent or people those do not speak English in their country....it helped me so much. (Int 2: p 2; ln 22-26, 28-29, 32)

Caroline lives a very busy life. She takes care of her children, household work, and grocery shopping. In addition, Caroline goes to school. She studies hard because of her limitations with the English language. The tyranny of her day to day activities keeps Caroline busy. Caroline feels overwhelmed and tired.

It's not easy anyway. But I have to manage it. So it is not easy—everyday you have pan of activities, go to school, take your lectures, run around and come back. You have to go to Wal-Mart, you have to go to mall, you come back, do your cooking. You take care of your kids, their home works. (Int 2: p 9; ln 164-167)

Caroline has a few Nigerian friends in Lethbridge. Through these friends, Caroline makes new friends. However, all of her friends are Nigerian. “I have two friends here. They were my close people for very first time and through them I got to know other people. They are from Nigeria” (Int 2: p 2; ln 37-38). Her friends provide her with emotional support. Caroline also meets them in social gatherings and religious events. Caroline makes friendship with her co-workers and students at the college who are Canadians. However, these friendships are limited to her workplace or college only. Caroline does not socialize with her Canadian friends.

No, for now we don't reach that level. At school we just work together, do team work, discuss, I may call, we talk on phone, how you doing this one....because we are so busy with our studies. (Int 2: p 3; ln 52-55)

Caroline gets support from her eldest son and her daughter. Her children assist her with her domestic work. With their support Caroline manages her daily activities. “My son is 17 and my daughter is 15. They help me. In this area I am managing fine” (Int 2: p 8; ln 156). However, being a single mother and an immigrant woman Caroline has to negotiate and deal with many additional responsibilities. The burden of household work and study leaves her with little time for leisure. During her spare time, Caroline goes to the park, walks around, does some exercise, and meditates. Caroline enjoys the sun.

When I get time of my own I exercise, I go to the park, walk around and do 30 minutes exercise. Sit down, face towards sun and meditate....I enjoy the sun. I like on doing exercise....It helps me to be in shape. (Int 2: p 9; ln 175-178)

Caroline speaks of a happy marriage and a wonderful husband. Joseph is a caring and supportive husband. He is also a responsible father. Even though Joseph does not live in Canada and he is geographically distant from his family, he remains present through the Internet. Joseph meets with his children on Skype every day and helps them with their

studies. Joseph's active participation in parenting and constant monitoring keep the family emotionally connected.

Most of the time, they talk with their father on Skype....My son has an exam today on English, so he was sitting on the Skype and teaching from there. So, he is also monitoring from there. You may not see him physically but everyday he is on Skype and talk. (Int 2: p 17; ln 344-347)

Caroline misses Joseph. She feels lonely. The absence of her husband in family creates emptiness. Caroline wants to return back to Nigeria. However, Joseph encourages her to remain strong. It was Joseph who suggested that she go back to school. Now, Caroline spends her time studying, cooking, doing grocery shopping, and taking care of the children. Caroline keeps engaged in life to prevail over her loneliness. Joseph visits his family once or every other month. Every time he leaves Canada, he leaves Caroline alone.

There was a time I said oh I want to go back to Nigeria, I want to go and stay with him. But he really had pursued me and then encouraged me to go back to school. He really helped me to be easy. Now I find that as soon as I have so many things I use to forget that I am lonely. Again I feel when he comes and he is leaving oh I feel lonely again. (Int 2: p 19-20; ln 388-392)

Caroline lived a good life in Nigeria. She had many support at home. She belonged to an upper class society. Upon arrival to Canada, Caroline lost her social identity. She lost her supportive network, her family, friends, and her professional career. Caroline sacrificed much to be in Canada.

I come from Nigeria my level of status was high, I have so many people stay at my house, and they helped me out. I have house keepers there for me....I can't see my family members, sisters, my siblings—some of them, my parents. At times I get frustrated. (Int 2: p 21; ln 427-431)

The economical challenge is a major obstacle for Caroline to live a good life in Canada. She works part-time. She is enrolled in a college program. She could not obtain

any bursary or loan to meet the associated expenses. Caroline has four children. Her earning is less than what she needs to look after her family. Therefore, the family keeps running on the money Joseph sends from Nigeria, but at a lesser exchange rate. Caroline feels insecure and anxious.

It is very stressful because my husband sends a big amount of money and it changes into a very small amount of money. Before you see it, it is gone. The economical part is really challenging. The society, the government does not give us any room for saving. Because you can't think oh I want to save this for rainy days....I know that it is not easy for him to send all these money. He has to make sure that his family is comfortable here. It's a very big stress. (Int 2: p 21; ln 417-423)

Moving forward. Caroline had aspirations to build a career in nursing. She took courses to meet the prerequisites of the nursing program. The college also provides support to improve her communication skills. Caroline acquired her driver's licence. She can move around independently. Caroline plans to continue working at menial jobs. She believes that her work will help to improve their economic situation and lessen the burden that Joseph carries to look after the family. Caroline also dreams that Joseph will return to Canada once the family settles down. Caroline is confident. She looks to the future.

I am going to school, give test to get driver's licence and passed it....So I can move now. I have couple of friends; I can chat, talk and ask if I need anything to know....When I will be done with my study by next month, I want to get a full time job. I want to help my husband.... he will come back and go to the university after we are settled you know and start all over again. (Int 2: p 21, 23; ln 474-476, 421-423; Int 1: p 16; ln 327-328)

Major achievements in life. Caroline lives away from her husband. She takes care of her children. Caroline becomes independent. She improves her communication skills. Caroline can understand a little bit more of Canadian accent now. She can drive. Caroline goes to work, she goes to school. Day by day she becomes more integrated into

this new society. She is content to see her children living in a country that provides them with the opportunity to grow further. Caroline considers all these as her major achievements in her life in Canada.

When we came new we were kind of stressed out. What kind of society, where do I come from—you know? So now I can drive, I move about, I go to school, I go to work. I found myself a little bit integrated to the society. So I am much, much better now. (Int 2: p 22; ln 435-437)

Suggestions for new immigrants. Caroline realizes that immigrants' lives in Canada are not easy, at least not for the professional immigrants. Non-recognition of foreign education and credentials, and the inability to obtain professional jobs bring disappointments and frustrations to their lives. Therefore, Canadian immigrants need to negotiate many things.

When you come you won't get a job that commensurate your qualifications you have to drop your profession, you have to start again, you can't fit where you want to fit in, you shouldn't eat what you want to eat, you can't have a car the one you want to ride. So where you are coming from you have frustrations (Int 2: p 22; ln 447-450)

Caroline suggests that immigrants should further their education in Canada to obtain a better employment and have a better life. "May be going back to school, because if you decide to stay here you have to go there to get the education" (Int 2: p 23; ln 467-468). Caroline also recommends new immigrants to work at menial jobs even if such jobs are not commensurate with their qualifications to get some Canadian experiences, to improve language skills, and to integrate with their new society.

You do some job whatever it is, because you meet people in your office, you meet people at your school. It helps to learn language and also the accent. (Int 2: p 23; ln 469-471)

Parenting is another challenge in this different social context. Immigrant parents need to compromise and negotiate a balance to keep their own culture and at the same to

accept Canadian culture. Parents should keep track on their children and protect them in this new environment.

If you are not too strong, if you are not very careful they are kind of deviate from original tradition to different culture where they are not comfortable. It's a challenge. (Int 2: p 22; ln 454-456)

The journey continues. Caroline is a courageous woman. She moved to Canada with a dream to secure a better education for her children and to live a wonderful life. Caroline dreams of a career in nursing. In reality Caroline endures many hurdles throughout her journey. However, she is determined in her quest to overcome all challenges and achieve her goals. Caroline knows she is on right track. Caroline is happy with her life in Canada. "I am on the right track....I am happy. In spite of all challenges, I am happy" (Int 2: p 24; ln 478, 486).

Looking Across the Five Stories

Three major themes emerged from the stories told by five participants. The first theme "Life before Canada" speaks to the participants' lives in their home lands, their childhood, and how they grew up within their societies and cultures. The second major theme "A journey of compound stressors" is the journey of each participant with respect to the challenges they endured as part of the immigration process. The third and last theme "Resilience in everyday life" examines the strengths and capacities of the participants as they respond to compound stressors they bear in their daily lives in Canada.

Life before Canada

Resilience is embedded in natural growth and development across the life course, in cultural contexts, in belief systems, and in the nature of individual-social relations

(Bottrell, 2009). Therefore, to have a holistic understanding of the experience of immigrant women and their resilience, it is vital to know their life in their own country.

Growing up in the homeland. All the participants in this study were raised in middle to upper middle class families. One of the major functions of families is to provide love and affection to its members. Parents were the core of the world in which the participants lived and grew, and the family was a source of strength for each of the participants. The connection to family was, therefore, crucial in their lives. As Diana expressed, “I am really proud of my family-- my dad teaches us that we have to love each other and care about each other”. Strong bonds with their family of origin and the love experienced within the family was voiced by all participants in this study. Such strong bonds came to bear on the participants as they made concerted efforts to remain connected to their family members in their home countries.

All the participants were highly educated. With the exception of Panna, these women worked in professional fields such as teaching. They lived a good life and they were members of middle to upper middle class society. The participants expressed a deep sense of belonging to their own culture and their identities were deeply rooted in it. They felt uprooted and dislocated when they experienced difficulty in blending in to the new culture found in Canada. Therefore, they felt a strong desire to preserve their own culture and the sense of “keeping” it transcended their loss of identity.

Although all participants spoke of wonderful childhoods and adolescence, some of them experienced tragic deaths of their family members. Pata witnessed her father’s sudden death during her early adolescence. She also experienced the loss of her nephew who died only at the age of eight. Anita’s parents died of cancer, leaving her devastated

with the loss. Despite these tragic deaths and losses, they grew up strong and led a healthy life.

Three of the participants---Pata, Panna, and Diana lived in a foreign country before they arrived in Canada. They encountered many challenges and struggled with language, culture, food, and weather. While living in another country, the most prevailing challenge they experienced was severe isolation and loneliness.

Global family—relatives across the world. All of the participants, with the exception of Anita, had family members in different parts of the world. The majority of their family members lived in North America. Having family who live in other countries influenced the participants and their husbands to make decisions to leave their homelands and move to Canada. Pata and Abeer decided to move to Windsor as Abeer's elder brother and his family lived in Oakville which is not far from Windsor. Panna's eldest sister lives in Australia; and Shakur and Panna wished for Australian immigration. However, they did not meet the criteria for Australian immigration and so made the decision to immigrate to Canada. They also spoke with Panna's uncle who lived in Kuwait and received encouraging feedback from him. The participants, who had their siblings living in Canada, received a very different account about Canadian life than what they experienced. Pata stated that, "My husband's brother, he is an engineer, and he got experience from US. When he came here, in months he got good job...he did not know about any problem...they never know what is happening here in Canada".

The participants identified that family members living in Canada or in other countries influenced their decision making process. However, they did not enrich the pre-immigration knowledge of the participants. In other words, these family members were

not aware of the difficult struggles experienced by immigrant Canadians; they simply endorsed the possibility of coming to Canada.

Leaving the homeland for brighter horizons. While every immigrant's experience is unique, the research reveals that immigrants share many common hopes and dreams that bring them to Canada. The participants hold a presumption that Canada is a land that offers many opportunities such as life security, high standards of living, a peaceful life, and a good education system. The aspirations to secure a better future and good education for their children factored into the decision to come to Canada.

With the exception of Pata, the decision to come to Canada was solely made by the husbands of the participants. Pata was actively involved with the decision making process while other participants remained passive. The husband of each of the participants was highly educated. Three of them held a PhD, while the other two are engineers. They are ambitious and have aspirations to build a professional career in Canada.

It is always difficult to leave the homeland forever. It is more difficult to make a new country home. Therefore, immigration is a complex process that involves many decisions to make, preparations to take, and plans to execute. For most of the participants, it took almost six to eight years to make decisions, receive their immigration papers, and reach Canada. Therefore, the immigration process captured a significant number of years from their lives to begin their new journey.

Although the participants and their husbands spent several years to reach the final decision to leave their homelands and start new lives, it was observed in the study that all of them had very limited knowledge about living in Canada. They were not aware of the

challenges immigrants experienced to obtain a “better” life. Some of them had heard of unemployment among immigrants; however, they could not realize the difficulties encountered by immigrants. “We knew that but we didn’t realize actually”. Some of them visited Canada before they finally moved. They observed the disappointments among immigrants about their lives. However, excitement about the future surpassed the harshness of reality.

Nobody gave us the positive results and that they were saying that they are struggling here and not getting good job and nobody gave us the positive side. Nobody showed us the positive sight of them. But still we felt that we should move here, because we will find things in our own ways. (Anita)

A Journey of Compound Stressors

Immigration is a complex journey that begins with loss of identity, family ties, and cultural norms to embark to a new land with the promises of the future. All participants and their families had their own dreams and hopes that brought them to Canada. However, they gave up much to reach here. Immigration dislocated them from their families, their cultures, their languages, and even from their own sense of self. Immigration brought severe isolation, loneliness, disappointments, non-recognition of their credentials, and finally, insecurity in their lives. All of the immigrant women kept looking for ways to overcome these day to day challenges and master all the resources available to survive. This research introduces the notion of compound stressors experienced by the participants throughout their immigration journey and the accompanying resilience they exercised to overcome these stressors and move forward in life.

“I am all alone”—in the midst of many. Loneliness is perhaps the dominant stressor experienced by all the immigrant women in this study. During their initial

months or years, each participant underwent extreme isolation and loneliness. There was no immediate family; no immediate friends. They were sequestered in their homes. They felt alone, and they felt lonely despite the presence of their husbands and children. Their husbands were burdened with many responsibilities and life stressors. Their husbands were under pressure to secure employment, to succeed in their graduate studies, and to focus on other priorities in life. Almost all of the husbands remained distanced from their wives emotionally and sometimes geographically. As Diana described her experience of loneliness, “I am alone, and I am doing my things, he leaves me in morning and comes back at the end of the day. I don’t know any body.....I just walk alone around my apartment and it is very much feeling lonely. I felt lonely”. Her voice was echoed in each participant’s story of their immigration experience.

