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Phenomenological descriptions and critical interpretations of the lives of immigrant women.

M. Jacqueline Antonio

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PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESCRIPTIONS AND CRITICAL INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE LIVES OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN

by

M. Jacqueline Antonio

M.A. University of Windsor, 1991

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Psychology
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Requirements for the Degree
of Doctorate of Philosophy at the
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ABSTRACT

Narratives of 19 immigrant women living in Windsor Canada were analyzed using a phenomenological approach with the goal of gaining an indepth understanding of their lives. Narratives were organized along numerous aspects of their lives which included language, work/social status, being with Canadians, friendships with Canadians, leaving their homelands, health, coping with distress, spousal relationships, children, achieving a successful life in Canada, and help from Canadians. In each of these domains, I sought to uncover the essential phenomenologies of their experience. Two themes were pervasive in participants' experiences within these various domains and include (1) the sense of being marginalized relative to their new community and (2) a sense that their current lives constituted a deterioration in some respects relative to their lives in their homelands. Discussion of the results centers on a critical examination of the socio-political practices and structures that impact on the experiences of participants with particular emphasis on the way in which goals and desires are compromised. The implications of this critical analysis are considered relative to the kinds of social change required to facilitate the enhanced well-being of immigrant women. Apart from the specific research issue, this project examined the value and validity of qualitative research paradigms vis a vis quantitative approaches founded on positivist assumptions. I make the argument that qualitative approaches such as the phenomenological approach used here, provide insights that are likely to elude quantitative approaches. I posit that this approach, in its value of and focus on the subjective experience, provides an avenue for
participants to tell of their lives from their perspective and to voice their needs and concerns. Regarding this project’s implications for the practice of research, I sought to demonstrate the value and validity of acquiring knowledge through qualitative approaches, in which findings are examined in light of what they reveal about the status quo and the need for social change.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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of sacrifice you made so ungrudgingly and with so much support and pride. And to God, whose spirit in me through Jesus Christ, enabled me to pursue this path and grow stronger spiritually and emotionally through it, I give You ultimate glory and praise.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

One need not read far into this introduction to discover that this text is different from the prototypical psychology dissertation in style, approach, and goals. The style is personal; I, the researcher will, throughout the document, make the reader aware of my presence, not only as the writer of this text but also as an actor in the research process (see Hollway, 1989; Thomas, 1993).

The approach is qualitative and is set within a post-positivist framework. This is also a major departure from most psychological dissertations. Typically, in this discipline, if qualitative methods are used, they function as adjuncts; the apparent assumption is that they are not sufficiently sound on their own (Espín, 1993a). Post-positivism is both a critique of and an alternative to positivism (natural science theory and methodology). Its theoretical and methodological premises will be explicated shortly.

Thirdly, the goals of this research enterprise are not to explain a phenomenon in terms of cause and effect, or to delineate the variables that are most highly associated with or predictive of a variable of interest. Instead, the primary goals are to understand the worlds of the study's participants, how they make sense of their world, and to consider how the socio-cultural and historical contexts of
these participants are implied in their experiences.

The lives of immigrant women are my focal interest. This area has only been recently addressed in the social sciences (Brettell & Simon, 1986). Prior to this, the experiences of immigrant women had either been subsumed under that of immigrants in general or had been totally ignored. As an immigrant woman, I was interested in knowing what the experiences were among others who shared this identity. Additionally, as I surveyed the content of my training as a professional psychologist, I became critically aware that it had not adequately addressed the issues involved in working with minority groups in either research or applied settings. Furthermore, as I read the psychological research literature on immigrants, I gained little sense of what the lives of these people were. My career plans are to work in an applied setting with immigrant people. I therefore determined that if I were to gain any understanding of their lives through research, the latter would have to take an alternative direction from its traditional path.

Any alternative that stands at the margins of a dominant paradigm has to justify its precepts and demonstrate the inadequacies of the dominant paradigm. The following section will lay out a critique of positivism and an explication of the post-positivist position.

Scientism refers to the positivist assertion that the
method of natural science takes precedence over any other proposed means of knowing the world, regardless of the phenomenon of interest and that it is the only means through which a valid reality can be discovered (Giorgi, 1970). Objectivism implies that objectivity is the privileged method through which scientific information is obtained. By removing the personal and subjective, a reality that is independent of humankind and associated characteristics (e.g., prejudice, values, biases) is discovered.

The post-positivist attitude challenges the possibility of apprehending a reality independent of human influence, since, as Polkinghorne (1972) points out, "human knowledge is a construction built from the cognitive processes... and embodied interactions with the world of material objects, others and the self" (p. 150). This statement implies that we can only know our world through our human capacities. Further, it is contended, the categories with which we describe our world are also humanly constructed; they do not exist in and of themselves (Danziger, 1990; Lather, 1991; Sullivan, 1984; Tseëlon, 1991).

Shotter (1992) delineates the process by which scientific statements become reality:

1 First, a statement is formulated as a description of a state of affairs which although we may not realize it at the time is open to a number of possible interpretations. 2 We are then tempted to accept the statement as true. 3 By its very nature the statement then "affords" or "permits" the making of further statements, now...
of a more well articulated and systematized nature. The initial interpretation (already accepted as true) is now perceived retrospectively as owing its now quite definite character to its place "within" the now well-specified context produced by the later statement - it has been "given" or "lent" a determinate character in their terms which it did not, in its original openness actually have. (p. 65).

Although traditional methods have acknowledged that the researcher's bias can affect the data obtained, it is treated as a source of error that is then controlled. However, a post-positivist view is sceptical that this influence can be eliminated and proposes instead that biases and values be treated as part of the data and interpreted to the extent that the researcher is able to reflect on them (Giorgi, 1985).

As a history of psychology demonstrates, the experimental method, modeled on natural science methods, emerged out of a society that valued technological control and rationality. The dominance of this paradigm was contiguous with the devaluation of the subjective (Danziger, 1990; Sullivan, 1984). The research process within this framework is characterized by a dualistic relationship between researcher and researched, where the former is the observer and the latter, the object. It is presumed that the observer is the ultimate judge in determining the real phenomenon. Subjectivity (that is, the subject's interpretation of their experience) is to be eschewed, since
it is plagued with bias, prejudices, and values that would contaminate the discovery of the real.

The privileged position of the observer's reality is challenged by a counter-argument hinged on whether methods appropriate for natural phenomena are similarly appropriate for human or social phenomena (Giorgi, 1985). Shotter (1992) proposes an alternative epistemology, where we would come to know by "being in contact or in touch with " as opposed to knowing by "looking at" (p.58).

Traditional psychological research has proceeded hand in hand with the use of quantification. The presumption is that the application of statistical analysis enhances the validity of one's findings. As one peruses psychological journals, it is readily apparent that editors base the worth of a research enterprise on the researcher's demonstration of methodological and statistical skill (Ibañez, 1991). Bakan (1967), who explains the limitations of statistics in understanding human phenomena, is wary of the tendency in psychological research of concluding that because the "p" value is significant the inferences made about a variable or phenomenon of interest are more valid. The inferences based on statistical data are still constructions of human reason and are thus still subject to human bias and perception.

The quantitative methods used in psychology were meant to arrive at greater precision, and to minimize ambiguity (Danziger, 1990). However, as Boring has argued (Danziger,
1990), with respect to human behaviour, it seems futile to attempt precision within a context where precision does not exist. Thus as opposed to deeming it a source of error, the post-positivist stance argues for the relevance of context - historical, social, cultural - in understanding human phenomena (Gergen, 1985; Giorgi, 1985; Minton, 1993). Where positivism attempts to isolate variables and assumes a model of explanation based on linearity and unidirectionality, post-positivism contends that to reduce complex, dynamic, and interactive phenomena to clear cut categories is to drain them of their significance, meaning and depth (Hollway, 1989; Jones & Thorne, 1987).

Within the positivist framework, value-neutrality has been upheld. Again this validates the scientific nature of one's research. One does not rely on authorities to judge the truth - rather the latter is self-evident and democratic (Ibañez, 1991). The post-positivist response to this claim of value-neutrality is to reveal the values inherent in the processes and products of scientific enterprises. Further, it is argued that these values often remain hidden because that which is labelled objective and scientific is unlikely to be challenged. A large part of the post-positivist movement has been to illuminate the inherent power biases in information generated by the scientific method (Gergen, 1992; Kvale, 1992; Lather, 1991). In contrast to a value-neutral stance, post-positivists advocate that the
researcher make her/his values explicit and engage in research that effects social change and emancipation (Lather, 1991; Minton, 1993; Sampson, 1991; Thomas, 1993).