Living in seclusion was common among all these women. During her initial years, Pata felt lonely and frustrated. She could not obtain the job she envisioned, she could not obtain a post doctoral fellowship, and she experienced several miscarriages. Her husband, Abeer, was busy and burdened with family responsibilities. Pata had no one around to offer her support. Pata called her sister in Bangladesh. Pata went back to her family to find her solace. “My experience was very bad, because when I didn’t get any work andbecause of miscarriages....I asked my husband that I need to go home...I wanted to stay with my mom for some days”. Panna confined herself at home during her first year in Canada. Her lack of communication skills, the extreme cold weather, and unknown neighbourhood isolated her from social connections. In addition, Shakur’s busy schedule led her to live a cloistered life. “When I came to Lethbridge—I stayed one year at my home, I didn’t come outside...life was boring...When I felt lonely, I made call to

Bangladesh, my sister, my parents, and talked to them”. Anita felt the same way when her husband was away from her. She felt socially isolated and lonely because of her busy neighbours, cultural differences, and language barriers. “If my husband is here, then it is okay. When he was out, that was a horrible time for me”. Her isolation made her highly dependent on her husband. Caroline expressed her loneliness as “it is killing me!”

Caroline’s husband Joseph left her in Canada and returned back to Nigeria. His absence in Caroline’s life left her alone in a strange country.

I was kind of left alone, it wasn’t funny you know staying alone... when my kids go to school, I would be home alone. Just turn on my channel and watch, I walked around, exercised, it was so boring.... my husband used to call and I spend some hours talk with him, after that you know you go up, you come down, nothing to do. You just look at your life you are wasting in a way. I just tell my husband I want to come back to Nigeria. How can I continue to live this way? No, loneliness is getting too much. Its killing me! (Caroline)

A liminal traveller on a difficult journey. As with many immigrants, the participants experienced many challenges once they arrived in Canada. The non-recognition of their foreign credentials was another predominant challenge all participants encountered. Despite their higher education and work experience from their own countries, the participants needed to negotiate within the Canadian system and most of them sacrificed their careers. As Anita observed, “Bad experience is that I’m not getting that job that I’m interested in. They are not giving the advantage of my twenty years of experience in India”. Diana found systemic barriers in the Canadian work force that held back immigrants to advance their careers. She is a teacher and has a bachelor’s degree in teaching. She worked at the USA as a substitute teacher. However, Diana could not obtain a job. “I am a teacher...it’s not easy and I don’t expect to be a teacher...but why can’t I be a substitute teacher”. Pata and Abeer were optimistic to have a better

career in Canada with their advanced qualifications. To their dismay, neither of them could secure employment that was commensurate with their education. “The whole time...it was very frustrating. What will we do with our education?” Caroline and Panna also experienced the same. The promises of future were dashed once they came to Canada.

In addition to non-recognition of credentials, the participants endured many other challenges in their daily lives. Extreme cold weather, language barriers, loss of family and friends, and transportation were few of the common challenges that each participant experienced throughout her journey.

Life in Canada was not simple; at least not for these immigrant women. They had to give up much to be here in Canada. Of interest, all participants had a back up plan of returning home as their safety net; however, it was not easy for them to go back. They had already invested so much money and time, and they left behind so many emotional ties and material things. In reality, they could not go back, nor find it easy to stay in Canada. They were all liminal travellers on this difficult journey.

Art of balancing cultures. Each participant has a strong sense of belonging to her culture. They wanted to preserve their cultures among their children. They wanted to keep alive their languages, traditions, and customs in the next generations i.e. their children. Each participant considered it as her own responsibility to transmit her culture to her children. Panna explained, “My duty is to let them know my language, my culture, my heritage...I want that my son will know about his origin, his root.” Pata created opportunities to educate her daughter about her family heritage, her language, and her culture. “She has to learn to call her grandma...to get blessings on different

occasions...it's my responsibility to teach her". Diana was a Muslim woman and she wanted her children to follow the Islamic faith. She spoke her language at home so that her children could speak their own language. Anita wanted her children to remember and follow their Hindu religion, and retain their Indian self-identity. Caroline planned to visit Nigeria with her children every year to preserve her culture among them.

After three years when we will get citizenship, we plan to go to Nigeria at least once in every year. They will see their grand parents, meet with people, and know the culture. (Caroline)

Being an immigrant mother is difficult because of the additional tasks involved in negotiating cultures and creating new parenting frameworks. All participants in this study felt that their children needed to adapt to the Canadian way of living. They should learn to speak English. However, they wanted to protect their children from the open society and keep away from the negative values of Canadian culture. All participants wanted to connect the two cultures in such a way that no damage or harm happened to their children. They wanted to nurture both cultures so that the children benefitted from both.

A stranger in a strange country. Most of the participants had no friends in Canada who provided them with emotional support. They had work acquaintances. They had social connections with their ethno-cultural and religious communities. Their ethno-cultural community sometimes helped them with grocery shopping or offering a ride to the hospitals. They met in social gatherings, pot lucks, or for cultural events. However, the ethno-cultural and religious communities were not always available to the women. Most of the participants in this study made phone calls to their families who were "back home" in time of their loneliness. It is with their families that they found solace and

comfort. Of note is the use of technology to communicate with family members at a distance.

None of the participants had local Canadian friends. They remained isolated from Canadian society. The language barriers and unfamiliarity with Canadian cultures kept them from making friends with Canadians. They were not confident or comfortable making friends with Canadian people. The participants were hesitant about how Canadians felt about immigrants. As Diana explained, “I really don’t start. Why, because I don’t know how they feel about me, may be they don’t like to talk to immigrants”. The participants remained disconnected and strangers in the very society where they wanted to build their new lives.

Act of compromises. People immigrate with great expectations. They dream of a wonderful life and prospects for the future. The participants in this study also had expectations of a better life in Canada and a prosperous future for their children. However, in reality coming to Canada turned out to be an act of sacrifice and love for their children and families.

All the participants believed that Canada would offer a gifted future to their children. As Panna expressed, “His [son] life will be smooth, he will not struggle, he will have Canadian educations and then he can go anywhere in the world.” Anita sacrificed her dream to continue her education to support her daughter’s education. Her daughter’s education took priority over Anita’s education. “It will be a lot of spending over her [education], then how can I go for my education? I think it is the time for my daughter to go to the university”. Caroline decided to immigrate to Canada for the betterment of her children. She believed that Canada would offer her children a high quality education.

“The main thing is to give my kids the quality of education”. Therefore, the participants sacrificed much in their lives for the possibilities of their children’s future.

The decision to immigrate to Canada was made mostly by the husbands of the participants. With the exception of Pata, they all followed their husbands. They had caring parents, high salary jobs, and good lives. Their husbands’ choices for a prosperous future led them to Canada. They ostensibly compromised their well-to-do life for the aspirations of their husbands. In her story, Diana explained how she sacrificed her career for her husband’s future career. “My job in Jordan was really good. I used to have a good salary...then the plan changed ...then my husband said...we have to go to Canada, because it has good life there”. Panna left all her belongings in Bangladesh unsold; hoping that she would be coming back to her country soon. “I have lots of furniture, lot of electronics...and I didn’t sell anything...he took study leave...so we are going back home”. As with Diana and Panna, most of the participants compromised their dreams for the ambitions of their husbands.

Resilience in Everyday Life

Resilience is embracing the challenges of life and maintaining optimism. It is the ability to make plans and take decisions. It is the ability to move on with hopes and dreams. Resilience is about “not giving up”. This study tells the stories of five immigrant women and of their strengths and capacities to respond to compound stressors they endured every day. It gives the sense of not only their individual resilience, but of their husbands and families who journey with them.

Safety net for an unknown future. The participants and their husbands had a back up plan should their attempts to build a life in Canada not turn out. The back up plan

was their safety net. Rajesh has a business in India. He often visited India to take care of his business. He gave himself a two year deadline that within two years he will have things settled. Shakur came to Canada on a three year study leave to explore the opportunities to further his career. If he could not secure better employment, Shakur and Panna would go back to Bangladesh. Caroline's husband did not quit his job in Nigeria. Once he realized that he would not be able to obtain a job aligned with his qualifications, Joseph left Canada and returned back to Nigeria. Pata and Diana also considered going back to their countries if they could not secure a better career in Canada. Therefore, the participants kept things in their countries as safety nets for their indefinite future. It gave them autonomy in making choices of their own.

I still don't know I will be staying here....as long as having secure life I will live here and if good standard life I am living here. If I don't have a good life and my husband doesn't have a good job I will not live here. It depends on having my husband a good job and having a good secure life mainly. (Diana)

Motivations and strengths—making a difference abroad. Each participant in this study was strong and determined. Although they endured many challenges throughout their journey, they never gave up their hopes. They mastered their resources to survive unforeseen challenges. Pata found it challenging to secure employment commensurate with her education. However, Pata was not ready to concede defeat. She strived tirelessly in searching for opportunities from across Canada. "Every time I was pursuing, pursuing, writing to the scientists, writing to the professors, I was just like glue". Pata sustained her efforts to connect with Canadian gate-keepers who might help her to enter into the system. Being unable to secure a professional job, Diana started to receive computer training. She registered for English language classes. Diana developed her language and computer skills with a hope for better career in future. "Now I am

getting some training to find a job or for study”. Anita sacrificed her professional career of teaching. She is now working part-time at a fast food restaurant. She cleans up other people’s dirt. Anita believes that this work will give her Canadian experience and help her to overcome language barriers. Anita prays to God to give her strength. Caroline realized that systemic barriers in Canada would not allow her to obtain an employment in the field of her specialization. Caroline decided to change her profession and build a second career in nursing. Caroline enrolled in a college to accomplish the prerequisite for nursing program. Caroline enjoys her study.

When I came and I found out that I can’t continue with my profession...if I want to go to my profession I would need to study about four/five years to get me at that level again. I don’t think I can do that to go all over again and I said instead of going in that way let me go to other way. Let me go to nursing”. (Caroline)

Independence and autonomy were stepping stones for the immigrant women in this study. Independence afforded them the opportunity to engage in the world around them. All the participants in this study considered a driver’s licence as key to their independence. Panna is taking her driving lessons and hopeful about getting her driver’s licence soon. All other participants have secured their driver’s licences and move around independently.

The participants overcame their language barriers. Some of them took ESL courses, other improved by speaking with people at their work places and schools. Now they can confidently communicate with people.

Marriage—in the process of resilience. Resilience is complex and multidimensional process; and a person may have diverse capacities that increase or decrease their resilience. A person may need a strong support network to become

resilient. Marriage is a significant phenomenon in one's life; and relational intimacy affords emotional support to counter life's stressors.

The participants and their husbands have many responsibilities. Immigration added more responsibilities and stress into their lives. Most of the participants expressed their longing for deeper connection and intimacy with their husband, but at times they found them emotionally distanced. When Diana gave birth to her child, she drove to the hospital, parked her car and walked to the labour room by herself. For some women, child birth is a divine experience. At these critical moments a woman desires her husband and family around her giving her emotional comfort and sharing the joy. As expressing her loneliness Diana's voice resonates with an echo of hopelessness, "When a woman is in delivery....every body worries about how it goes. In my case, I was alone". Hussein may love Diana and care about her. However, he was caught up in other unavoidable work. These responsibilities took the husbands away from their wives. As Diana explained, "My husband—maybe he is worried about me but he was worried about moving the truck—because you know ---you pack all your stuff by yourself".

Anita enjoyed a life of status in India. Upon arriving to Canada, Anita sacrificed her luxury and social status. Anita experienced tremendous loss in this regard. Anita regrets, Anita shouts. She is a Hindu woman working in a fast-food restaurant that serves hamburgers. Anita left a life where she had a chauffeur, maids, and a cook—to a life in Canada where she cleans up other peoples leftovers in the restaurant. She is humiliated and can not let her family, in India, know of her circumstances. Rajesh could not feel the loss experienced by Anita. He was too much preoccupied with his future plan to settle down his family, to start a new business, and to look after the business existing in India.

Rajesh gets angry at her impatience. “My husband gets angry with me when I do things like this. Then I promise on my hearts that I will do whatever he wants”.

Panna grew up with an extended family. Upon her arrival to Canada Panna loses her emotional support network. Thus, Shakur becomes her primary source of support. However, his job and study consume much of his energy and time such that he had very little left for Panna and the children. “My husband was busy; and he said he could not give me time. I told him to make a phone call to the ESL and he said no he could not”. Sometimes Shakur was not respectful of Panna’s plans and did not encourage her efforts. “He told me that I would never pass driving test”. Therefore, lack of support from Shakur delays Panna’s capacity to move forward.

Although the participants in this research often perceive the absence of their husbands in their time of stress, all of them reveal that their husbands are very supportive regarding their household chores and parenting activities. Panna speaks of Shakur’s participation in household activities, “I come at 5:30 then I saw every thing is ready for me. Sometimes he washes all the dishes”. Rajesh is a good father; and he takes care of his children. He also helps Anita with her day to day activities. “My husband, if he is at home he helps me in the kitchen.... he is a good father, he manages the things very nicely, never shouts at the children”. All participants appreciated their husbands’ assistance with household activities and taking care of their children. They identify that compromise and sharing each others work are very important to maintain harmony in their marriage.

The participants’ stories revealed that they obtained their husbands’ support through active agency in order to overcome challenges. Abeer helped Pata to obtain

better employment; he helped her to write her Curriculum Vitae, publish her articles, and even edit her thesis. Rajesh reassures Anita that within two years he will have things settled and Anita will enjoy her luxury again. Hussein encourages Diana to become self-sufficient and confident. He bought her a car to promote her independency and autonomy. “He always forces me that I have to learn. I have to do and I should not rely on him...to be more confident”. Even though Joseph does not live in Canada, Joseph remains connected with his family through the Internet. He meets with his children on Skype every day and even helps them with their studies. Joseph’s constant presence provides Caroline with profound support to meet life’s challenges.