I determined that a post-positivist analysis of qualitative data is better suited to exploring issues relevant to immigrant women. Through this research enterprise, I seek understanding of the lives of immigrant women. I believe that this can only be achieved by remaining wedded throughout my analysis to the in-depth narratives from my participants. Subjectivity is therefore embraced as a means of acquiring knowledge.

A post-positivist approach also asserts that human phenomena are too complex to be fragmented into their basic components in search for causes. The lives of these women are not only diverse but each is multifaceted and dynamic. I seek to present descriptions that capture this complexity and dynamicism.

Boyd (1986) identifies immigrant women as one of society's most disenfranchised groups. In describing their lives, I believe it is also important to illuminate the dynamics of this disenfranchisement. As indicated previously, in contrast to traditional approaches, proponents of post-positivism advocate that researchers highlight social injustices and promote social change.

The following sections constitute (1) a summary of the history of immigration in Canada; (2) a review and critique

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of major areas of psychological research in immigration; (3) a review of studies of immigrant women; and (4) a review of studies of refugees. Chapter One will conclude with an overview and rationale of the study.

A Brief History of Canadian Immigration

Within the written discourses of psychology, there is rarely an examination of the ways in which the socio-political and economic climate affect the phenomenon under study. This thesis departs from this tradition and presents a brief historical background on some issues relevant to immigration in Canada. The discussion will focus on the motives of the Canadian government for permitting immigrant settlement and on the changes in the demographic profile of immigrants. I believe that this information is necessary because social institutions and social relations impact on people's lives and thus knowledge of their characteristics helps us understand people's experiences and provides a more comprehensive picture of human phenomena. Most of the following information, except where otherwise indicated, is drawn from Avery (1995), Knowles (1992), and Whitaker (1987).

Social scientific studies of immigration often look at what motivates people to migrate. However, it is also important to understand the motives of the receiving country (Berry, 1986). The admission of immigrants into Canada has eve
economic exigencies. For example, as a part of New France, French settlement was encouraged to boost its economic viability. Ventures such as mining, fur trade, fishing and manufacturing required skilled labour as well as managers and men with capital. After the British conquest of 1760, immigration was likewise pursued based on the need to augment the labour force.

Immigration declined during and between the World Wars, including the period of the Great Depression. Although Canadian policies was restrictive in the early years following the second World War, the subsequent period, from about 1950 onward, saw a boom in immigration. Proponents of immigration argued again that immigrants were needed to enhance the economy, based on the relationship between the population of a country and its prosperity. As Grubel (1992) explains, the more people there are producing, the more the country prospers. A free economy is designed to ensure that a worker's earnings are always less than the value of his/her production. Additionally, when people spend their earnings, they create jobs. Currently, the fertility rate of Canada is declining significantly. As a consequence, some would argue, the GNP (the country's gross national product) is declining. This trend has been used as justification for the continuation of large scale immigration.

Immigration has also been encouraged for political
reasons. At the time of the British conquest, the population was still predominantly French. Fearing the power that comes with numbers, the British government began to take measures to attract British settlers, also ensuring domination of British culture. The French-English power issue was again a notable impetus for enticing British immigrants following 1870 when the French attempted rebellion based on the inequities in governmental power.

In the Post-World War II era the Canadian government responded to public humanitarian concerns by establishing provisions to grant residency to refugees and displaced persons from the War. This established a precedent for allowing immigrants who were seeking a better and safer life. The Canadian National Committee on Refugees played a central role in lobbying on behalf of refugees. Public pressure from this organization and others as well as individuals led to the implementation of a category for refugees in the Immigration Act of 1976.

The demographic profile of immigrants throughout the history of Canada has varied considerably and will be discussed in the context of selective/restrictive immigration policies. As mentioned previously, upon British colonization, immigrants from Britain were preferred not only to ensure British power but also because the British people were considered superior to the French. White immigrants from the United States of America were also
encouraged because they were seen as having similar values, customs and characteristics to British people. However, Blacks from the United States were not welcome, supposedly because they would not fare well in the Canadian climate.

When the Canadian government embarked on an enterprise to fill Canada with agriculturalists in the late 1800s, people from northern, central and eastern Europe were solicited. Southern Italians were excluded. Restrictions were also placed on Chinese immigrants, following an influx of people from China into British Columbia between 1881 and 1884. Many of these immigrants who came to serve as labourers for the construction of the railway between the Rockies and the Pacific lost their lives due to hazardous working conditions. However, once the railroad was completed, residents of British Columbia, who had opposed their presence from their arrival, put pressure on the government to repatriate them. A tax per head was placed on each Chinese immigrant, starting at $50 and rising to $500 in 1903. This approach permitted the government to discourage their presence without openly restricting them.

Immigration policies became progressively more restrictive as the Anglo-Saxon members of Canadian society began to perceive various other ethnic groups as a threat to the domination of British culture because they were not adopting British ways. The Immigration Act of 1910, reflecting these fears, gave the government unlimited
authority to restrict and select immigrants based on volume, ethnic origin and occupation. Race was not openly a factor but for all purposes was relevant based on the criterion "suitability to climate." Another tactic used by the government to restrict certain races was the criterion that immigrants embark on a continuous journey directly from their country of origin on a through ticket purchased in their country. This requirement effectively limited peoples from Japan and India for whom a continuous journey was not possible. However opposition to the influx of "undesirable" ethnic groups was less successful in the implementation of the policy given the demands by mining, lumber, and railroad industries for cheap and 'suitable' labour. For example, southern Europeans, especially Italians, were considered most suitable for railroad construction because they, unlike labourers from the British Isles, were willing to live on meagre wages and endure the 'primitive' working conditions. Similar hiring practices continued in the 1920's through the preference by the Canadian Pacific Railway for Black sleeping car porters from the southern United States, who were characterized as a docile labour force. The vulnerability of these workers lay in the power of the company to fire them without notice and without having to provide any reason. The Canadian government did nothing to prevent such abuses.

During World War I strong anti-foreign sentiments were
manifest among Canadians. Ethnic groups from Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire once seen as desirable, were now perceived as threats. As a result, these "enemy-aliens" were disenfranchised and interned until the end of the war. At the end of the war, many were dismissed from their jobs to provide job opportunities for returning soldiers. The fear and hatred of Germans and Austro-Hungarians expanded to Russians as the fear of communistic allegiances and influence spread. Assaults on Ukrainians and other foreigners became commonplace. Anglo-Canadians seemed to believe that such acts of violence were justified and this position was supported by the Canadian government. Instead of punishing violators, a policy was initiated, whereby immigrants were issued a registration card necessary for employment, only if they were deemed 'loyal aliens'. Those who were denied such registration were scheduled for deportation.

Arguments for the restriction of immigration from certain countries became associated with a scientific rationale as the Eugenics movement, the popularity of which had grown in the United States with Francis Galton at its helm, gained increasing favour among scientists, social workers, and educators in Canada. In keeping with the belief in the moral and intellectual superiority of some races over others, 'scientific' observations were made that social problems (e.g., crime, juvenile delinquency,
prostitution, and pauperism) were more predominant among southern and eastern Europeans than among Anglo-Saxon and western Europeans.

During World War II injustices similar to those that had been perpetrated against Germans and Austro-Hungarians were evident. For example the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese gave Canadian nationals justification to take measures against Japanese settlement. Many Japanese Canadians were stripped of their property and placed in detention camps till the end of the war.

Post-World War Two saw the beginning of shifts in Canadian immigration policies. Groups were lobbying for humanitarian measures to be taken toward refugees and displaced people from the War. While the government extended the offer to Europeans to settle in Canada, in response to anti-Semitic views among Canadians, Jewish applicants were still rejected as they had been prior to and during the War, despite the fact that they had suffered the gravest injustices (Whitaker, 1987). Even among 'acceptable' groups, there was still a selection practice driven by the economic needs of the country. While the 1952 Immigration Act permitted immigration based on humanitarian reasons, it still allowed restrictions based on nationality, ethnic group and suitability to the climate. Such restrictions continued until 1962 when skill, education, and other qualities became criteria upon which selection was
based, regardless of race, colour, or origin. This reform led to the influx of immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, South America, and the West Indies. These changes coincided with the Civil Rights movement in the United States of America and may have been influenced by such struggles to have the rights of disenfranchised groups recognized.

This history is primarily that of immigrant men or immigrant families. Explicit mention of the plight and experiences of immigrant women has not been made. Knowles (1992) mentions that in the early history of Canadian immigration, women were solicited as prospective mates for the largely male immigrant population, to facilitate population growth. Later, they were admitted as household workers. However the tendency to admit them as dependents of immigrant men has predominated, although changes in policies were implemented in 1974 where the qualifications of the woman in the household could be factored into the decision to grant residency status.

The current status of immigration in Canada shows that immigrants from Africa, Asia and the West Indies predominate and that they settle disproportionately in the lower Fraser Valley and Vancouver in British Columbia, as well as in Toronto and Montreal. The cultures of these groups are more dissimilar to that of Anglo-Canadian than has been the case historically. Opposition to the influx of immigrants
(particularly those from the Third World) has been premised on the contention that these groups will not assimilate well, causing social problems, and that too much money will be spent on getting them adjusted. Economic-based opposition is particularly salient in the present fragile economic climate in which many Canadians are being laid off from their jobs. In response to this opposition, one could note that throughout the history of Canadian immigration, immigration has been encouraged by offering land grants, paying for transportation and offering jobs (Knowles, 1992). Secondly, as Beaujot (1992) notes, with the decline in the fertility rate, immigration offers one solution to ensure the current rate of production. Thirdly, many immigrants arrive as adults, ready to enter the labour force, and by spending their earnings contribute to job creation (Grubel, 1992). Aside from the economic implications of immigration, Knowles (1992) suggests that Canadians ask themselves whether they are willing to actively address the plight of the overpopulated, poverty-stricken Third World by opening our country to them.

Evidence of Negative Attitudes Toward Immigrants

Validation of this perception of negativity toward immigrants can be obtained from results of a public opinion survey of attitudes toward immigration issues. Holton and Lanphier (1994) refer to Longwood's 1991 survey which
demonstrated increased opposition to the level of immigration intake (31% in 1989 compared to 43% in 1991).

With respect to preferred characteristics, 63% of respondents endorsed a preference for immigrants who fit into Canadian society, suggesting a bias against those whose racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds were dissimilar to that of mainstream Canadians. Forty-eight percent of respondents also expressed a concern that immigrants constitute a drain on social services.

Support for an increasingly negative attitude toward immigrants and visible minorities can also be derived from the rhetoric of the various populist parties emerging in more recent years, such as the Reform Party, Bloc Québécois, and Confederation of Regions from the Atlantic provinces. The discourse of such parties resonates with sentiments of a significant segment of the population that multiculturalism is a threat to national or provincial cohesion and identity (Dorais, Foster & Stockley, 1994). Does such rhetoric suggest a desire for a more unified society or a desire for a more homogeneous society? The first would indicate a desire for peaceful relationships among ethnic groups and a sense of national allegiance, while the second has underpinnings of intolerance for diversity.

Holton and Lanphier (1994) note that segmentation exists in public attitudes toward immigrants, ranging from support for immigration and its current intake level, to
indifference, with those expressing reservation, concern, even resistance at the other end of the continuum. These latter sentiments reflect the position of 19 percent of respondents from Longwood's 1991 survey, labelled reactionaries by Holton and Lanphier (1994) and include supporters of the Reform Party who believe that the current immigration policy threatens the integrity of Canadian society in its failure to be consistent with the choices and requests of the population. In its more extreme expression, opposition to immigration in its current form is reflected by the parlance of the Heritage Front, a group that explicitly opposes the influx of non-white immigrant groups (Holton & Lanphier, 1994). This group contends that the curtailment of the immigration of non-white groups is necessary to preserve the integrity of Canadian society (Kallen, 1995). Discriminatory attitudes in Canadian society also translate into behaviour, as for example in hiring practices. A 1991 cross-country survey conducted by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association indicated that 12 of 15 employment agencies were willing to comply with 'white only' job orders (Kallen, 1995).

The Relevance and Nature of Prejudice

What factors relate to increasing prejudicial attitudes and behaviour toward immigrants? Holton and Lanphier (1994) refer to a frequently made link between economic recession and increased prejudice. Writings on this topic suggest
that prejudice and hostility occur when the dominant group perceives that they are competing with a subordinate group for scarce resources (Bobo, 1983; Langford & Ponting, 1992). In their study of Canadians' attitudes toward Native issues, Langford and Ponting (1992) report that a resistance among respondents to increased attention and resource allocation to Native issues was related to the perception that Aboriginal groups are treated favourably to the disadvantage of other Canadians.

Bobo (1983) examined the reasons behind resistance to busing Black American children into white schools. Conclusions of the study indicated that social changes like desegregation represented a threat to the social world of white respondents and an indication that changes to the status quo were not only possible but could also expand into other areas of social life.

Holton and Lanphier (1994) posit that since prejudice is not higher among the unemployed than the employed, the strong relationship between economic recession and increased negativity toward immigrants and level of immigration intake is not so much accounted for by the experience of unemployment as it is by the belief that in difficult economic times, high levels of immigration intake are unreasonable. However, in Brewer and Kramer's (1985) discussion of allocation bias, it is suggested that even when respondents are not directly affected by the
distribution of resources, the group membership of the person rewarded or deprived influences the respondent's degree of distress. Thus, the perception that members of one's group are deprived relates to intergroup hostility even in the absence of personal deprivation. Bobo's (1983) contention that the perception of threat to the status quo is linked to prejudicial responses is probably relevant to this proposition of allocation bias theory. Thus, if members of one's group are perceived to be deprived, one may conclude that the existence of a systemic bias is possible and may then infer that the materialization of a personal threat in the future is probable.

Groups migrating to Canada most recently are increasingly dissimilar to dominant Canadian cultures in racial origin, language, culture, and religious practices (Knowles, 1993). Mainstream Canadians are less likely to feel affiliated and thus empathic with groups from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Longwood's 1991 survey, for example, found that Middle Easterners were the least preferred immigrant group (Holton & Lanphier, 1994).

Immigrants and Psychological Issues

Psychological research in the area of migration has undertaken the generation of theory, description, and explanation of numerous aspects of this phenomenon. For example, theoretical models have been generated to describe the process of growing accustomed to life in a new culture.
(Grove & Torbiorn, 1985). Strategies have been proposed to achieve or hasten this end point and factors that purportedly facilitate or hinder successful living among migrants (see Furnham & Bochner, 1986) have been identified. Investigations have been made into the degree to which migrants experience problems in living, measured most commonly by looking at comparative rates of mental health problems between different migrant ethnic groups or between migrants and non-migrants (Kuo, 1984; Sundquist, 1994; Thomas & Lindenthal, 1990). Attempts have been made to identify factors associated with such difficulties. Models for attitudes toward culture change have been proposed (Berry, Kim, Power, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). Although these areas do not constitute an exhaustive list of immigrant issues studied in psychology, they broadly describe the most researched areas. This section presents examples of research and theory from three areas, namely cultural adjustment, mental health, and acculturation. It then concludes with a brief critique of these examples from a post-positivist position.

**Cultural Adjustment**

Grove and Torbiorn (1985) have described a theoretical model of the stages involved in learning to live in a new and unfamiliar environment. The premise of their model is that immigrants, although socially adept and well adjusted in their native environment become increasingly socially...
inept as a function of the unfamiliarity of their new environment. Further, recent immigrants begin to suffer a lack confidence as they become aware of the discrepancy between their behaviour and that of those around them but lack of knowledge of what is appropriate. The authors propose that the dynamic of three components operates differently depending on the stage in the adjustment process. These components are generated by the person's frame of reference, stemming from their life experiences as well as from their perceptions of the current environment, that operates to appraise and recommend what behaviour is appropriate in a given circumstance. They include: (1) applicability: the person's evaluation of the consistency between their behaviour and that of others; (2) clarity: the extent to which their behaviour is experienced as consistent with the recommendations generated by their frame of reference; and (3) adequacy: the extent to which the person is satisfied with their appraisal of the situation and their behaviour and its consequences.