Marriage can play a dual role in the act of resiliency. This study identifies that husbands influenced the capacities of these immigrant women to be resilient. Their husbands’ encouragement and reassurance motivated the women to become independent and confident to move forward. Conversely, their physical or/and emotional distance and discouragement undermined or compromised these women from exercising their resilience.

The role of community in the lives of immigrants. None of the participants could identify their participation in the host community. They have no neighbourhood friends, and no social contacts other than within their own ethno-cultural community. With the exception of Pata and Anita, none of the participants availed local Immigration settlement services. Pata’s husband Abeer visited the Immigration settlement services during his initial days to collect information. Abeer did not find the service helpful and informative for him as a skilled professional immigrant. Anita found the service more useful for less skilled immigrants and refugees who had different life-challenges.

The participants in this study were socially isolated. They remained confined to their own ethno-cultural community. They socialized with them mostly to communicate in their own language, to have ethnic food with them, and to celebrate cultural and religious festivals. Being with people from their ethnic community helped them to face day to day challenges and to make adjustment to life in this new country. It also helped them to retain their identity. However, they remained mostly at the edges of Canadian society in terms of having Canadian friends (i.e. not from their ethno-cultural communities).

Meaning making—the road to resilience. In their stories, the participants shared their hopes and dreams for the future. They moved to Canada with a vision to have a secure life, successful career, and a better education for their children. In reality, it was a long journey for them and they experienced compound stressors. However, they kept looking to the promise of the future. Anita dreams of her husband's success in his own business in Canada and she will regain her luxury in her life. "I want my husband's own business, I want to be a boss of my own job, I don't want to go and work for somebody else's... I am waiting for my husband to start his own business". Caroline dreams of a career in nursing. She is determined in her quest to achieve her goals. Diana is optimistic to build her career in the field of her specialization. She looks for ways to achieve her career.

All participants in this study hold a potential of future for them and their children. They make meaning of what is happening. They are resilient based on their optimism and hope for the future. Their hope and dreams keep them going and they do not give up on life.

Making connections and keeping contacts. Making new connections and keeping contact with family and friends are vital within the participants' daily lives. With moving to Canada each of the participants felt enormous emptiness inside for the loss of their families. They longed for their parents; they missed them. They made phone calls, they used Skype. These phone calls and contacts were paramount in their lives that enabled them to be resilient.

When I had no job, we didn't have good time, I asked my husband that I have only one demand to you. I don't buy any thing.....I don't need to buy jewellerys, make ups like that, so my only expense is talking to my country.

The participants identified that use of telecommunication and the Internet were central in their lives. In addition to keeping contact with family, the participants and their husbands took advantage of technology to make new contacts in Canada. Pata sent a blitz of e-mails to many professional people (i.e. professors, researchers) to make connections with the gate-keepers in her field of specialization. She sent out e-mails as if they were darts, hoping they land somewhere and someone would respond. Pata did receive a respond. A professor responded to her e-mail and offered her an opportunity to work with him. Thus, Pata was given the opportunity she looked for. Shakur made contact with a Canadian professor through the Internet before he and his family immigrated to Canada. The professor offered Shakur a post doctorate fellowship. It gave them initial security for life in a foreign country. The participants and their husbands utilized the Internet in many ways such as renting apartments, buying furniture, searching job opportunities, and taking on-line courses to open up new doors for them. The Internet was a "lifeline" for them.

Unique Experiences

Even though the participants' stories reveal some common experiences, there were some contextual differences among these women's life situations and experiences. Anita came to Canada as a middle age. She had a well-off life in India. Her loss of wealthy life tormented her the most. As an employee at fast food restaurant Anita mops and cleans up the dirt of other people. Anita feels embarrassed. Anita could not share her Canadian work experience with her family in India. Anita fears that she will lose "face" with her family and friends.

Panna's father is diagnosed with gallbladder cancer. He is undergoing chemotherapy. Panna felt miserable. She is at such a distance that she can not be with her family during this crisis. Panna can not afford the cost to fly back to her country. The geographical distance complicates her life.

Pata experienced several miscarriages. She had negative experiences with her first pregnancy. Therefore, she was aware of the risk of complications in her successive pregnancies. She found her Canadian physician not very concerned about her risks. In addition, prolonged waiting time in the emergency room also jeopardized her pregnancies. The Canadian health care services frustrated Pata most.

Caroline's husband returned back to Nigeria after three months of arrival to Canada. Therefore, Caroline is on her own in this new country. Her husband's geographical distance put her at high risk of emotional suffering and loneliness.

Summary

Three major themes characterized the experience of resilience in the every day lives of these immigrant women. The first theme "Life before Canada" gives a sense of

participants' lives in their own countries. The understanding of their lives in their own culture is important to understand their resilience while living in Canada. This theme is supported by three subthemes: "Growing up in the homeland" gives an understanding of how they grew within their own culture; "Global family—relatives across the world" identifies the influence of family members living across the world in decision making processes; and "Leaving the homeland for brighter horizons" captures the dreams and hopes that brought the participants to Canada. The second major theme is "A journey of compound stressors". This theme is further supported by five subthemes: "I am alone"—in the midst of many; A liminal traveller on a difficult journey; Art of balancing cultures; A stranger in a strange country; and Act of compromises. The second theme provides a holistic picture of multiple stressors and challenges immigrant women endure in their daily life. The last theme "Resilience in everyday life" examines the strengths and capacities of the participants to respond to the compound stressors. The theme is further supported by: Safety net for an unknown future; Motivations and strengths—making a difference abroad; Marriage—in the process of resiliency; The role of community in the lives of immigrants; Meaning making—road to resilience; and Making connections and keeping contacts. At the end, I also highlighted the unique experiences the participants encountered throughout their journey. Thus, the themes and subthemes provide an understanding of resilience that is needed to respond to these compound stressors immigrant women endure in their day to day life in Canada.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This study was an exploration of the experiences and life-stories of recent Canadian immigrant women; and concomitantly their resilience in every day life. Qualitative methodology, involving repeated in-depth person-centered interviewing (Levy & Hollan, 1998) engaged recent Canadian immigrant women (n=5 participants; n=14 interviews) to understand their experiences throughout their journeys from leaving their country of origin to living in Canada. In this chapter, I offer a discussion of the findings in light of existing literature. I explore the concept of resilience and how it was enacted by the participants. In addition, I examine resistance as exhibited by the women in light of the findings and the theoretical implications therein. Feminist theory and feminist research principles were applied in this study. I offer a critical account of their performance in this study. A section on reflection and reflexivity accounts for my research journey as a researcher and an immigrant woman. I also identify the limitations of the study, future research directions, recommendations, and implications of this study; and finally I provide a conclusion to the study.

Findings and Their Place in the Literature

Research that explored the experiences and hardships of immigrant women was reviewed for this study to develop an in-depth understanding of their immigration journeys. The concept of resistance and its application to immigrant women was also reviewed. This chapter links findings from the study in relation to relevant literature. Where appropriate, the findings are contrasted with existing literature.

Life before Canada. The concept of resilience is based upon the principles of attachment theory first developed by John Bowlby, a British paediatrician and psychoanalyst, (Phaneuf, 2003). According to Bowlby (1969), attachment is the

construction of emotional bonds between the child and his/her mother or a significant other which allows the child to develop self-confidence and a sense of security. These protect him/her later on in life and help the person cope with separation and adversity (as cited in Hoover, 2004; Phaneuf, 2003). Therefore, the significance of family background remains regardless of genetic predispositions, physical distress, or differences in personality traits in the process of resilience. The adult personality is the product of the individual's interactions with key personalities during his/her childhood years (Phaneuf, 2003). An immigrant's life in the host country is like a tip of the "ice berg". As most of the ice berg remains unseen under water, a large part of immigrants' life histories remain unknown in the context of a new country. It is as if an immigrant arrives without history. Research focused on immigrants' resilience, therefore, must go beyond their lives in the host countries and explore their childhoods, family relationships, and social and cultural contexts to understand their resilience.

Early and later years. All the participants in this study spoke of wonderful childhoods. The family was a source of strength for each of the participants. They were highly educated and lived a good life. Participants were members of middle to upper middle class families. Resilience researchers argue that resilience may often develop from three factors, such as personal attributes, aspects of the family, and wider social environments (Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Luther, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). The participants' in this study had a healthy upbringing, strong family bonds, and positive social environments which could develop self-confidence and sense of security; and helped them to be resilient.

Life experiences. Patterson and Kelleher (2005) state that resilience is determined by life's accumulated experiences. As individuals grow from adversity, he/she expands his/her resilience through the strengthening of personal values, efficacy, and energy. The researchers (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005) also argue that the opposite can happen if an individual reacts negatively to adversity. According to Patterson and Kelleher (2005), past competence affects present confidence which in turn affects present competence and future confidence, leading to an improved performance. Strong self-confidence and competence combine to create the belief that you can make a difference. Researchers also caution that the reciprocal influences of confidence and competence can also create a diminished performance (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Two participants of this study experienced the sudden and tragic death of their parents and family members. Despite these tragic deaths and losses, they reported growing up strong and enjoying a healthy life. Three participants lived in a foreign country before they arrived in Canada. They encountered many challenges, including isolation, language barriers, cultural differences, and difficult weather. Therefore, some of the participants in this study experienced similar stressors prior to their immigration to Canada. In the literature about immigrants' resilience, the aspects of immigrants' lives before immigration most often remain ignored and warrant further exploration.

Decision making. The decision to relocate to Canada was mostly made by the husbands of the participants. Aspirations to build a professional career and good education for the children were the predominant reasons undergirding immigration. In reality, they found little to no opportunity for career advancement. Khan and Watson (2005) described Canada as a "land of opportunity" where people come from all over the

world with dreams, hopes, and future goals. However, the researchers also cautioned that these dreams and hopes were shattered once immigrants confronted the reality of life in Canada (Khan & Watson, 2005; Toth, 2005).

Spouses or dependents. Statistics Canada (2006b) reported that the majority of woman immigrants entered Canada as “spouses or dependents”. Women, in particular, are commonly considered their husbands’ dependants, even when they have been in the labour force in their home countries. This experience was also voiced by all participants in this study. The participants were highly educated and most of them had a professional career in their countries. Only one participant arrived under the economic immigrant category while other four women came as dependent spouses of their husbands.

O’Mahony & Donnelly (2007) comments that as dependent spouses of their male partners, women compromise their autonomy and independence from the beginning of their new life in Canada. The findings of this study challenge those of O’Mahony and Donnelly (2007). In this study, most participants developed independence and autonomy. They “changed” as a consequence of immigration and began to develop their sense of autonomy and independence.

Global family. Most of the participants belonged to a global family. The participants identified that family members living in different countries influenced their decision making process to immigrate to Canada; however, the family members living abroad did not enrich the participants’ pre-immigration knowledge. The influence of a global family in relation to the decision making process of immigrants is not evident in the literature.

Pre-immigration knowledge. All participants in this study arrived in Canada with very limited knowledge about living here. They were not aware of the challenges and difficulties that Canadian immigrants experienced in their lives. Khan and Watson (2005) stated that immigrants had very limited pre-immigration knowledge. These researchers (Khan & Watson, 2005) also noted that immigrants were misinformed regarding employment challenges which resulted in deep disappointment. Participants in this study were informed by different sources about unemployment challenges and other hardships borne by immigrants in Canada. However, they could not appreciate the severity of these hardships until they experienced them first hand. Further research is needed to better understand the gap between existing information provided by the Canadian government and the real hardships of immigrants' lives in Canada. In light of this finding, it is recommended that Citizenship and Immigration Canada consider developing a comprehensive website (Alberta Government, 2005) to provide a single-window access point for information for immigrants that include: recognition criteria of foreign education and skills, job market opportunities, study opportunities and the common hardships faced by Canadian immigrants.

A journey of compound stressors.

Loneliness and isolation. Loneliness was a prevailing stressor which emerged through the stories of each participant in this study. All of the women suffered from extreme isolation and loneliness. They lived within the confines of their homes, leaving only to tend to very basic necessities for themselves and their families. This living in seclusion was common among all the participants and it went on for months or even years. The first year of living in a new country was particularly difficult. In the literature,

the phenomenon of loneliness and isolation are not readily identified as part of the immigrant experience. Choudhury (2001) focused on the experience of elderly immigrants, and loneliness was addressed in that study. Toth (2003) observed similar experience among immigrant women and refugee in her study. However, these researchers did not offer any recommendations as to how to help immigrant women suffering from isolation. Given that each participant in this study suffered from loneliness and isolation, it would be prudent to further explore this phenomenon among immigrants in general, and immigrant women in particular.

Participants' husbands were busy with many life stressors and remained away from family even during critical moments, such as childbirth. The participants left their parents, friends, and family behind. They came to a new country and a new culture. Loss of family ties, their homeland, and culture along with unfamiliarity with a new culture, language, and extreme weather conditions contributed to isolation in their lives. The loneliness and isolation, and their mental health issues in relation to such isolation are potentially substantial, especially during the initial settlement years. The literature on immigrant women's experiences remains silent with respect to such isolation and loneliness. Although research on the mental health of immigrant women is apparent (Samuel, 2009; Smith et al., 2007; Morrow & Chapell, 2000) the focus has been mostly on their health seeking behaviour. Previous research (Samuel, 2009; Smith et al., 2007) has addressed mental health problems as a result of family conflicts, economic challenges, and deficits in social support within the Canadian context. Ahmad et al (2005b) identify loneliness and isolation among South Asian immigrant women as a concern to mental health issues. Therefore, the findings of this study have important

implications for health care providers in relation to loneliness and consequently immigrant women's vulnerabilities to mental health problems.