The adjustment cycle is described as having four stages. During the initial stage, although the person notes that the behaviour of the host nationals is different from their own, they remain confident in their frame of reference and are satisfied with their behaviour. In the second stage, the person's confidence in their frame of reference is challenged. Confusion is experienced as they try to
determine how they should behave. Dissatisfaction with the situation and their behaviour predominates. This phase is associated with the term 'culture shock' because of the distress experienced and the strain on coping resources. Stage three is characterized by the beginning of progressive recovery from stage two as the person begins to notice more congruence between their behaviour and that of those around them and feel less overwhelmed. Stage four indicates the end point of the process of adjustment as the person feels more confident about their assessment of what is appropriate and is more satisfied with their behaviour.

This model of adjustment implies that successful adjustment is based on accurate knowledge and appropriate application of the social norms of the host environment. A similar inference can be drawn from Furnham and Bochner's (1986) model of social skills and culture learning. These authors aver that cultural social-skills training may serve to mitigate against the culture shock described in the second stage of the Grove and Torbiorn adjustment process, not by eliminating it altogether but by curtailing its duration. They too propose that the recent immigrant to an unfamiliar culture functions like a socially inept person when interacting with members of the host community because different meaning systems, interpersonal styles, and norms guiding communication lead to distortions, misunderstandings, and conflict. The goal of social skills
training then is to help people behave in ways appropriate to the cultural context based on knowledge of cultural norms and the effective interpretation of feedback. Furnham and Bochner (1986) acknowledge that the successful application of this model requires a mutual desire of the immigrant person and members of the host community to improve relations.

Mental Health

The psychological experience denoted by the term "culture shock" includes feelings of confusion, being overwhelmed, distressed and stressed. While it is presented as a normal and even necessary stage for adjustment (Grove & Torbiorn 1985), it is also discussed in the context of mental health risk and migration (Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

The relationship between mental health and migration has been extensively researched in studies of mental health rates, in those seeking to define the nature of the relationship, and in those looking at factors surrounding the utilization of mental health services by immigrants.

Studies have assessed the rates of mental health problems among immigrants. Thomas and Lindenthal (1990) describe findings from epidemiological studies of rates of mental illness among West Indians compared to the host nationals. For example Hensi (1967) found that West Indians had higher admission rates to psychiatric hospitals compared to London natives, with higher rates of schizophrenia,
affective and character disorders. Bagley (1971), also reviewed by Thomas and Lindenthal (1990), found that compared to an English control group, West Indians had higher rates of schizophrenia but lower rates of depression, anxiety, and personality disorders.

In a Canadian study, Lasry (1977) found that compared to native francophone Montrealers, African immigrants had lower rates of depression, and higher rates of psychosomatic and anxiety symptoms.

Kuo (1984) found that Asian-Americans had higher rates of depression than White Americans. Among the ethnically diverse Asian group, Koreans were found to have the highest levels of depression compared to Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. Kuo also looked at variables associated with higher levels of depression among the Asian-American group. Those identified were being unemployed, having a low income, being under 30 years of age, and having a minority religion in one's ethnic group.

Sundquist (1994) compared the psychological distress of three immigrant groups in Sweden - Latin American immigrants, Finnish labour immigrants, and southern European labour immigrants - with Swedish nationals as the control group. Latin Americans were found to have the highest level of distress, with the two labour migrant groups showing no significant difference from the Swedish controls. Overall, some variables associated with higher levels of distress
were fewer material possessions, lower financial resources, and a poorer social network.

The equivocal status of assessments of prevalence rates of mental illness among immigrants has been noted by many (Bal, 1987; Brewin, 1980; Cheung, 1980; Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982). Explanations of this current status of epidemiological data studies have centred on the phenomenon of the under-utilization of mental health services by immigrants. Several reasons for this phenomenon have been proposed.

One explanation points to the problems in communication between health professionals and immigrants. Language barriers are often implicated in the communication and understanding of the patient's symptoms and concerns (Brewin, 1980; Cheung, 1980; Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982). Further, conceptions of illness may be discrepant (Bal, 1987; Brewin, 1980; Nguyen, 1984). Bal (1987) explains how people perceive and experience illness based on how it is understood in their culture. Thus the health professional and patient may have different conceptions of what is causing the symptoms and what they mean.

Another explanation for the under-utilization of mental health facilities is that immigrants may be unaware of what is available and how one gains access to available facilities (Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982; Nguyen, 1984). It has also been noted that the current state of mental
health services does not sufficiently meet the needs of immigrants. This includes the absence of bicultural/bilingual health professionals, the lack of culture sensitivity training among professionals, the lack of culturally relevant treatment modes that fit with the patient's conceptions of their illness, or therapeutic approaches with which the patient feels comfortable (Cheung, 1980; Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982; Nguyen, 1984).

For many cultures, mental illness is a source of shame for the individual and their family (Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982; Nguyen, 1984). As a result, the individual may either try to hide their symptoms or its evidence may be confined to the family setting. External sources of dealing with the illness may be avoided as much as possible. As a result of the combination of these factors, immigrants will often seek alternative sources to deal with their symptoms, including traditional healers and acupuncture (Nguyen, 1984).

Research has also explored the extent to which prevalence rates are affected by misdiagnosis of symptoms. This may occur for a variety of reasons, which include communication/language difficulties, lack of awareness of the meaning and experience of illness in the patient's culture, and the lack of awareness of other relevant circumstances in the patient's life (Bal, 1987; Brewin, 1980; Cheung, 1980; McGovern, 1987).
There has been a long held assumption that the phenomenon of immigration is contiguous with the phenomenon of mental illness (Nguyen, 1984; Salvendy, 1983). An earlier theory of natural negative selection proposed that a predisposition to mental illness precipitates emigration (Nguyen, 1984; Salvendy, 1983). An alternative theory suggests that it is the stress of the migration experience itself that precipitates mental illness. These unifactorial explanations have been found wanting. As Salvendy (1983) notes, a thorough discussion of mental health and migration necessarily addresses its multifactorial nature. Factors implicated in the mental health of immigrants, as described in the literature, include: (1) the effects of being victims of racism (Cheung, 1980; Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982; Mcgovern, 1987); (2) pressures to conform to values, norms, and customs of the host society which may conflict with those of the immigrant's country of origin (Cheung, 1980; Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982); (3) the cultural distance between the host country and the country of origin (Salvendy, 1983; Westermeyer, 1986); (4) the loss of social relations, particularly in the case of refugees for whom this phenomenon is uncontrolled, sudden and acute (Lin, 1986); (5) social isolation and alienation due to low numbers of members of one's ethnic group in the community, or to the demands of starting a new life (Cheung, 1980; Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982; Lin, 1986; Westermeyer,
1986); (6) downward mobility because for many immigrants, their educational credentials and job experience are not recognized and they experience frustration at their loss in socio-economic status (Cheung & Dobkin de Rios, 1982; Lin, 1986; Salvendy, 1983; Westermeyer, 1986); and (7) for refugees, the trauma associated with fleeing persecution, which is often characterized by torture, starvation and forced separation from family and friends (Lin, 1986).

Morrison (1973) proposes 10 categories of variables, derived from each temporal step of the migration process, that need to be considered in trying to understand how migration and mental health are related. Pre-migration variables include the personality of the immigrant, life experiences, cultural background, reasons for leaving their native environment, reasons for moving to the new location. With respect to the practical aspects of the move, the stresses involved need to be considered. Variables relevant after immigration include the host community's attitude toward the immigrant (as indicated by social policies, pressure to acculturate, availability of opportunities and resources); racial and ethnic make-up of the community, the degree to which expectations and aspirations are fulfilled, and the personality of the migrant.

**Acculturation**

In their model of acculturation, Berry and his colleagues (Berry, 1980; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki,
have considered the impact that acculturative attitudes and strategies subscribed to by immigrants and the host community have on immigrants' experience of their new life, including mental health (Sands & Berry, 1993). In the Berry model, acculturation is defined as cultural change resulting from continuous first-hand contact between two distinct cultural groups (Kim & Berry, 1986). Although in theory changes may occur in both groups, in reality one group dominates and defines acceptable norms and tolerated behaviour (Berry, 1980).

Four acculturative strategies or attitudes are generated by dichotomous "yes/no" responses to the following two questions posed to the new (non-dominant) group: (1) Is it valuable to retain my cultural identity?; and (2) Are positive relations with the larger society to be sought? An affirmative response to both questions indicates a desire for integration, which is described as "the maintenance of cultural integrity as well as the movement to become an integral part of a larger societal framework" (Berry, 1980, p. 13). Responding "no" to the value of retaining one's cultural identity and "yes" to seeking positive relations with the larger society is indicative of an assimilationist attitude. Seeking to maintain one's cultural identity and to avoid relations with the larger culture implies a separatist attitude. Finally, lack of interest in both
maintaining one's cultural identity and in seeking relations with the larger society indicates a marginalized position.

Similar questions may be asked of the dominant group: (1) Is it desirable to maintain cultural diversity and (2) Is it desirable to maintain positive group relations? (Kim & Berry, 1986). The groups' responses to these questions will indicate the socio-political climate in which the non-dominant group acculturates. Positive endorsements of both statements indicate an atmosphere of multiculturalism; when diversity is not encouraged but positive intergroup relations are, an assimilationist climate is manifest. When diversity is endorsed but positive relations are not, segregation prevails. Lastly, when neither diversity nor positive relations are encouraged, ethnocide is promoted.

Berry, Trimble, and Olmedo (1986) suggest that an effective assessment of the adaptation of individuals (which is characteristic of a psychological approach) should include an evaluation of characteristics of the dominant group and the acculturating group. Some of the former, relevant to the phenomenon of immigration, include purpose for allowing contact to take place, policies exercised toward migrating groups, and whether or not the dominant group forms a majority. The authors also note that the attitudes of the larger society toward acculturation affect the process of acculturation for the non-dominant group.

Characteristics of the immigrant groups which are
important to assess include purpose for migrating, length of contact, location, and whether or not the group has some organized response to acculturation. It is noted that not every individual within a group will respond in the same way to acculturation. Thus an individual assessment may include (1) the extent to which the individual is participating in the larger culture in such ways as education, use of media of the dominant group, wage employment, religious practices, language, daily practices (food, dress), and social relations; (2) acculturation attitudes, as outlined in the above model; and (3) consequences of acculturation which include changes in cultural identity, cognitive domains, personality, and degree of contact and attitude. In addition to these changes, acculturative stress may also be evident, and constitutes, according to Berry (1980), "those behaviours and experiences which are generated during acculturation and which are mildly pathological and disruptive to the individual and his[her] group (e.g., deviant behaviour, psychosomatic symptoms, and feelings of marginality)". In addition to an explication of this model of acculturation, a number of empirical studies have utilized this model to assess acculturative experiences and attitudes (Berry, 1984; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Kim & Berry, 1986). For example, some of their results indicate a positive relationship between the experience of stress and
marginalization.

A Post-positivist Critique

As a starting point for the critique of the reviewed studies, I pose the following question: What are the socio-political implications of the theoretical propositions, findings, and presentations reviewed? From this question, several related issues extend. These include (1) their potential to promote or hinder the welfare of group/individuals researched; (2) the extent to which they support ideologies or public sentiments, the expression and application of which would place or has placed the researched group in a disadvantageous position; and (3) the extent to which the research is decontextualized.

Consider the implications of the contention that cultural social skills training will alleviate or curtail the feelings of distress, of being overwhelmed and stressed, characteristic of the second stage of adjusting to a new culture (Grove & Torbiorn, 1985). A deficit is identified in the newcomer. They are the ones for whom a need for adjustment or change is identified if their transition is to be successful. It was noted earlier in a discussion of negative attitudes toward immigration issues that a significant proportion of respondents to Longwood's 1991 survey (Holton and Lanphier, 1994) indicated a preference for immigrants whose culture was closer to the mainstream Canadian culture. While I believe immigrants might benefit...
from learning the norms of the host culture to which they have moved, I do not believe that it is far fetched to argue that the social skills proposal can be easily used by segments of society resistant to the intake of groups whose culture is different from theirs. Aside from the danger of imputing the immigrants' difficulties to their own deficits, there is also the concern that resistant groups may attribute their opposition to admitting new immigrants to their concern of the financial drain that would be associated with programs for social skills training or for interventions for social problems arising from culturally inappropriate behaviours. A major concern is that the theory of social skills is decontextualized. While Furnham and Bochner (1986) acknowledge that a mutual desire for positive relations must exist for the effectiveness of social skills training to be maximized, the frequent reality of the absence of this mutuality is not discussed. Grove and Torbiorn (1985) fail to make this an issue at all. As a result of this omission, the role of the host environment in contributing to the distress of newcomers (through for example, hostility, lack of opportunity), is not considered. The social skills hypothesis therefore lacks a more balanced and fair view of what is required by both parties to improve relations and the new life of immigrants.

A historical review of studies of mental health rates among immigrants reveals the use of the results of early
studies to justify limiting immigration intake, especially among certain ethnic groups (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). More recently, such studies are undertaken with the goal of assisting immigrants through the identification of some of their needs. In their review of such studies of West Indian immigrants, Thomas and Lindenthal (1990) note some methodological problems and their social implications. Among these is a tendency to use admission rates in psychiatric hospitals as a measure of mental health problems. Thomas and Lindenthal caution that this measure ignores the tendency for persons with lower socio-economic status and those perceived to be a threat to society (both of which are characteristic of West Indians) to be admitted compared to those who can afford private treatment. The authors point out that their reviewed studies also fail to consider the extent to which there is social acceptance of West Indians in England. I believe that researchers who do not consider the social impact of their results and make such issues explicit in the communications of their findings run a greater risk of having the latter used to the disadvantage of their researched group than researchers who draw attention to these issues. A discussion of mental health rates and associated variables that does not consider the social health of the community (e.g., ethnic and racial acceptance, efforts addressing the needs of the poor) and other factors related to the social context, leaves open the
possibility of attributing these the mental health problems of immigrants solely to factors inherent to immigrants. The possibility also exists that data may be used to fortify a resistance to the reception of immigrants based on the financial drain involved in their treatment.

Congruent with the post-positivist theoretical perspective, the literature pertaining to immigrants and the utilization of mental health services draws attention to the relevance of context. Some of the articles go further and explicitly advocate for systemic change - training of health care professionals in cultural sensitivity and awareness; encouraging the participation of immigrant workers in the health care system; addressing existing racist and prejudiced attitudes.

The recognition by Berry and his co-authors that the socio-political climate is implicated in the experiences of immigrants is compatible with the post-positivist perspective that one loses the complexity of human behaviour by isolating the latter from its context. I would argue, however, that this issue needs to be more explicitly addressed in their work. For example, Kim and Berry (1986) consider the role that acculturative strategies among Koreans living in Toronto play in their experience of stress. The authors propose that given Ontario's social policy endorsing multiculturalism and Toronto's diverse racial and ethnic make up, one is likely to find harmonious
racial and ethnic co-existence there. However, this conclusion may well diverge from reality. Recall for example, Holton and Lanphier's (1994) reference to the discrepancy between Canada's endorsement of multiculturalism and the negative attitudes toward the influx of immigrants from diverse cultures. Moreover, multiculturalism may mean different things to different people. For example, some may endorse a limited expression of multiculturalism through the performing arts, whereas others may embrace more substantial expressions. A more accurate picture of the social environment and prevalent acculturative attitudes could have been obtained from direct inquiries of the public as well as from immigrants' perspectives of how the host community views them.

By and large, the reviewed studies are consistent with many psychological studies in the area of immigration, which do not include the perspectives of their researched groups, directly expressed. Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Brialm (1989) depart from this trend somewhat in the development of acculturative strategy scales, by engaging in ethnographic enquiries to assess what acculturative experiences are of import to represented groups. I believe that generally, the studies reviewed here and those of which they are examples, could have resulted in richer understandings of their researched phenomena had they sought more extensively, participants' relevant experiences, perspectives, meanings,
values and beliefs.

The following section consists of a review of the literature on immigrant women drawn mostly from sociological, anthropological, and feminist periodicals. The review, which focuses mainly on the experiences of immigrant women in Canada, will be organized on the basis of salient issues described in the literature.

**Immigrant Women**

A considerable number of research enterprises have been devoted to migration issues but until recently, the particular issues surrounding the lives of immigrant women had not been topics of investigation (Anderson, 1987; Boyd, 1986). Although immigrant women world-wide may share common experiences, a basic premise of the contextual perspective is that the history, economy and politics of any community affect the behaviour and subjective experiences of its participants. Thus, aspects of the experiences of immigrant women in Canada may differ from that of immigrant women in other countries.