Absence of Canadian friends. The women in this study did not make any Canadian friends. They remained isolated from main stream Canadian society. Mostly, language barriers and unfamiliarity with Canadian cultures kept them from making friendships with Canadian non-immigrant people. The Citizenship and Immigration Canada has recently launched some programs on community connections (Host program developed by CIC, <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/host.shtml>.) that offer opportunity to immigrants as well as Canadian borne people to connect with each other. None of the participants in this study were aware of the existence of such programs in their local context. Therefore, these services need to be more accessible. In the literature, the concept of friendship in relation to Canadian immigrant women remains silent. Given the magnitude of the role of friendships in integrating to a new culture and society, further research is required to explore the phenomenon of friendship among immigrants in general; and immigrant women in particular.

Non recognition of credentials. All women in this study discussed non-recognition of foreign credentials as a major disappointment in their lives. The participants immigrated to Canada with an aspiration of a high standard of living and a better future for them and their children. All of them had to spend a significant number of years in making decisions, receiving immigration papers, and reaching Canada. The non-recognition of their previous education and the need for Canadian education to secure a professional career added barriers to adjusting to new life in Canada. Unemployment and underemployment also create economic challenges and tensions in immigrant families.

Previous researchers (Girard & Bauder, 2005; Graham & Watson, 2005; Khan & Watson, 2005; Preston & Giles, 2004; Schellenberg & Hou, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2007b) report that non-recognition of foreign credentials and lack of Canadian experience are critical obstacles for new immigrants' entry into the Canadian work force. It also obliges them to engage in low-paying menial work and further results in economic challenges (Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, 2009; Khan & Watson, 2005). With the exception of one participant, all the women in this study were professionals (i.e. teacher, researcher) and they sacrificed their careers in coming to Canada.

Weather, language, and transportation. The participants in this study identified extreme cold weather, language, and transportation as common challenges they endured in their daily lives. This finding is validated by previous research on immigrant women (Cheung, 2004; Choudhury, 2001; Colick-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Graham & Thurston, 2005; Khan & Watson, 2005). These researchers established that language was a major barrier among immigrant women to reorient themselves in a new context. It also limits their outdoor activities, use of public transportation (Choudhury, 2001; Stewart et al., 2006) and increased dependency on other family members (Choudhury, 2001; Khan & Watson, 2005). Canada's extreme cold weather is another major challenge for many immigrant women (Martins & Reid, 2007; Toth, 2003).

Preserving culture and religious beliefs. All participants in this study wanted to preserve their cultures and religious beliefs among their children. Concomitantly they also felt that their children needed to adapt to the Canadian way of living. All participants wanted to connect the two cultures in such a way that no damage happened to their children. The participants wanted to protect their children from what they perceived as an

open society and the negative values of Canadian culture. This finding is in keeping with the existing literature on biculturalism among immigrants (Berry, 2003; Khan & Watson, 2005; Timberlake et al., 2003; Willgerodt et. al., 2002). In the literature, it was noted that immigrant women desired to remain connected to their own cultural traditions and heritages (Timberlake et al, 2003). They were apprehensive about the negative values of Canadian culture and they wanted to protect their children (Khan & Watson, 2005; Timberlake et al., 2003).

Lack of leisure. Each participant of this study was burdened with daily responsibilities. The day to day structured work, completed within strict time lines, made the women exhausted and left little time or opportunity for leisure. This finding is also confirmed by previous research (Graham & Thurston, 2005; Khan & Watson, 2005; Martins & Reid, 2007).

Experiences with health services. The stressful adjustment to a new country and major changes in lifestyle may bring a new set of health risks among immigrants (Trimble, 2003). In addition, long waiting periods to see specialists or access to the emergency room, lack of control in the referral process, and cost of medication may also limit access to health services by immigrant women (Ahmad et al., 2005a). The participants in this study expressed their dissatisfaction regarding prolonged wait times in the emergency room, unavailability of family physicians at critical moments, and the high expenses of medication.

Resilience in everyday life. All participants in this study experienced compound stressors in their daily lives and they exercised resilience in responding to these stressors.

Having a back up plan. All participants had a back up plan to return to their countries should their attempts to build a good life in Canada not be successful. They kept jobs or things in their countries as a safety net to their indefinite future. Such plans gave them the autonomy to make choices of their own. In the literature on immigrant women's experiences and resilience, the aspect of "back up" plan is not addressed. Khan and Watson (2005) described that the ability to return to one's own country after receiving Canadian citizenship was anticipated among immigrants. However, this is different than having a back up plan if not successful in Canada. Further research can provide better understanding of how a back up plan acts as a safety net for immigrants and how this plan factors into their resilience.

Striving for independence and re-framing life's goals. Each participant was strong and determined. They did their best with their resources to survive their challenges. They strived for their independence. Most of the participants obtained a driver's licence and moved around independently. They improved their communication skills. Many of them changed their professions and searched for ways to build a second career. Negotiation with life situations and determination to move forward helped the woman immigrants to transcend their challenges. Researchers (Graham & Thurston, 2005; Khan & Watson, 2005) argue that negotiating and adapting to new roles and expectations is part of the adaptation process for immigrants. Re-framing of life goals is a resilience strategy that develops positive self image among immigrant women (Graham & Thurston, 2005).

Hope and optimism. All participants in this study were hopeful regarding the future for them and their children. They kept looking to the promises of the future.

Previous research reveals that hope and optimism are another mechanism for many immigrants to adjust to new life (Graham & Thurston, 2005). Women keep a positive outlook despite frustrating circumstances (Graham & Thurston, 2005). Appraisal of the gains also influences their coping mechanism (Khan & Watson, 2005; Maydel-Stevens et al., 2007). The participants considered independency, autonomy, ability to make decisions, and improved communication skills (i.e. English language) as their major accomplishments in Canada. These findings of this study also suggest a relationship between optimism and resilience among immigrant women.

Cultural values and religious faith. The participants in this study maintained their cultural and religious beliefs. They spoke their own language at home, cooked ethnic food, and celebrated the cultural and religious festivals with their ethnic and religious communities. Martins and Reid (2007) found that maintaining cultural values such as speaking in the mother tongue language at home, associating with friends from one's own cultural group, retaining culturally related gendered roles in homemaking and care giving were important factors in adjusting to a new country.

Act of resistance. Resistance may be reframed as resilience in dealing with difficult circumstances and adversities (Bottrell, 2009). Carranza (2007) pointed out that many immigrant women enacted strategies of resistance to oppressive circumstances which provided them inner strength to face the outside world. The participants of this study resisted many circumstances throughout their life which provided them a sense of autonomy and power over the situation. Pata resisted and defied her mother's choice of an arranged marriage, stopped the marriage, and left her country. Upon arrival in Canada, Pata resisted the systemic barrier of non-recognition of her international credentials. She

was determined not to end up her career with menial jobs and was active in search of opportunities. Another participant (Panna) resisted her husband's discouragement on her act of independency and made her own decision. Panna wanted to learn how to drive. Her husband discouraged her and told her, "You will never pass". Panna resisted his decision. She took her learner's licence for driving and passed. She did it by herself. "I told him [husband] to show me the online exam practice, but he didn't have time to show me....on the day I took my son with me and went by bus alone. My husband didn't come....I did the exam and I passed. So I did it alone". Participants in this study resisted compromising their religious faith and cultural norms. Therefore, act of resistance reframed their identity and empowered them which facilitated resilience. Further research can provide better understanding of the phenomenon of resistance in relation with resilience among immigrant women.

Impact of the marital relationship. Researchers have consistently found marriage satisfaction as a strong positive effect on immigrants in terms of stress and crisis (Cheung 2004). In her study, Cheung (2004) found that long-term marital satisfaction and relationships constituted a good foundation that helped immigrant couples endure hardships during the process of adjustment. In this study, marriage appeared to play a dual role with resilience. The women expressed that their husbands' participation in household chores, and encouragement and reassurance in their striving for active agency helped the participants to become independent and confident. Conversely, the emotional and physical distance from their husbands and discouragement of their endeavours around independence undermined the participants' resilience work. O'Mahony and Donnelly (2007) pointed out that gender roles and underlying power relations within the

family placed the immigrant women in a socially disadvantaged position. In addition, attitudinal disparities between husband and wife could lead to less mutual understanding and marital disharmony which could negatively impact resilience (Min, 2001; O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007). There is dearth of research that examines the role of marriage in the process of immigrants' resilience. Further research could explore the impact of marriage on resilience among immigrant women.

Transcending loss through technological connections. The participants in this study expressed an enormous emptiness in their lives for the loss of their families. All these women remain connected with their families through phone calls and the Internet. They also took advantage of technology (i.e. Internet) to make new contacts in Canada, search job opportunities, and take on-line courses in upgrading their skills. The Internet is "lifeline" for them. This finding demonstrates the strong connections immigrant women have to their extended families. As with the participants in this study, previous research (Graham & Thurston, 2005; Toth, 2003) found that maintaining connection with family and friends was an important coping strategy for immigrant women.

The role of ethno-cultural communities. Social support from family, friends, and others is often cited as being essential to develop resilience (Brennan, 2008). In this study, the participants established connections with their ethno-cultural and religious communities. Being with people from one's ethnic community helped them to make adjustments to life in this new country. Researchers (Graham & Watson, 2005; Martins & Reid, 2007) observed that connections with same or other cultural groups provided immigrant women with emotional and resettlement support. It also facilitated the adjustment process as it offered them a sense of comfort (Martins & Reid, 2007). In

contrast to the emotional support provided by ethno-cultural communities, the ethnic community sometimes disappointed immigrant women (Khan & Watson, 2005). One of the participants in this study also expressed her disappointment, “My husband went to visit one of the professors [who is] from Bangladesh and he worked at the university here as a professor...he just said I can’t do anything for you”. This statement confirms the findings of Khan and Watson (2005). There may be a misalignment between the expectations of immigrants and the nature of the support offered by their respective ethno-cultural communities. Further research is warranted in this regard.

Role of social support. Research (Graham & Thurston, 2005; Martins & Reid, 2007) suggested that immigration and settlement programs provided support in terms of offering information, emotional support, and accessing resources which acted as buffer to negative adjustment experiences. In contrast to these observations, only two of the participants in this study received the support from immigration and settlement programs, and they found such services inadequate. This does not suggest that previous findings are invalid. However, the participants were highly educated and were in need of professional connections. More research could explore the services offered by immigration and settlement services and their adequacy in relation to the requirements of professional and highly educated immigrants.

Factors impede resilience. Resilience is not just an individual’s capacity to overcome the adversities and challenges. Ungar (2005) argues that resilience is as an artefact of both individuals’ capacities to navigate resources and their communities’ capacity to provide those resources in culturally meaningful ways. Therefore, resilience can either be fostered or hindered by environmental factors. The research findings

supported this concept of resilience present in the literature. The study revealed that there were many factors that undermined the participants' resilience.

Internal factors. Roberts et al. (2002) describe that people who are resilient usually possess some internal factors such as temperament, self-motivation, self-esteem, sociability, and autonomy. Some of the participants in this study reportedly lacked such qualities during their initial periods in Canada. Lack of confidence, autonomy, and self-motivation cloistered these women in their homes during their initial days in Canada. One of the participants explained that her impatience created frustration, "I want the things to happen immediately I don't want to wait; I don't have that much patience". Her frustrations affected her relationships with her husband and children, and in turn undermined her resilience. "My son gets scared of me and...my husband gets angry with me". Another participant became depressed and physically sick during the initial periods of her immigration journey and went back to her country to stay with her mother and comfort her soul. As the participant described, "My experience was very bad.... I need to go home, back home; I wanted to stay with my mom for some days". Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) note that those who suffer most from a sense of loss of belonging, lack of self-fulfillment, feeling of hopelessness, and low self-esteem remain less resilient.

Marriage and family. Marital relationship greatly influences the resilience of immigrant women. Previous research (Cheung, 2004; Min, 2001) established that marital disharmony and less mutual understanding between couples impeded resilience. This study confirms the influence of marital relationship on resilience. In this study, most of the participants experienced loneliness because of their husbands' emotional and physical distance (for some participants). Ahmad et al (2005b) identify loneliness and isolation

among immigrant women as a concern to mental health issues which undermine resilience.

The study revealed that discouragement of participants' husbands to their endeavour around independence undermined or compromised these women from exercising their resilience. This study also identifies that husbands' behaviour and attitude greatly influenced participants' emotional state which in turn affected their resilience. One of the participants explained that her husband did not show his feelings, "He loves me and he cares about us a lot but doesn't show his feelings". Given the tremendous stress the participants endured, these women sometimes needed their husbands' attention. Another participant expressed her disappointment about her husband's inappropriate behaviour when she had no family members around her to provide her with emotional support, "Sometimes, he gets angry, sometimes, I think why he is so angry? I don't understand". Therefore, marriage and family counselling can support the immigrant couples to maintain marital harmony and foster resilience among them. Further research is warranted in this regard to have better understanding of this phenomenon.

Systemic barriers. All participants encountered many systemic barriers upon arrival to Canada which influenced their adjustment process and impeded their resilience. Non-recognition of foreign credentials and work experiences were major systemic barriers that dislocated the participants from their own identity. With the exception of one, all participants in this study were professionals. Being unable to obtain employment aligned with their education added barriers to adjusting to their new life in Canada. Participants experienced a loss of their identity and potentially a loss of self-confidence.

Previous research (Khan & Watson, 2005) states that occupational dislocation sometimes has a greater effect on internationally educated professional immigrant women.

Discrimination and prejudice affects one's self-image and feeling of acceptance by the host country (Cheung, 2004). The researcher argues that discrimination and prejudice pose additional risks to the stress of immigration, increases immigrants' personal vulnerability, and hampers their resilience (Cheung, 2004). One participant in this study expressed her concern about her child who became victim of discrimination by her friends. Another participant stated that non-recognition of foreign education is one kind of discrimination. This statement confirms the findings of Khan and Watson (2005). The researchers (Khan & Watson, 2005) argue that non recognition of their foreign qualifications conveys a message of racial discrimination to the recent immigrants which in turn undermines their healthy adjustment and affects resilience.

Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework of the study is a structure that can hold or support a theory of a research work. Resilience theory and feminist research principles guided this research process.

Concept of Resilience. Resilience is a subjective concept that is not simple to define. Some researchers define resilience as “the capacity to transcend adversity and transform it into an opportunity for growth” (Bottrell, 2009: p. 125). In other studies, resilience was viewed as the ability to embrace the challenges and remain positive in the face of adversity (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Some theorists believe that resilience is an innate quality that exists in human nature and unfolds naturally in the presence of certain environmental factors (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Other theorists consider resilience as the

result not only of innate traits, but also of complex and dynamic social contexts in which people are embedded and are more or less vulnerable to harm (Harvey, 2007). Therefore, resilience is an outcome of the interaction between nature and nurture and can either be fostered or hindered by environmental factors (Greene & Conrad, 2002).

Most resilience research has adopted quantitative methods and epidemiological studies to reveal the associations between “developmental outcomes and characteristics of individuals and their environments” (Barton, 2002: p. 97) However, such studies fail to address issues of causality (Barton, 2002). The subjective construction of meaning can make many differences in understanding the effects of an event upon the individual involved. Therefore, qualitative methods are better suited to this task (Barton, 2002).

Resilience is a bi-directional relationship shared between individuals and their environments. A particular individual may respond differently to the same life stressors in different contexts (Richardson, 2002) and people who are not adapting well at one point in their lives may become more adaptive if they have social, economic, and emotional opportunities (Greene & Conrad, 2002). Therefore, understanding the process of resilience is important through emphasizing the individual trajectory in terms of relationships with environments such as family, marriage, children, and the ethno-cultural community. However, there is dearth of research that considers the embeddedness of resilience in life courses, within cultural context, and in the nature of individual-social relations (Bottrell, 2009).

Resilience is multidimensional in nature. Resilience research on at-risk children consistently find that who are considered as resilient on the basis of particular competence criteria may reflect considerable heterogeneity in functioning across other

adjustment domains (Luther, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). In this study, the women experienced multiple stressors (i.e. isolation, loss of family ties, weather, culture, occupation etc.) and concurrently they enacted resilience in multiple domains. Resilience was not located in one aspect of their lives. It occurred in the everyday, in many aspects of their lives. The individual woman could be resilient in one domain while not so in another domain. Therefore, it is important to take into account relative resilience in these various dimensions of life.

Resilience is a complex phenomenon. It is a subjective concept. What is perceptible as resilience from subjective point of view may not be appreciable from the social point of view. As a result, individuals' experiences can represent not only their responses to adversity and the directions they wish to take; but also indicate the consequences of individual-social positions and environmental resources (Bottrell, 2009; Ungar, 2008).

The interaction between individuals and their social ecologies determines the degree of positive outcomes experienced (Ungar, 2008). Ungar (2008) argues for an understanding of resilience as a quality of the environment as much as the individual. Therefore, resilience can not be understood by simply focusing on the individual-level. As the research unfolded, it became apparent that resilience among immigrant women was a collective process and was not simply a matter of individual resilience. The woman's capacity to be resilient was greatly influenced by her husband, her children, and even her family in her home country. Therefore, resilience was synergic in nature and connected from individual to spousal-dyad, and to the family. Resilience develops not through the evasion of adverse events, but through a family's successful use of resources

to cope with these events (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2008). Therefore, fostering family-protective factors in order to promote family resilience among immigrant populations is likely important.

The concept of “sustained resilience” emerged from this research. Immigrant women demonstrated resilience throughout their life journeys. The women were challenged to be resilient during the course of their daily lives. It was in the every day occurrences of living whereby the women had to be resilient. These were not profound or dramatic occurrences. Rather, the women demonstrated resilience repeatedly during their daily lives. For example, one participant made ‘halaal lunches’ for her daughter so that the daughter could practice her religious beliefs while at school. Thus the woman positively adapted the situation. This study found that immigrant women encountered many stressors in their daily lives and they enacted resilience in their everyday living. Therefore, resilience is sustained and a continuous process. It is difficult to isolate resilience to one particular event. This raises some challenges as researchers develop and implement scales to measure resilience.

Resilience—“not giving up on life”. Resilience, in this study, is viewed as the capacity of immigrant women to embrace the challenges of life and maintain optimism in the face of adversity. Adversity comprises in this study as challenges, life stressors, and hardships (i.e. loneliness, loss of identity and professional roles, having to engage a new culture and society, language barriers etc.) immigrant women encountered in the Canadian context. Resilience among immigrant women is not a matter of “bouncing back” or eliminating these challenges; rather it is a matter of capacity or strength to transcend such challenges and integrate them in a meaningful way into one’s life.

Resilience is the ability to make plans and take decisions; it is the ability to set goals; and have hopes for the future. Resilience is about “not giving up on life” but to move forward in life with hope and optimism. Resilience is not about success but happiness. Resilience is about leading a healthy life which has meaning and purpose.

This research took account the participants’ perspectives about resilience on their own terms. It was how they perceived their lives and how they defined happiness and success. All the participants in this study were optimistic about a better future—especially for their children. They were hopeful and did not give up on the future. The participants reframed their goals and made plans for their futures. They also became more independent and autonomous compared to when living in their countries of origin. Such independence and autonomy fostered resilience, as did the support from their husbands and family members. The women actively made major decisions in their lives, for their lives. In spite of all hardships and sacrifices, they indicated they were happy to be in Canada. All of the women in the study were considered resilient as they overcame adversity, especially in the every day, to live their lives as fully possible.

Feminist Theory

Feminist research focuses on the status of women in the society and views women through a female prism (Cook & Fonow, 1986). It is through women’s experiences and especially through their life crises that they are able to understand the world around them. Therefore, the concept of woman is the central point for feminist theory (Letherby, 2003) and making women visible and representing women’s perspectives are major components of feminist research (Harvey, 1990). Feminist researchers are, thereby, committed to make a difference in women’s lives through bringing social and individual change.

The five epistemological principles of feminist research offered by Cook and Fonow (1986) guided this study. The primary focus of this research was women and their life experiences. Being a woman and an immigrant, I had an experiential understanding of the dynamics of social relationships that informed the phenomenon of interest. Therefore, I easily situated myself as a subject within the same social relationships which structured the everyday experiences of the participants. Thus, the research was devoted to a description, analysis, explanation, and interpretation of the female world (Bernard, 1979).

The interview situation was created so as to be relaxed and non-hierarchical. It was a mutual interaction in which I was open, flexible, and intimating. The participants felt more comfortable in sharing information as they considered me someone who was within the same situation. Therefore, the affiliation between me as researcher and the participants as co-researchers was established.

As the research proceeded, I viewed immigrant women's lives through a 'double prism' – as a woman who lived through the immigration journey and as a researcher. Thus, the process raised a double consciousness in me of being a member of this group and a scholarly group; and allowed me to explore women's perceptions of their situation from an experiential base (Reinharz, 1983).

The research process allowed the women to reflect on their life journey. Therefore, a sense of understanding and a sense of a life-lived were created. By sharing their stories with me validated the experiences they lived through. All participants received their stories which provided them with an opportunity to read their own life-stories, and potentially helped to generate an understanding and healing. The participants

were asked about their experience of being interviewed during or after the interview. Most participants expressed the experience as positive. One participant (Anita) described her experience, “I feel more confident now”. Another participant (Caroline) explained that she felt powerful. Therefore, the research process was empowering for the participants.

During interviews, participants in this study reviewed the transcripts from the previous interview and made comments on that. I also e-mailed their stories to each participant to confirm that the interpretations reflected the participants’ experiences and understanding. Also, during interpretations of the data I articulated their experiences in their own words. This addressed the concern with ethics regarding the representation of women’s meaning of their own experiences.

Therefore, feminist research principles drawn from feminist theory guided the research process to uncover the experiences of immigrant women in their own words.

Reflection and Reflexivity

It is critical for the researcher to pay attention to his or her thoughts and emotions that occur as a research study progresses (Barrett, 2010). Recognizing the thoughts, emotions, and behaviours evoked in the researcher reflects his/her choices in the process of conducting research. A summary of the results of self-scrutiny undertaken by me as the researcher is presented here as well as its impact on this research process.

As an immigrant woman, this study was important and fascinating to me in understanding other immigrant women’s experience and validating my own experience within this context. Upon arriving to Canada, I encountered many challenges as an immigrant professional woman. This lived experience provided me with a new ways of

seeing reality and strength that is “not giving up on life”. My own experience and the dearth of research on immigrant women’s capacity to overcome challenges led me to do research on the resilience of immigrant women in Canada.

Being an immigrant woman, I expected the data collection process to be emotional. I was also prepared to learn a lot from these women, and to contribute to the dearth of literature on resilience. Therefore, I was aware of my position as an immigrant and a researcher, and drew upon these roles and experiences in relation to the study. Importantly, I recognized the responsibility of being both a researcher and someone who is living through the experience of immigration. As the research unfolded, I discovered many areas that were not travelled; and remained silent to Canadian society and even to immigrant society. Some participants became emotional during the interviews and I understood the agony associated with the experience of immigration. I was also surprised at the extent of their challenges and their capacities to respond to these challenges.

Throughout the data collection phase I recognized that isolation and loneliness had a major impact on the woman immigrants’ daily lives. The women revealed the impact of their husbands’ emotional support on their resilience. It also disturbed me emotionally how these woman suffered from a secluded life and were cloistered in their homes during their initial years of living in Canada.

The research revealed that some of the participants and their husbands found difficulty in accessing Canadian professionals who were the gatekeepers in the professional fields. One of the participants sent a blitz of e-mails to Canadian professors and scientists; she mentioned her sustained efforts as “I was just like glue”. After her extensive persuasion, the participant succeeded to make connection with a Canadian

professor whom she described as “a blessing from God and he supported me as an angel”. From my own experience as a professional immigrant, I also realized the importance of a Canadian mentor in career success. During the research process, I closely worked with my supervisor, a Canadian professor. He mentored me to be successful as a potential researcher and scholar in Canadian context. Future research would provide insights into the impact of Canadian mentorships and professional networks in career success of immigrants.

The interviews were empowering for most of the interviewees as well as me. As one participant expressed, “Oh with this interview I feel more confident now”. It felt good to know that I shared similar experiences with other immigrant women. I also felt content about providing participants with an opportunity to discuss their life stories. The opportunity for sharing their stories with others was likely limited—if at all.

The initial plan of obtaining access to participants was through the LFS-Immigrant Services and the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association using purposeful and convenience sample selection techniques. In addition, I planned to adopt snow-ball sampling if access to sufficient number of participants proved to be difficult. I also put up posters at the offices of LFS-IS and the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association; and at the campus of the University of Lethbridge. While working with the LFS-IS, only one participant was accrued through this recruitment process. No participant was accrued from the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association. All other participants were recruited through snowball sampling and “word of mouth”. Therefore, the most effective recruitment strategy for this research was snowball sampling. Therefore, I suggest that

future researchers may consider snowball sampling as a recruiting strategy for studies about immigrant women.

As the research process proceeded, it became apparent that immigration was a difficult journey and as a consequence of this journey, immigrant women needed to be resilient. They were all alone though living in the midst of many. These women needed resources to build their capacity to overcome challenges. Further research could explore the environmental resources (family, community, institution) that can facilitate immigrant women's resilience.

Limitations of the Study

In this section, I describe the limitations of the study regarding sample selection, data collection, and trustworthiness.

The sample selection was one of the major limitations in this study. The participants who volunteered to be in this study were comfortable with and willing to be interviewed in English. Language is an essential vehicle to express emotional experience. Language shapes the words, concepts, and thus conveys the meaning of experiences. Despite the ability of conversing in English, one of the participants experienced difficulty in articulating her thoughts and emotions. As the woman spoke my language, I encouraged her to express her emotions in Bengali and later on I translated those in English. The findings of this study may not relate to immigrant women who cannot speak English. In this study, participants were non-refugee immigrants. Therefore, the stressors and resilience experiences of immigrant women who came to Canada as refugees are likely different to the sample accrued for this study.

This study was exploratory and its main purpose was to generate knowledge and understanding related to Canadian immigrant women's experience and their capacity of resilience. Given the small sample size, this study can not represent the entirety of experiences of Canadian woman immigrants. However, the findings were validated by previous research. Furthermore, new findings help us to better understand resilience among immigrant women.

The study focused on immigrant women's resilience during their initial years of relocation. The participants in this study lived in Canada from nine months to five years to be considered as a recent Canadian immigrant. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other immigrant women who have lived in the country for longer than five years.

Given the time constraints, the sample diversity was limited. The participants who volunteered for the study were mostly from Asia and one was from Africa. No participants were found from Europe or South America. Therefore, experiences of immigrants who came from these regions are not necessarily captured in this study.

The study was conducted among immigrant women who lived in Lethbridge. The experience of living in a larger city can be different from living in a small-sized city. Moreover, in large cities, resources available for immigrant women may influence their capacities to be resilient.

Future Research Directions

In this study I explored the experiences of recent Canadian immigrants in relation to the expectations that brought them to Canada. Also explored were the sustained acts of resilience immigrant women and their families enacted in light of the challenges they

encountered during their initial years of relocation. Loneliness, as a dominant stressor, emerged among immigrant women. All participants suffered from extreme isolation and loneliness in relation to their husbands, to their families, and to their new society. Loneliness is a pervasive feeling that can undermine the health and quality of life. It also impedes resilience (Toth, 2003). In the literature on immigrants' experience and resilience, the phenomenon of loneliness remains unknown. Therefore, it would be useful to explore loneliness (and isolation) as experienced by immigrant women during the first year of living in Canada. To what extent does this phenomenon exist? What is the relationship between loneliness and the capacity to be resilient among immigrant women?