According to Ng and Estable (1987), the term "immigrant woman" generally evokes a certain image - woman of colour, originating from a Third World country, speaking little English, working in the lower strata of the labour force. Seldom perhaps, do we envision a Caucasian, English-speaking professor from the United States of America. It is women who share the former characteristics whose lives are
typically described in the literature. Yet, as Ng and Estable (1987) note, these women hardly constitute a homogeneous group. Immigrant women in Canada comprise a highly diverse group with respect to culture, ethnicity, race and other factors. Even those who are similar in terms of particular characteristics may locate themselves on opposite ends of political ideology. Thus while the following text portrays some of the experiences of immigrant women in Canada, I would advise the reader to bear in mind that these are neither universalities nor generalizations but simply part of the complement of the various experiences of immigrant women. The following sub-sections are based on various aspects of immigrant women's experiences and they include (1) labour force experiences and English language facility; (2) domestic lives; (3) health; and (4) social support.

**Labour Force Experiences and English Language Facility**

These two issues are discussed together because, as will become evident, for immigrant women, knowledge of the English language factors considerably in their experiences in the Canadian labour force.

Slightly more immigrant women (55.6%) are members of the paid labour force than Canadian-born women (52.1%) (Hartman & Hartman, 1983; Ng & Estable, 1987). This statistic contradicts the common assumption that most immigrant women do not work outside the home. Areas in
which they are most heavily represented include (1) private domestic and janitorial; (2) the lower strata of service industries, restaurants, janitorial, and cleaning; and (3) the lower strata of manufacturing (Anderson & Lynam, 1987; Hartman & Hartman, 1983). Segura (1989) found a similar distribution among Chicana and Mexican women in the United States. Three quarters of the securely employed women worked in minority-female dominated jobs as teachers' aides in bilingual programs, child care workers, domestic workers, and production workers. Thus immigrant women in Canada and the United States are over represented in jobs that are characteristically insecure, low-paying, and unorganized, where employees are required to be available on a short-term, temporary and emergency basis (Kallen, 1995; Ng & Estable, 1987).

Compared to the total Canadian labour force, immigrant women are over represented in unskilled labour. Seventeen percent of immigrant women compared to 11% of the Canadian work force are employed in the service sector, whereas 14% of immigrant women compared to seven percent of the total Canadian work force are employed in the fabricating and assembling sectors (Paredes, 1987).

Hartman and Hartman (1983) note on the other hand that except for those from Britain or the United States, immigrant women are under-represented in professional and clerical fields. Downward mobility is prevalent among
immigrants. Women who have held professional jobs in their countries of origin rarely get comparable jobs in the host country because often their credentials (work experience and education) are not recognized (Anderson & Lynam, 1987; Hartman & Hartman, 1983; Miedema & Nason-Clarke, 1989). Although British and U.S. degrees are seen as comparable to Canadian degrees, other foreign degrees are generally seen as inferior (Hartman & Hartman, 1983). Ng And Estable (1987) further observe that historically, immigrants from the U.S. and Britain have been preferred. The issue of recognizing credentials is discussed in Trovato and Grindstaff's (1986) study. In comparison to married Canadian-born women, married immigrant women who had migrated in adulthood were twice as likely to have university degrees but less likely to be employed in professional jobs. The authors suggest that factors impacting on this finding could include lack of recognition of credentials, discrimination, and/or the recency of migration. However, in response to the recency hypothesis, Ng and Estable (1987) note that regardless of how long and hard immigrant women work, they consistently earn lower wages compared to Canadian-born women. A similar situation exists in the United States of America, where women in minority-female dominated positions earned as much as two hundred and fifty dollars less than women working in white-female dominated jobs (Segura, 1989). Kallen (1995) notes
that immigrant women continue to be unable to access job skills and development programs because the pressure to meet their families' needs forces them to take any job rather than be unemployed.

In summary, as their participation rate in the labour force indicates, immigrant women contribute significantly to the Canadian economy. Yet obstacles are placed on them realizing their potentials with respect to their training and work experience. As Ng and Estable (1987) comment, "From the view point of resource management, the lack of recognition of their qualifications and abilities constitutes a waste in talents and skills" (p. 31).

How does English language facility impact on the work experiences of immigrant women? Miedema and Nason-Clarke (1989) propose that due to low English language proficiency, immigrant women are typically employed in low-paying, powerless jobs and end up either financially dependent or living in poverty. Downward mobility is also characteristic of immigrant women's experiences in the United States (Foner, 1986; Hartman & Hartman, 1983; Prieto, 1986). The lack of English language facility not only limits the types of jobs accessible to immigrant women (Anderson & Lynam, 1987), it also fosters dependency and aggravates isolation (Boyd, 1986). Thus Boyd contends that immigrant women are among the most disadvantaged groups in Canada. She observes that women from Southern Europe and Asia are particularly
vulnerable in this respect. Prieto (1986) noted that among Cuban women in the United States, the lack of English language facility was an obstacle to upward mobility.

If English language skills are implicated to such an extent in the accessibility of jobs for immigrant women, one may ask about the opportunities available to them to receive these skills. To address this question, it is helpful to look at Canadian immigration policy and process. Immigrants to Canada are admitted under one of three classes (Ng & Estable, 1987). Independent immigrants are those who qualify based on the accumulation of points. They may be nominated by a relative (other than immediate family) or they may qualify because they intend to invest money in a Canadian business. Secondly, immigrants may be admitted into Canada if they qualify for refugee status. Thirdly, immigrants who enter under the family class are granted residency by being sponsored either by an independent immigrant or a Canadian citizen. They are considered dependents of the latter. The majority of immigrant women enter Canada as dependents (Miedema & Nason-Clarke, 1989; Ng & Estable, 1987). Among married applicants, it is the husband who is classified as head of the household and the wife who is classified as the dependent. This is generally the case even when the wife may surpass her husband on the point system.

Dependents do not qualify for the benefits available to
independent immigrants, which include travel and training allowances for language training programs (Paredes, 1987; Wittebrood & Robertson, 1991). Without these benefits, language training programs are quite costly and necessitate part-time work (Paredes, 1987). In addition to cost, other hindrances include the inconvenient times at which courses are offered and the lack of appropriate day care services (Anderson, 1987; Gannagé, 1984; Miedema & Nason-Clarke, 1989).

Two requirements are necessary to qualify for language programs. Firstly, the person must be destined for the labour force (Paredes, 1987). This criterion excludes women who in the immigration application process are classified as housewives, regardless of their intent to work in Canada. It is very likely that when filling out the application, women who are given this label are not made aware of its implications for their participation in the Canadian labour force.

A second criterion requires that the job for which one is deemed suitable (a decision eventually made by employment counsellors) must necessitate speaking English or French. The majority of immigrant women as we have seen, fill unskilled positions that supposedly do not require English or French fluency. Hence, in a vicious cycle, this prevents these women from qualifying for language training and thus from moving out of menial, low-paying jobs (Paredes, 1987).
The federal government has implemented a program called Canada Job Strategy which is designed to help people upgrade their skills. However, immigrant women often do not have the language skills to participate in these programs (Ng & Estable, 1987; Wittebrood & Robertson, 1991). It is evident then, that a systemic and entrenched process exists whereby immigrant women are denied the means by which they could achieve upward mobility and increased independence. Moreover, Anderson (1987) observes that married immigrant women typically share their family's view that given his role as primary bread winner, the husband should be given the primary opportunity to receive English language training.

Bourdieu's (see Paredes, 1987) conceptualization of language as a valuable resource is evident in the current discussion. This perspective states that in any community the value of a language is socially generated by political and economic forces. When social forces control access to language, they also control access to material resources.

Although fluency in the host country language influences one's job prospects, Miedema and Nason-Clarke (1989) demonstrate in their phenomenological study of immigrant women in Fredericton that the label "immigrant" itself also seems to be a significant factor in limiting access to jobs with better financial and working conditions.

A balanced perspective of immigrant women's experiences
in the work force also includes more positive aspects. For example, Anderson and Lynam (1987) reported that Greek and East Indian immigrant women experienced a positive sense of self from working, despite the fact that they were performing menial jobs. Some of these women also noted that although work was sometimes stressful, it also provided relief from the demands of their domestic lives.

As Foner (1986) warns researchers, we often make assessments of people's lives from our vantage point, forgetting to consider their own subjective evaluations. The Jamaican immigrant women in her study living in New York and Britain, despite being paid comparatively low wages and working in low status jobs, reported that compared to their prospects in Jamaica, their situations were significantly more favourable. It is not surprising then, that immigrant women in Canada continue working even when it is not financially lucrative (Hartman & Hartman, 1983).

**Domestic Lives**

Even though many immigrant women participate in the Canadian work force, they, like Canadian-born women in general, also bear the responsibility of child care and household tasks (Hartman & Hartman, 1983). However, the means by which Canadian women deal with their dual role is not as tenable for immigrant women. They often lack close relatives with whom their children could be left while they work and they are reluctant to leave their children with
strange baby-sitters who may not speak their language (Hartman & Hartman, 1984). Some women in Gannagé's (1984) study spoke of how strange it seemed to them to pay for baby-sitting. In their country of origin, women relied on each other to care for each other's children when necessary. Some of these women reported a sense of guilt and sadness at not spending adequate time with their children and looked forward to retirement when they would be able to care for their grandchildren. Similar child care problems and concerns are evident among immigrant women in the United States (Foner, 1986; Seller, 1981).

There are notable changes in the domestic lives of immigrant women in general. In many instances, immigrant couples had worked together in their country of origin. With emigration, this changes and sometimes the couple even ends up working on different shifts and thus spends less time together than they used to (Bloch, 1976; Brettell & Simon, 1986).

For some immigrant women, participation in the paid labour force is a new role for them and this also generates changes in the family dynamics. Earnings give women increased power and hence more importance in the family. However, conflict between husband and wife may also ensue as power dynamics change and the husband now has to deal with his wife's new role (Brettell & Simon, 1986; Seller, 1981).

Mother-child relations are also subject to change.
Children have more opportunities to interact with members of the host culture than do their mothers, who remain more isolated. Mothers may thus find themselves in the position of having to rely on their children to be culture brokers and interpreters (Boyd, 1986; Brettell & Simon, 1986). For immigrant (Kyung-Hee, 1993) and refugee women (Friedman, 1993), the increasing enculturation of their children is a source of distress and anxiety. For many, not only is the concern a loosening of family ties, but it also signifies a threat to important values from their culture and a vulnerability to undesirable attitudes and behaviour, even deviance.

Well-being

Although the experience of emigration itself does not compromise the health of immigrants, certain aspects of their experience may make their health vulnerable (Canada Task Force, 1988). Expanding a social network from which support could be obtained is often difficult for some immigrant women given their dual role, isolation and poor English language skills (Anderson, 1987). In addition to the stress of their dual roles, Greek and East Indian women in Canada in Anderson's study reported isolation, loneliness, and depression. Boyd (1986) observes that the loss of their ability to manage their home when most needed impacts significantly on some immigrant women whose primary role has been to manage family affairs. Seller's (1981)
description of the experiences of immigrant women in the United States shows that English language difficulties compound feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Some women in Anderson's (1987) study reported feeling reluctant to share their concerns with members of their ethnic community. They expressed instead more comfort sharing their concerns with an outsider whom they perceived as able to offer another perspective and as being more confidential. However, with respect to expressing their health concerns to professionals, some women reported negative experiences. Their perceptions of health professionals were that they could not respond appropriately to their concerns. In some cases there were conflicts between the health professionals' perspectives and those of the women. What the professionals labelled as mental health problems, the women saw as facts of life. Anderson (1987) identifies in these situations a prevailing ideology which identifies the individual as the target for treatment, while ignoring contextual factors. Thus Wittebrood and Robertson (1991) advocate helping approaches which focus less on the individual and alternately address the impact of the socio-cultural context.

Social Support

In Lynam's (1985) study of the support networks of immigrant women, participants identified a strong need to feel as if they belong in Canada, a need which many reported
had gone unmet, even after numerous years of residency (see also Espín, 1993b). As participants described their experience of isolation, it was less a matter of physical isolation than it was a sense of being apart from people. For many, this sense of loneliness contrasted with the feelings of being interwoven with the community they had experienced in their homelands.

Although this review has emphasized the needs and concerns of immigrant women, it is also noted that many women perceive positive elements in their new lives such as increased independence, better living conditions, and improved finances (Anderson & Lynam, 1987; Brettell & Simon, 1986; Foner, 1986). For some, for example, even though their incomes would be considered meagre in the host country, they consider themselves more fortunate than their peers in their native countries with respect to personal and economic opportunities (Foner, 1986).

In summary, the above review justifies the need to gather information on the experiences of immigrant women. The socio-economic impact of gender is a salient factor in their migrant experiences with respect to labour, domestic lives, and mental health.

The Relevance of Refugee Status

One of the issues of immigration demanding increasing attention is the challenge of assisting refugees. According to Knowles (1992), since the 1960's the refugee count has
increased significantly as a result of ethnic and civil war, natural disasters, and political upheaval. The government of Canada declared its willingness to be designated as a resettlement country for refugees when it signed the Protocol of the Geneva Convention in 1969. As defined by the Geneva Convention, a refugee is:

any person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, by reason of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (Lacey, 1987).

The conventional designation of refugee comes at the conclusion of an application process initiated outside Canada at refugee camps or Canadian immigration offices worldwide (Knowles, 1992). Another means through which one may obtain refugee status designation is by making a claim once one arrives in Canada. One's eligibility for making this claim is determined by a senior officer and the legitimacy of one's claim is decided by the Refugee Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board. One is detained until the legitimacy of the claim is determined, a process which may take several years.

It should be noted that according to the United Nations' International Convention, flight from external or
internal war does not qualify one for refugee status (Westermeyer, 1989). Yet many people emigrate for that reason. While they may hold family or independent immigrant status, not refugee status, their experiences may be quite compatible with that experienced by refugees. Thus, their governmental classification may be discrepant with their actual characteristics (Westermeyer, 1989). Hence the definition used by the Geneva Convention has been criticized for its limited scope through which persons displaced for reasons of war and natural disasters, for example, are excluded (Marsella, Bornemann, Ekblad, & Orley, 1994). Other groups have undertaken to rectify this perceived restriction by broadening their definitions of refugee status, as is seen in that used by the Organization of African Unity:

The term refugee shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or whole of his country or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality. (Marsella et al, 1994, p. 21)

In the following sub-sections, I will present some psycho-social findings relative to general refugee experiences of trauma and victimization subsequent to which
I will consider the specific vulnerabilities of refugee women.

**Vulnerability for Trauma and Victimization**

By definition, refugees have been or continue to be at risk for victimization (Westermeyer, 1989). Many have been victims of torture, deprivation, theft, and assault not only in their country of origin but also in refugee camps (Marsella et al., 1994; Westermeyer, 1989). The supposed safety of the refugee camps is sometimes elusive, as these various forms of brutality are inflicted on refugees. In addition, they are often threatened with starvation or have limited access to medical resources (Marsella et al., 1994). As a result, refugees are particularly vulnerable to diverse and extensive mental health problems ranging from anxiety, somatization, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to paranoia, hostility, and withdrawal (Marsella et al., 1994). Ng (1984) found that most of these mental health problems were associated with severe losses and difficulties presented by the new environment.

Unlike voluntary migrants who have planned their departure for a long time, refugees often make the decision to flee within hours to a few days. Often they leave without knowledge of the whereabouts of family members, even children (Tien, 1994). In addition to being unprepared for their new lives, they live in constant uncertainty of what their future holds. In the country of resettlement, the
impact of their traumatic experiences continues to be felt powerfully (Marsella et al., 1994), despite the initial relief that physical safety brings (Espín, 1993b). Though biological needs are met, psychological wounds continue to make their presence felt. However, these psychological needs tend to be treated as being of secondary importance, with fewer resources delegated to addressing them (Marsella et al., 1994). The resettlement country presents additional elements that threaten the well being of refugees as they deal with various prejudices, their loss of social status and identity, and occupy a minority, marginalized status of low power (Brody, 1994). For some, coping with the realities and demands of their new lives is precluded by the hope that their displacement will be temporary and that they will soon be able to return to their country of origin to resume their lives (Tien, 1994; Westermeyer, 1989).

**Refugee Women**

Although all refugees are at risk for the vulnerabilities discussed above, refugee women are exposed to additional threats to their physical and mental health based on their gender. One of the most predominant and traumatic threats faced by refugee women is sexual violence. In their homelands, they are prime targets for this type of humiliation and degradation at the hands of persecutors, because an attack on them of this kind represents an attack on their society's honour (Friedman, 1993). They can also
become victims of sexual aggression at any point in the process of fleeing. For example, there are reports of such victimization at borders in exchange for safe passage (Friedman, 1993), at the hands of pirates who storm refugee boats to ravage and loot fleeing refugees (Friedman, 1993; Tien, 1994), and in refugee camps by men who offer to stop hassling them in exchange for food (Friedman, 1993). As a result of sexual violence, repeated and by gangs in many cases, victims are susceptible to venereal disease and to becoming pregnant. Their community is often aware of their plight and if they belong to a society where the ideal for women is chastity and virginity, they are considered to be tarnished and are ostracized, even by family members (Friedman, 1993).