The study revealed that many of the participants' husbands remained aloof emotionally and thus left the women feeling alone. The husbands were focused on their own contexts, their own problems, and their stressors. Understanding the experience of men and their immigration journeys would be important in term of resilience and integration into Canadian society.

The concept of friendship within the context of immigration emerged from this study. Although the participants had friends from within their ethno-cultural and religious communities, none of them had friends outside of these communities, i.e. non-immigrant Canadians. Much research has been conducted on immigrants' social networks; however, there is a dearth of research that focuses on immigrants' friendship in general and with Canadian people in particular. Future research would provide insights into the impact of friendship on resilience among immigrants with the Canadian people and immigrants' ability to their new society.

The participants and their husbands in this study were highly educated and had professional careers. However, they found difficulty accessing professional networks. Only one participant in this study received mentorship from a Canadian professor. The relationship between the aforementioned factor and the extent of their career success is also an area for future research.

This study was retrospective. A prospective study design, such as interviewing women upon their arrival into Canada and then after a period of six months to a year would be a much stronger design. Likely recruitment would pose a challenge as well as the logistics of maintaining participation in a study over time.

Resilience can be achieved at any point in the life cycle. However, there is dearth of research on at-risk individuals and vulnerable populations (Luther et al., 2000) such as immigrant women, particularly on their achievement of positive outcomes in later life. Therefore, it is important to research resilience at different points in human development.

Finally, further study needs to be done on the existing programs offered by immigration and settlement services and their relevance to highly educated immigrants in Canada.

Recommendations

- Loneliness emerged as a prevailing stressor among immigrant women in this study. Therefore it is recommended that social and community services workers consider developing partnerships with immigrant Canadians or ethno-cultural and religious community leaders to incorporate programming to provide information and social networking services to new immigrants.

The women in this study were in need of relationships and connections with non-immigrant Canadians.

- Social and community service workers together with ethno-cultural or religious leaders may strategize ways of culturally appropriate social activities and encourage immigrant women to participate in them.
- Incorporate family and marriage counselling within cultural traditions to work with the family to foster resilience among immigrant families to adapt well to new environments.
- Incorporate grief and bereavement counselling for immigrant families in light of the multiple losses associated with the immigration journey.
- Community agencies that provide programs for immigration and settlement services may consider developing adequate programs that can foster connections between immigrants and host Canadians.
- Develop resources and programs that increase Canadian borne people's awareness, understanding, and appreciation of multiculturalism and diversity to welcome immigrants from diverse cultures and religious traditions.
- Incorporate mentorship programs for professional immigrants through immigrant and settlement services.
- Develop a comprehensive website (e.g. <http://integration-net.ca/english/offsite.cfm?urlE=http://www.directioncanada.gc.ca/>) to provide a single-window access point for information for immigrants that includes: recognition criteria of foreign education and skills, job market opportunities, study opportunities, and the realities of the immigration

experiences. It is to be noted that the “lived experience” is missing from the CIC website

- Expand efforts of Government to work with regulatory bodies to develop innovative assessment frameworks that recognize international credentials as well as skills.
- Develop programs to increase awareness and understanding of internationally acquired skills and work experience among employment service providers, regulatory bodies and professionals, labour organizations etc.

Implications for Mental Health Professionals, Counsellors, and Social Workers

This study has several implications for mental health professionals, counsellors, and social service workers. This study offers a comprehensive understanding of immigrant women’s complex experiences and challenges associated with the journey of immigration. Although not the focus of this study, an understanding on the marriage dyad (relationship) and family dynamics was attained. This has an important bearing on the state of their mental health and family dynamics. Understanding these dynamics is important for mental health professionals, counsellors, and social service workers to offer effective treatment, counselling, and emotional support on the state of their mental health.

Implications for Immigrant Population

This study has the most important bearings on immigrant population in general, and immigrant women in particular. Immigrant men and women may learn from the experiences of these participants and prepare themselves for the various challenges they may face as well as the strategies the participants used to encounter the challenges.

Conclusions

The study explored the experiences of recent Canadian immigrant women and their resilience. The participants immigrated to Canada with an aspiration to have a prosperous life for themselves and for their children.

Immigration is a complex journey that brings loss, disappointments, and dissatisfactions in life. The losses are multiple and concomitant. They include: The loss of self and one's identity; the loss of family; of culture and of traditions, and a way of life. This research introduced the compound stressors that immigrant women experience in their day to day lives. The predominant stressor that surfaced was severe loneliness. In addition to loneliness, immigrant women encountered many other challenges. Non-recognition of foreign credentials, cold weather, language barriers, loss of family and friends, social isolation, and difficulty accessing public transportation were a few of the common challenges participants experienced upon arrival to Canada.

The study demonstrated the strengths and capacities of these women who muster all their resources to address the challenges in their lives. The participants were strong and determined. They were resolute in their quest to survive. They improved their communication skills, obtained their driver's licence, and became independent. Many of them changed their professional careers and searched for ways to build a second career.

Resilience is at once an individual and collective process. The woman's capacity to be resilient was greatly influenced by her husband, her children, and her family in her home country. The study identified that support and encouragement from the husbands helped the participants to move forward. Conversely, their husbands' physical/emotional distance, and discouragement undermined these women's resilience. Established in this

study was the notion that the marital dyad has its own resilience. This was also the case of families, i.e. that there was a kind of resilience associated with the family unit. To understand immigrant women's resilience is to understand the resilience of her marriage and that of her family.

The participants were optimistic. They negotiated with life situations and expectations. They were hopeful and looked to the future. They were happy to be in Canada despite all the losses and challenges associated with their immigration journeys. This research was about the stories of power and strength of Canadian immigrant women who shared their spirit, courage, and wisdom.

References

- Ahmed, F., Ali, M., & Stewart, D. E. (2005a). Spousal-abuse among Canadian Immigrant Women. *Journal of Immigrant Health*, 7(4), 239-246. doi: 10.1007/s10903-005-5120-4.
- Ahmad, F., Shik, A., Vanza, R., Cheung, A. M., George, U., & Stewart, D. E. (2005b). Voices of South Asian women: immigration and mental health. *Women and health*, 40(4), 113-130. doi: 10.1300/J013v40n04_07
- Ajdukovic, M., & Ajdukovic, D. (1993). Psychological well being of refugee children. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 17(6), 843-854. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8287295>
- Alberta Government. (2005). *Supporting immigrants and immigration to Alberta*. Edmonton, AB. Retrieved from http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WIA/WIA-IM_policy_framework.pdf
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behaviour* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. Retrieved from <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/BanEncy.html>
- Barrett, K. S. (2010). Work experiences of professional West Indian Immigrant women in the United States: An exploratory study. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Retrieved from <http://0-proquest.umi.com.darius.uleth.ca/pqdweb?index>
- Barton, W. H. (2002). Methodological square pegs and theoretical black holes. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 95-114). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Berry, J. W. (2003). Conceptual approaches to acculturation. In K. M. Chun, P. N. B. Organista, & G. Marin (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research*. (pp. 17-37). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), 5-68.
- Bottrell, D. (2009). Understanding 'marginal' perspectives: Towards a social theory of resilience. *Qualitative Social Work*, 8 (3), 321-339. doi: 10.1177/1473325009337840
- Boyd, M., & Grieco, E. (2003, March). Women and migration: Incorporating gender into international migration theory. *Migration Information Source*. Retrieved from www.migrationinformation.org/feature/print.cfm?ID=106
- Brayton, J. (1997). *What makes feminist research feminist? The structure of feminist research within the social sciences*. Retrieved from <http://www.unb.ca/PAR-L/win/feminmethod.htm>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp0630a
- Brennan, M. A. (2008). Conceptualizing resiliency: An interpersonal perspective for community and youth development. *Child Care in Practice*, 14(1), 55-64. doi: 10.1080/13575270701733732
- Calgary Multicultural Health Care Initiative. (2000). *Building Bridges: Healthy Living for Calgary's Diverse Community (Final Report)*. Calgary: Calgary Immigrant Aid Society.

- Carranza, M. E. (2007). Building resilience and resistance against racism and discrimination among Salvadorian female youth in Canada. *Child and Family Social Work, 12*, 390-398. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2206.2007.00492.x
- Cattell, V. (2001). Poor people, poor places, and poor health: The mediating role of social networks and social capital. *Social Science & Medicine, 52*(10), 1501-1516. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(00)00259-8
- Cheung, M. (2004). *Resiliency of immigrant couples in immigration and integration in Canada* (PCER11 Funded Research Final Report). University of Manitoba, Prairie Center of Excellence Metropolis. Retrieved from http://pcerii.metropolis.net/generalinfo%5Cinfo_content
- Choudhury, U. K. (2001). Uprooting and resettlement experiences of South Asian immigrant women. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 23*(4), 376-393. doi: 10.1177/019394590102300405
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008a). *News Release: Government of Canada admits highest number of newcomers in Canada's History*. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2008/2008-03-14.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008b). *Facts and figures-immigration overview: Permanent and temporary residents, 2008 Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2008/index.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007). *Attracting & retaining immigrants: A tool box of ideas for smaller centres (2nd ed.)*. National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14. doi: 10.3102/0013189X019005002
- Cook, J., & Fonow, M. M. (1986). Knowledge and women's interests: Issues of epistemology and methodology in feminist sociological research. *Sociological Inquiry, 56* (4), 2-29. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-682X.1986.tb00073.x
- Colic-Peisker, V. & Walker, I. (2003). Human capital, acculturation and social identity: Bosnian refugees in Australia. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 13*, 337-360. doi: 10.1002/casp.743
- Crawford, E. B., & Kimmel, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Innovations in feminist psychological research*. New York, NY: American Psychological Association.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crocker, S. V. (2008). Resiliency: A springy strategy for wellness. *Ala Nurse, 35*(2), 25. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18634235>
- Crotty, M. (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research (3rd Ed)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research (1st ed.)*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Crow, B. (2000). *Radical feminism: A documentary reader*. New York: New York University Press.

- Dass-Brailsford, P. (2005). Exploring resiliency: Academic achievement among disadvantaged black youth in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 35(3), 574-591. Retrieved from <http://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed, pp. 1-28). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-18). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Donnelly, T. T. (2006). Living in-between--Vietnamese Canadian women's experiences: Implications for health care practice. *Health Care for Women International*, 27, 695-708. doi: 10.1080/07399339600817725
- Dolan, P., & McGrath, B. (2006). Enhancing support for young people in need: Reflections on informal and formal sources of helping. In P. Dolan, J. Pinkerton, and J. Canavan (Eds.), *Family support as reflective practice* (pp. 149-164). United Kingdom, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Ewing, K. P. (2007). Immigrant identities and emotion. In C. Casey & R. B. Edgerton (Eds.), *A companion to psychological anthropology: Modernity and psychocultural change* (pp-225-240). United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Fraser, M. W., Richman, J. M., & Galinsky, M. J. (1999). Risk, protection, and resilience: Toward a conceptual framework for social work practice. *Social Work Research*, 23(3), 129-208.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books. Retrieved from http://hypergeertz.jku.at/geertzttexts/thick_description.htm
- Gillespie, B. M., Chaboyer, W., & Wallis, M. (2007). Development of a theoretically derived model of resilience through concept analysis. *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*, 25(1-2), 124-135. Retrieved from <http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/retrieve.do?contentSet>
- Gilligan, R. (2007). Adversity, resilience and the educational progress of young people in public care. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 12(2), 135-145. doi: 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2000.tb00149.x
- Gilligan, R. (2004). Promoting resilience in child and family social work: Issues for social work practice, education and policy. *Social Work Education*, 23(1), 93-104. doi: 10.1080/0261547032000175728
- Girard, E., & Bauder, H. (2005). *Barriers blocking the integration of foreign-trained immigrant professionals: Implications for smaller communities in Ontario*. University of Guelph, Retrieved from <http://www.geography.ryerson.ca/hbauder/Immigrant Labour/imm>
- Graham, J. M., & Thurston, W. E. (2005). Overcoming adversity: Resiliency & coping mechanisms developed by recent immigrant women living in the inner city of Calgary, Alberta. *Women's Health and Urban Life*, 4(1), 63-80. Retrieved from <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/4265>

- Graneheim, U., & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24, 105–112.
- Greene, R. R., Galambos, C., & Lee, Youjung. (2003). Resilience theory: Theoretical and professional conceptualizations. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 8(4), 75-91. doi: 10.1300/J137v08n04_05
- Greene, R. R. (2002). Human behavior theory: A resilience orientation. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 1-28). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Greene, R. R., & Conrad, A. P. (2002). Basic assumptions and term. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 29-62). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Greene, R. R., & Livingston, N. C. (2002). A Social Construct. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 63-93). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Greene, R. R., Taylor, N. J., Evans, M. L., & Smith, L. A. (2002). Raising children in an oppressive environment: Voices of resilient adults. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 241-276). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2004). Competing paradigms in qualitative research: Theories and issues. In S. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 17–38). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigm in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Halli, S. S., & Anchan, J.P., (2005). Structural and behavioural determinant of immigrants and non-immigrant health status: Results from the Canadian community health survey. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 6(1), 93-122. doi: 10.1007/s12134-005-1004-7
- Harding, S. (1989). Introduction: Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and Methodology* (pp. 1-14). Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com/Feminism-Methodology-Social-Science-Issues/dp/0253204445>
- Harvey, L. (1990). *Critical social research: Contemporary social research* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Harvey, M. (2007). Towards an ecological understanding of resilience in trauma survivors: Implications for theory, research, and practice. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*, 14(1-2), 9-32. doi:10.1300/J146v14n01_02
- Haslanger, S. (2000). Gender and race: what are they? What do we want them to be? *Nous*, 34(1), 31-55. Retrieved from http://philpapers.org/s/Sally_Haslanger_-_78k
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *The practice of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Hollan, D. (2005). Setting a new standard: The person-centered interviewing and observation of Robert I. Levy. *ETHOS*, 33(4), 459-466. doi: 10.1525/eth.2005.33.4.459

- Hoover, J. H. (2004). John Bowlby on human attachment. *Cyc Online*.62. Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0304-bowlby.html>
- Hyman, I., Forte, T., Mont, J. D., Romans, S., & Cohen, M. M. (2006). Help-seeking rates for intimate partner violence (IPV) among Canadian immigrant women. *Health Care for Women International*, 27, 682-694. doi: 10.1080/07399330600817618
- Im, E., & Yang, K. (2006). Theories on immigrant women's health. *Health Care for Women International*, 27, 666- 681. doi: 10. 1080/07399330600817535.
- Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary. (2009, July). *A Made-in-Calgary Municipal Immigration Strategy*. Retrieved from <http://www.isccalgary.ca/publications/092909%20Municipal>
- Jambunathan, S., Burts, D., & Pierce, S. (2000). Comparisons of parenting attitudes among five ethnic groups in the United States. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 31(4), 395-406. Retrieved from <http://0-proquest.umi.com.darius.uleth.ca>
- James, S. (2000). Feminism in Philosophy of Mind: The Question of Personal Identity. In M. Fricker & J. Hornsby (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Khan, S., & Watson, J. C. (2005). The Canadian immigration experiences of Pakistani women: Dreams confront reality. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 18(4), 307-317. doi: 10.1080/09515070500386026
- King, K. E. (1994). Method and methodology in feminist research: What is the difference? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 20, 19-22
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: SEGA Publications, Inc.
- Laidlaw, S. (2005, February 9). Immigrants' skills 'squandered': Immigration Minister, Joe Volpe's Breakfast speech to Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association. *Toronto Star, Business News, C Section*.
- Lauritzen, C., & Jaegar, M. (1997). *Integrating learning through story: The narrative curriculum*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.
- Levy, R., & Hollan, D. (1998). Person-centered interviewing and observation. In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology* (pp. 333-364). Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press.
- Letherby, G. (2003). *Feminist research in theory and practice*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Liamputtong, P., & Naksook, C. (2003). Perceptions and experiences of motherhood, health, and the husband's role among Thai women in Australia. *Midwifery*, 19(1), 27-36. doi:10.1054/midw.2002.0333
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child dev*, 71(3), 543-562
- MacLeod, L., & Shin, M. Y. (1993). Like a wingless bird. *Health Canada*, 1-56. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/html>
- Man, G. (2004). Gender, work and migration: Deskillling Chinese immigrant women in Canada *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27(2). 135-148. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2004.06.004

- Margalit, M. (2004). Second-generation research on resilience: Social-emotional aspects of children with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 19*(1), 45-48.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Martins, V., & Reid, D. (2007). New-immigrant women in urban Canada: Insights into occupation and socio cultural context. *Occupational Therapy International, 14*(4), 203–220. doi: 10.1002/oti.233
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being* (2nd ed.). Princeton, N.J. : Van Nostrand
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. *Applied social research methods* (Series, 41). Thousands Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc. Retrieved from <http://books.google.ca/books?id=XqaJP-iehskC&dq=qualitative+research+design>
- Maydell-Stevens, E., Masgoret, A., & Ward, T. (2007). Problems of psychological and sociocultural adaptation among Russian-speaking immigrants in New Zealand. *Social Policy journal of New Zealand, 30* (March), 178-198. Retrieved from http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-6529401/Problems-of-psychological-and-sociocultural.html
- McCormack, T. (1981). Good theory or just theory? Toward a feminist philosophy of social science. *Women's Studies International Quarterly, 4*(1), 1-12. doi:10.1016/S0148-0685(81)96298-9
- McCormick, K. M., & Bunting, S. M. (2002). Application of feminist theory in nursing research: The case of women and cardiovascular disease. *Health Care for Women International, 23*, 820-834. doi: 10.1080/07399330290112344
- Menziver, C., & Salcido, O. (2002). Immigrant women and domestic violence: Common experiences in different countries. *Gender & Society, 16*(6), 898-920. doi: 10.1177/089124302237894
- Min, P. G. (2001). Changes in Korean immigrants' gender roles and social status, and their marital conflicts. *Sociological forum, 16*(2), 301-320. doi: 10.1023/A:1011056802719
- Morgan, D. L. (1993). Qualitative content analysis: A guide to paths not taken. *Qualitative Health Research, 3*, 112-121.
- Morgan, G. (1983). Research strategies: Modes of engagement. In G. Morgan (Ed.), *Beyond method: Strategies for social research* (pp. 19-44). Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Morrow, M., & Chappell, M. (2000). Hearing women's voices: Mental health for women. *Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Research Bulletin, 1*(1). 18-19.
- Morse, J. M. (1995). The significance of saturation. *Qualitative Health Research, 5*. 147-149. doi:10.1177/104973239500500201
- Myers, M. (2000). Qualitative research and the generalizability question: Standing firm with proteus. *The Qualitative Report, 4*(3/4). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/myers.html>
- Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

- Ng, R. (1996). *The politics of community services: Immigrant women, class, and the state* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Garamond Press. Retrieved from <http://aecp.oise.utoronto.ca/main/faculty/ng.html>
- O'Mahony, J. M., & Donnelly, T. T. (2007). Health care providers' perspective of the gender influences on immigrant women's mental health care experiences. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 28, 1171-1188. doi: 10.1080/01612840701581289
- Oxman-Martinez, J., Hanley, J., Lach, L., Khanlou, N., Weerasinghe, S., & Agnew, V. (2005). Intersection of Canadian policy parameters affecting women with precarious immigration status: A baseline for understanding barriers to health. *Journal of Immigrant Health*, 7(4), 247-258. doi: 10.1007/s10903-005-5122-2.
- Patterson, J. L., and Kelleher, P. (2005). A Deeper Meaning of Resilience. In J.L. Patterson and P. Kelleher (Ed). *Resilient school Leaders: Strategies for turning adversity into achievement*. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/104003.aspx>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluations methods* (3rd ed.). Thousands Oaks, California; Sage Publications, Inc.
- Persad, J. V., & Lukas, S. (2002). No hijab is permitted here: A study on the experiences of Muslim women wearing hijab applying for work in the manufacturing, sales and service sectors. *At Work, Women Working With Immigrant Women*. Retrieved from http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork_library_detail.asp?passed_lang
- Phaneuf, M. (2003). Resilience: Abstract concept or survival skill? Retrieved from http://www.infiressources.ca/fer/Depotdocument_anglais/Resilience_abstract_concept_or_survival_skill.pdf
- Polakoff, E., & Gregory, D. (2002). Concepts of health: Women's struggle for wholeness in the midst of poverty. *Health Care for Women International*, 23(8), 835-845. doi: 10.1080/07399330290107520
- Polit, D., & Hungler, B. (1996). *Essentials of nursing research: Methods, appraisal, and utilization* (4th ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott-Raven Publishers.
- Powers, G. T. (2002). Toward a resilience-based model of school social work: A turnaround mentor. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 153-170).
- Preston, V., & Giles, W. (2004, October). *Employment experiences of highly skilled immigrant women: Where are they in the labour market?* Paper presented at the Conference on Gender & Work: Knowledge Production in Practice, York University, Ontario, Canada.
- Reinharz, S. (1983). Experiential analysis: A contribution to feminist research. In G. Bowles & R. D. Klein (Eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies* (pp. 192-209). Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Rianon, N. J., & Shelton, A. J. (2003). Perception of spousal abuse expressed by married Bangladeshi immigrant women in Houston, Texas, U.S.A. *Journal of Immigrant Health*, 5(1), 37-44. doi:10.1023/A:1021052212981
- Richardson, G. E. (2002). The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58(3), 307-321. doi: 10.1002/jclp. 10020
- Richmond, H. J. (2002). Learner's lives: A narrative analysis. *The Qualitative Report*. 7(3). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR7-3/richmond.html>

- Roberts, A. C., Galassi, J. P., McDonald, K., & Sachs, S. (2002). Reconceptualizing substance abuse treatment in therapeutic communities: Resiliency theory and the role of social work practitioners. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 2(2), 53-68. doi: 10.1300/J160v02n02_06
- Rolfe, G. (2006). Validity, trustworthiness, and rigour: Quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53(3), 304-310.
- Ross, L., Holliman, D., & Dixon, D. R. (2003). Resiliency in family caregivers: Implications for social work practice. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 40(3), 81-96, doi: 10.1300J083v40n003_07
- Samuel, E. (2009). Acculturative stress: South Asian immigrant women's experiences in Canada's Atlantic Provinces. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 7, 16-34. doi: 10.1080/15562940802687207
- Sandelowski, M., & Barroso, J. (2002). Reading qualitative studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(1). Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/_ijqm/
- Sandelowski, M. (1993). Rigor or rigor mortis: The problem of rigor in qualitative research revisited. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 16(2), 1-8.
- Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 8(3), 27-37.
- Schellenberg, G., & Hou, Feng. (2005, Spring). The economic well-being of recent immigrants to Canada. *Canadian Issues: Immigration and the Intersections of Diversity*, 49-52.
- Schmitz, C. L., Jacobus, C. S., Stakeman, C., Valenzuela, G. A., & Sprankel, J. (2003). Immigrant and refugee communities: Resiliency, trauma, policy, and practice. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 22(2/3), 135-158. doi: 10.1080/15426432.2003.9960346
- Scruby, L. S. (1999). The community health nurse's role in health promotion policy: An interdisciplinary feminist research paradigm (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- Statistics Canada. (2008). *Earnings and incomes of Canadians over the past quarter Century, 2006 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue number 97-563-X
- Statistics Canada. (2007a). *Canada: Mean earnings of women workers by education and origin, 1980-2000*. Retrieved from <http://www.canadaimmigrants.com/statistics.asp>
- Statistics Canada. (2007b). *Study: Canada's immigrant labour market* (The Daily, Monday, September 10, 2007). Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/070910/dq070910a-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2006). *Women in Canada: A Gender-based statistical Report* (5th ed.). Ottawa. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/>
- Statistics Canada. (2006 Census). *Census snapshot – immigration in Canada: A portrait of the foreign-born population, 2006 Census*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2008001/article/10556-eng.htm#19>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Stewart, M. J., Neufeld, A., Harrison, M. J., Spitzer, D., Hughes, K., & Makwarimba, E. (2006). Immigrant women family caregivers in Canada: Implications for policies

- and programmes in health and social sectors. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 14(4), 329-340. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2524.2006.00627.x
- Stewart, M., Reid, G., Mangham, C. (1997). Fostering children's resilience. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 12, 21-31.
- Tarrant, M. & Gregory, D. (2003). Exploring childhood immunization uptake with First nations mothers in North-Western Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 41(1), 63-72. doi: 10.1046/j.1365-2648.2003.02507
- Tastsglou, E., Ray, Brian., & Preston, Valerie. (2005, Spring). Gender and migration intersections in a Canadian context. *Canadian Issues: Immigration and the Intersections of Diversity*, 91-93.
- Timberlake, E. M., Farber, M. Z., Wall, S. M., Taylor, N. E., & Sabatino, C. A. (2003). Resettlement challenges in the land of opportunity: The experience of economically disadvantaged immigrant women. *Social Thoughts*, 22(4), 75-94. doi: 10.1300/J131v22n04_06
- Trimble, J. E. (2003). Introduction: Social change and acculturation. In P. B. Organista & G. Marin (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (pp. 3-13). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Toth, J. S. (2003). *The experience of immigrant and refugee women* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- Tusaie, K. & Dyer, J. (2004). Resilience: A historical review of the construct. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 18 (3), 3-8.
- Ungar, M. (2008). Resilience across cultures. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(2), 218-235 doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcl343
- Ungar, M., Brown, M., Liebenberg, L., Cheung, M., & Levine, K. (2008). Distinguishing differences in pathways to resilience among Canadian youth. *Canadian Journal of Community*, 27(1), 1-13. Retrieved from http://www.resilienceproject.org/files/distinguishing_differences_in_pathways_to_resilience_among_canadian_youth_canadian_journal_of_co
- United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Divisions. (2009). *Trends in international migration stock (The 2008 Revision)*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (1996). *Convention and protocol: Relating to the status of refugees*. Retrieved from http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:2611
- VanderPlaat, M. (2007). *Integration outcomes from immigrant women in Canada: A review of the literature 2000-2007* (Working Paper No. 8- 2007). Retrieved from Saint Mary's University, Atlantic Metropolis Center website: <http://atlantic.metropolis.net/>
- Watkins, G. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. London, United Kingdom: Pluto Press.
- Webb, C. (1993). Feminist research: Definitions, methodology, methods, and evaluation. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 18, 416-423. Retrieved from <http://0-web.ebscohost.com.darius.uleth.ca/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid>
- Willgerodt, M. A., Miller, A. M., & McElmurry, B. J. (2002). Becoming bicultural: Chinese American women and their development. *Health Care for Women International*, 23(5), 467-480. doi: 10.1080/073993302760190074

- World Health Organization. (2010). *Gender disparities and mental health: The facts, gender and women's mental health*. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/index.html
- Yoshihama, M. (2002). Battered women's coping strategies and psychological distress: Differences by immigration status. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 429-452. doi: 10.1023/A:1015393204820

Appendix A
Letter to Immigrant Services

July 5, 2011

Program Director
LFS-Immigrant Services
701 2 Avenue South
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C4

Re: Request to obtain access to potential participants for research.

Dear Program Director,

I am currently enrolled in Masters of Science (Health Sciences) at the University of Lethbridge. I am interested in conducting a research study on recent immigrant women's experiences in transitioning to Canada. In particular, I am interested to know the challenges and barriers Canadian immigrant women experience during their process of immigration and how they overcome these challenges.

This research will require 5-8 Canadian immigrant women for repeated in-depth, person-centered interviews. The potential participants will be eighteen years of age or older, will have lived in Canada from 1 to 5 years; will be married, and have children. They will be living in Lethbridge with immigrant status other than refugee and willing to participate in the study. Immigrant women comfortable being interviewed in English will be considered for this study. Ideally the potential participants will be interviewed up to 3 times and each will receive \$50.00 cash for their valuable time and for sharing their experiences at the beginning of the first interview. I will also request for your kind permission to put up a poster at the office of LFS-Immigrant Services providing information about the study and an invitation for prospective participants.

In compliance with ethical standards, I will maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of each participant. The proposed research has been reviewed by the Human Subject Research Committee, University of Lethbridge and ethics approval has been granted. A copy of the ethic's certificate have attached here.

I have heard that your organization works very closely with immigrant people and provides settlement support to newcomers to Canada. Therefore, I would be most appreciative if you could assist me in identifying and contacting potential participants who will meet the aforementioned criteria and would be willing to take part in this research study. It is to be mentioned that a presentation will be arranged and Executive Summary of the findings will be provided to share the results of the study with your agency.

I have attached a) A letter of Invitation which can be provided to prospective participants,
b) A poster for placement with the LFS-IS, and c) a copy of the Ethics Certificate.
Thank you in advance for your kind support.

Sincerely

Ruksana Rashid
MSc Student
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Lethbridge

Appendix B
Letter of invitation

Study Title: Resiliency and Immigrant Women: Meeting Life's Challenges

Dear Prospective participant,

My name is Ruksana Rashid. I am a graduate student in the Masters of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge. I am doing a research study as part of my degree in Health Sciences. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

I am interested to know the experiences of Canadian immigrant women when they move to Canada. If you are interested, you will be interviewed up to three times about your good and bad experiences as an immigrant woman. You will also be asked about how you overcame the hard times. Interviews will last sixty to ninety minutes each.

You will receive \$50.00 cash at the beginning of the first interview for your time. If you leave the study anytime before the end, you can still keep your \$50.00 cash.

If you are interested, please contact me at the number below. I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. The interviews will take place wherever you wish (e.g. in your home). You can also contact LFS-Immigrant Services and give your permission to LFS-Immigrant Services to forward your phone number to me. I will call you within the next week to see if you are interested in this study.

With thanks,

Ruksana Rashid
MSc Student
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Lethbridge
403-XXX-XXXX
rashidr@uleth.ca

Appendix C Poster

- *Are you an Immigrant Woman?*
- *Do you wish to share your immigration experience?*
- *Would you like to tell your story which may help other immigrant women in their journey?*

If your answer is yes, you are invited to take part in the research study:

RESILIENCY AND IMMIGRANT WOMEN: MEETING LIFE'S CHALLENGES



You can participate in this study if:

- You are a non-refugee Immigrant Woman
- You are eighteen years of age or over
- You are married and have children
- You have lived in Canada for 1 to 5 years
- You are comfortable being interviewed in English

If you are interested in participating in our study, please call Ruksana Rashid at 403-942-2515 or e-mail at rashidr@uleth.ca

Participants will receive \$50 cash for their time and contribution to this study

Appendix D
Letter to Community Centre

July 5, 2011

Project Manager
Southern Alberta Multicultural Association
Bill Kergan Centre
Lethbridge, AB T1H 2R6

Re: Requesting permission to put up posters at the office of Community centre.

Dear Project Manager,

I am presently enrolled in Masters of Science (Health Sciences) at the University of Lethbridge. I am conducting a research study on recent immigrant women's experiences in transitioning to Canada. In particular, I am interested to know the challenges and barriers Canadian immigrant women experience during their process of immigration and how they overcome these challenges.

This research will require 5-8 Canadian immigrant women for repeat (n=3) in-depth, person-centered interviews lasting 60-90 minutes each. To obtain access to potential participants I will need to provide information and advertise this study. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting your permission to place few posters at your office/centre.

The proposed research has been reviewed by the Human Subject Research Committee, University of Lethbridge and ethics approval has been granted. I have attached a copy of the ethics certificate.

If you require any information about this study, you may contact Dr. David Gregory (Supervisor) at 306-XXX-XXXX at the University of Regina. You may also contact the Office of Research Services at the University of Lethbridge at 403-XXX-XXXX or research.services@uleth.ca.

I would be most appreciative if you could support me in advertising my research study. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Sincerely

Ruksana Rashid
MSc Student
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Lethbridge

Appendix E
Consent Form

Faculty of Health Sciences

Resiliency and Immigrant Women: Meeting Life's Challenges

July 5, 2011

Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge. My research is about immigrant women. I would like to invite you to be in this study.

I am interested in the experiences of Canadian immigrant women. If you agree to be in the study, I will interview you up to three times. During the interviews I will ask you about your good and bad experiences. I will also ask you how you managed your bad experiences. Each interview will take 1 to 1.5 hours. The interviews will take place where you wish (e.g. in your home). Each interview will be audio-recorded.

During your interviews -- you may feel upset. If you feel upset, I will stop the interview. If you remain feeling upset, I will give you the telephone number of a counsellor. The counsellor will offer you support.

I will keep private your name and any information about you. The recorded interviews will be typed up. Then the recorded interviews will be erased. The person typing up the interviews will sign an agreement to keep your information private. The typed interviews will not have your name on them. I will remove all information that could identify you from the interviews. I will keep the typed interviews in a locked cabinet at the university. Only my supervisor and I will read the interviews. All information you provide will be destroyed after 5-7 years time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you are interested to take part, you will receive \$50.00 cash at the start of your first interview. If you leave the study anytime before the end, you can still keep your \$50.00 cash.

The findings from this study will be printed in journals. I will also give a presentation of the findings at LFS-Immigrant Services. I will invite you to this presentation. Your name or any identifying information will not be mentioned at this presentation. If you want a copy of the findings, please give me your telephone number and mailing address below.

During the interviews, if you tell me that you or your children are being abused (physical, emotional, and/or sexual); I will need to report this to the authorities.

If you need any more information about this study please call Ruksana Rashid at 403-XXX-XXXX. You can also call Dr. David Gregory (Supervisor) at 306-XXX-XXXX at

the University of Lethbridge. If you have any other questions about this research, you may also contact the Office of Research Services at the University of Lethbridge at 403-XXX-XXXX or research.services@uleth.ca.

I have read the above information. I agree to voluntarily take part in this study.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

I have read the above information. I have given consent for audio recording the interviews.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

◇ Please send me the findings of the study at the address listed below.

Address:

.....

.....

Appendix F
Oath of Confidentiality
Transcriptionist

I, _____, do affirm that I will not, directly or indirectly, without due authority disclose to any person any information or other matter that may come to me regarding the participants that are referred to in the research study titled, **Resiliency and Immigrant Women: Meeting Life's Challenges**, by reason of my involvement with the project, so help me God/I so do affirm.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

_____ (Name of Witness)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Appendix G
Demographic Sheet

1. What is your country of origin?

2. When did you come to Canada?

3. Under what immigration category did you arrive in Canada? Who was the principle applicant?

4. What is your age?

5. Do you practice a faith or religion? If so what is your faith or religion?

6. How many children do you have?

7. How old are they?

8. Gender of children?

9. How many members do you have in your household? Who are the members?

10. Did you pursue education in your country of origin? In what area?

11. Did you attend/ are you attending any school in Canada?

12. If yes, what kind of education did you pursue/ are you pursuing in Canada?

13. What education did your husband pursue in his country of origin?

14. Did your husband attend any school in Canada?

15. If yes, what kind of education did your husband pursue in Canada?

16. What was your occupation before you came to Canada?

17. Do you work outside your home now that you are living in Canada?

18. What was your husband's occupation before he came to Canada?

19. Does your husband work now in Canada? If yes, what is his occupation now?

20. What is your approximate total household income per year?

Appendix H
Interview Guide
Interview 1

Life in homeland:

1. Tell me about your life before coming to Canada (Probes: your family, parents, siblings, childhood, school, and friends).
2. Can you share with me any memorable (happy/sad) events that happened during your childhood/adolescence/young adulthood?
3. Tell me about your husband/children.

Reason for immigration (what brings her here):

4. Who made the decision of immigrating to Canada? What influenced your decision to immigrate to Canada?
5. What did you know about immigrants' lives in Canada?
6. Why did you choose to settle in Lethbridge?

Immigration (landing) experiences during initial days (weather, transportation, renting house, getting Health card etc.):

7. What was it like leaving your country? (Probes: family members, friends)
8. What were your feelings when you arrived? Describe your initial impressions of this country, i.e. weather, transportation experience, renting a house.
9. Describe some of your good/positive experiences during your first year in Canada.
10. Describe some of the bad/negative experiences (if any) you encountered. What do you think are the reasons they occurred?

Major experiences of resettlement (job, language, settlement services, health care etc.):

11. Did you know English before coming to Canada? If not, how did you learn English?
12. Did you take any language course here? If yes, did it help to improve your level of communication in English?
13. Do you face any challenges in communication with people (i.e. daily activities of life, groceries, banking, transportation, shopping)? If yes, what are the challenges you face to communicate with people here? How do you feel about that?
14. Do you have a job here?
15. How long did it take to get a job here? Is it difficult to get job? If yes, why do you think it is difficult to get a job here?
16. Were you (and your husband) able to have the same job that you had in your country of origin?
17. If not, what were the obstacles or challenges in finding a similar job? Describe your feelings about these challenges.
18. Are you happy/ satisfied with your occupation in Canada? If not, do you have plans to get back your previous career/profession? If yes, how do you get it?
19. How do people behave with you at your workplace? Do you find any difference for being immigrant at your workplace? If yes, why do you think people behave in that way?
20. How do you manage your work and household responsibilities? Do you get any support from your family? What support do you get from your family?
21. Did you participate in any immigrant settlement programs upon arrival to Canada?

22. If yes, do you feel you benefited or are benefitting from this program?

23. If yes, please explain how you are being benefited from the program.

Interview Guide: Interview 2

Culture of motherland:

24. Tell me in brief about the culture (heritage, religion, festival, music, sports etc) of your country.
25. How was your life as a woman in your family and in society of your country?

Impact of immigration on culture/religion/heritage:

26. What do you think of the Canadian lifestyle?
27. Describe the “good” and “not so good” aspects of Canadian lifestyles in your opinion.
28. What were the noticeable differences in life you found between Canada and your country of origin?
29. What were the compromises and changes in life style you had to adapt with the differences of living in Canada?
30. Have your children adopted the Canadian lifestyle? If yes, how do you feel about your children adopting another culture?
31. What language do your children speak at home? If English, how do you feel about that? Does it affect communication between you and your children?
32. Describe your child rearing and parenting experience in Canada.
33. How is the relationship between you and your children?
34. Do you try to transmit your culture and traditions to your children? If yes, what are the strategies you use to transmit your culture and traditions to them? If not, why don't you try to transmit it?

35. Have you noticed any intergenerational cultural gap/conflicts between parents and children? If yes, how do you overcome these gaps/ conflicts?
36. How do you practice your religion? Is there any place in the community where you could practice your religion?
37. Do your children practice their religion? If not, how do you feel about that? What measures do you take to influence them to practice?
38. Did you join an organization that had cultural/religion ties of your heritage?
39. If yes, what organization did you join? Did this organization help you in reducing your adaptation stresses in this country? If yes, how? Can you share your experience please?

Education of children

40. How do you find the education system for your children in Canada?
41. Do you find any difference between the Canadian education system and that of your country?
42. Do they enjoy their schools? If so, what they find enjoyable in school?
43. Are the children “fitting in” with their schools?
44. Do they find difficulty in adjusting **to** their new school environment? Do they have any stress? If so, what stress are they experiencing?

Interview Guide: Interview 3

Impact of immigration in economy, marital, family, and social life:

45. Describe your family life now in Canada.
46. Did moving to Canada affect your marital relationship? If not, what helped you to maintain marital harmony/ good relationship with your husband?
47. If yes, were you able to improve the relationship? How did you improve the relationship?
48. How do you feel about the standard of life you have now in Canada?
49. Do you have an improvement in your present economic situation than what you had back in your country? If yes, how do you achieve it? How long does it take to achieve this improvement?
50. If not, how do you manage economic challenges?
51. Did economic challenge (money issues) affect your family relations? If yes, how did it affect your family life? Please share your experiences.
- 52.** What strategies did you take to overcome this stress?
53. Do you find any time for your own fun/rest? If yes, what do you do for your fun/recreation? If no, why?
54. Do you ever feel lonely or isolated? If yes, does this affect your daily life? How do you try to overcome this isolation?
- 55.** Do you socialize with others? If yes, are they from your own ethnic group? Do they help you in your adaptation process?

Strategies to overcome situation (resilience):

56. Describe what you believe are the important steps immigrant women should take in order to adjust **to** life in Canada.
- 57.** What were the important steps you took to negotiate in order to adjust your life in Canada?

Supporting factors contributing to her becoming resilient:

58. Do you get any support from your husband in order to adjust **to** life in Canada? If yes, what kind of support **do** you get from your husband? Please share your experiences.
59. Do you get any support from other members of your family in order to overcome the stress? If yes, please explain from whom and what kind of support you get.
60. Do you get any support from the community to overcome the stress of adjustment? If yes, what kind of support do you get?

Factors hinder resilience

61. Describe what you believe are the major barriers immigrant women are facing in order to adjust life in Canada.
- 62.** What major barriers have you faced in order to adjust your life in Canada?

Achievements (if any) on immigration [which in turn help resilience]:

63. Are there any major achievements of your life after arrival to Canada? If yes, what are those?

64. What are the steps (education, training, language course etc) you have taken to achieve those?
65. Have you become citizen of Canada? How do you feel once you became a Canadian citizen?
66. What goals/dreams did you bring when you moved to Canada?
67. Did you achieve your goal? If not, how do you feel compromising your dreams?
Are you optimistic in achieving your dream/goal?
68. If yes, how do you achieve your goal?
69. Are you happy that you came to Canada? If not, why?
70. If yes, what has made you happy?

Conclusive question

71. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experiences as a Canadian immigrant?