The risk of domestic violence and/or emotional abuse of which women are the victims is high among refugee families (Friedman, 1993; Tien, 1994). The risk is particularly high if the male has been a witness to his partner's aggressive sexual victimization. By inflicting violence against the woman, he may be seeking to diminish his sense of vulnerability and regain the power and control which were stripped from him. Unaware of their legal rights and available sources of support in their new community, refugee women often do not oppose such treatment and may believe that their husbands have this right over them. In keeping the silence,
isolation and victimization are perpetuated.

As the parent bearing major responsibility for raising their children and transmitting culture and values, refugee women find their children's inevitable adoption of host values and norms a source of worry. As they find their influence increasingly weakened, they fear that their one remaining possession (their children) will be lost to them (Friedman, 1993).

Overview and Rationale

By and large, the studies reviewed on immigrant women have focused on describing the kinds of impediments and difficulties which many immigrant women face, demonstrating how social policies and systems affect their lives. In many of the studies, such descriptions and discussions were predicated on participants' stories gathered and interpreted through various qualitative methodologies. For example, Anderson and Lynam (1987) examine the meaning that work has for their participants and proceed to illuminate the structural factors that constrain their occupational opportunities. Miedema and Nason-Clark (1989) provide an opportunity for their participants to tell of their experiences in public life (e.g., employment, using public services, shopping) and use these data to consider the factors that shape participants' immigrant experiences. Ng (1986) analyzes the relationship between employment agencies designed to help immigrant women and the phenomenon of
immigrant women's over-representation in lower echelon occupations. Anderson's (1987) discussion of Greek immigrant and Canadian women's phenomenology of health is informed by a discussion of the influence of dominant ideologies through which they make sense of their lives. Starting with immigrant women's perspectives of their social supports, Lynam (1985) uses the themes and meanings gleaned from these data to generate categories of network systems. Gannagé's (1984) study of immigrant women is an attempt to elucidate the phenomenon of oppression by gender in the context of dual roles.

My approach for this study attempts to expand on the rich knowledge base offered by studies like those cited above that start with participants' perspectives to generate descriptions and discussions informed by the larger social context. I attempted to integrate a phenomenological analysis of the data (perhaps more psychologically based than in the above reviewed studies) with a socially contextualized interpretation. The outcome of the phenomenological analysis constitutes the content of the results chapter, whereas the contextual interpretation serves as the nucleus of the discussion chapter. The phenomenological descriptions were derived from participants' narratives and were analyzed to gain a sense of what was central to their psychological experiences of immigration (i.e., perspectives, values, feelings).
Phenomenological approaches, though varied, all value the subjective and attempt to wed any analytical statements to participants' experiences.

My decision to use this perspective was based on several factors. First, I spent a year completing a part-time clinical psychology internship at a placement where the primary approach utilized was experiential. For me, the experiential approach was a means of apprehending the client's experience as valued and valid. In my work, I attempted to refrain from interpreting the person's experience and from judging whether it was the "wrong" or unhealthy way to behave. Alternately, the goal was to help clients augment self-understanding by becoming more aware of what they were experiencing. My supervisors emphasized the human element and encouraged the interns to see our work with our clients within the context of a human and dynamic relationship. Despite difficulties I encountered and the insecurities I experienced as a student therapist, what kept me excited about my work was precisely this human relational element. Thus one of the reasons that I chose the phenomenological approach was that I feel rewarded when I connect with people and have the privilege of entering and sharing their world.

Other reasons for using this approach can be divided into two arguments, scientific and political. However, this distinction is arbitrary and is simply designed to organize
the discussion. The scientific and political are inextricably linked in a dialectical relationship. Tseëlon (1991) argues that "all methods are ideological in that they are the codes through which facts are defined and acquire meaning" (p. 300).

With respect to the scientific rationale, Husserl (1977) posits that all knowledge of our world (including the scientific) is preceded or presupposed by our experience of it. Hence "all knowledge, however abstract or universal, is based on how [a person] experiences the life-world" (Giorgi, 1970). The methodological implications of this thesis are that to understand human phenomena, we must use the subjective, lived experience of the phenomenon. This means that our participants cease being objects and are experienced as "unique, living, and human" (Giorgi, 1970).

One of my goals in this study was to come to understand an experience that differs from many in the dominant culture, that of immigrant women, how their worlds appear, what frameworks they use to apprehend and interpret their worlds. Such experiences cannot be adequately captured through the analysis of questionnaires or structured interviews. Phenomenology, as a descriptive method, facilitates the communication of experience and offers the recipient of such communication an opportunity to share in the experience. Marshall and Rossman (1989) argue that when participants' perspectives are valued and when the
researcher seeks descriptions of these perspectives, qualitative methods are more appropriate than quantitative methods. I determined that phenomenology, as a descriptive method that focuses on the subjective to capture essential meanings of experiences, was well suited to some of the goals of this study.

Regarding the political rationale, in traditional methods there is an underlying power dynamic in which researchers are the ones who, as Morawski and Steele (1991) note, "display the power to reflect on the activities of the subjects, thereby transforming subjects into objects of study" (p. 115). The discourse of such a paradigm illustrates an asymmetrical power relationship between researchers and participants where researchers are identified as the experts who are able to objectively extract knowledge from their experiments with subjects. Dissatisfaction with this dominant paradigm has been experienced by some social science researchers and practitioners, particularly among those belonging to groups which were not part of the dominant culture, such as women and minority groups (Espín, 1993a; Jones & Thorne, 1987). Tension was (and is) experienced between the upheld scientific method and the need of these social scientists to serve as advocates for the groups to which they belong. As a result, many began to use alternative paradigms that would be more consonant with their political positions. Morawski
and Steel (1991) argue that an important research goal is to empower participants, which "diverts the power of a hegemonic consciousness by returning to others the power to speak their minds and know their lives" (p. 120).

An explicit call is being made for a more socially responsible political agenda for psychology (Minton, 1993; Sampson, 1991) where a more democratic process is advocated. In this vision, participants are involved in both the inputs and outputs of psychological research and practice. This leads to a greater equality of "voice" in the process of framing and describing "human experience, knowledge, and meaning" (Sampson, 1991).

The issue of empowerment is pertinent to any group which we study and with whom we work. However, for marginalized and/or minority groups, it becomes critical, given systemic and structural impediments to the expression or reception of their perspectives. Immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to this hindrance. Their multiple identities as women, visible minorities (in some instances), and non-Canadians, are all disadvantaged positions. In my role as advocate, I assume the responsibility to present the world through their eyes rather than through mine or that of the dominant culture. I believe that by so doing we collaborate toward achieving a more empowered position.

My discussion of the results was based on a structural analysis, in which I critically examined how the socio-
cultural context was implicated in participants' experiences. According to Sullivan (1984), "an interpretative psychology commences to be critical when it attempts to criticize those features of a human situation that frustrate intentional agency" (p. 123). The critical perspective used here sought to demonstrate the various ways in which the participants' ability to participate equally and effectively in society was thwarted. Participation refers to one's opportunities to convey one's needs and concerns and one's ability to access resources and services. Equal participation refers to having equal opportunity compared to other members of society, while effective participation refers to one's successful pursuit of plans and goals.

I have already disclosed to you how my personal experiences as an immigrant woman of colour were implicated in my choice of this research paradigm and that of working with these women. I will now attempt to articulate why I believe a critical interpretation is especially appropriate for discussing the stories of these women.

The various identities of immigrant women typically carry low social status - immigrant, woman, person of colour, unemployed or low income. With their relative lack of socio-economic power, it is unlikely that the interests of these women will be represented in the agendas of the various social and professional institutions. Members of
society who occupy more privileged positions may contend that opportunities exist for all in our free society and it simply takes effective persistence to attain them (Fine, 1989). Yet, as Sullivan (1984) notes, societies may have structures of domination, which disable human agency, or structures of freedom, which facilitate agency and intervention. Fine (1989) argues that for "persons of relatively low ascribed social power...taking control involves ignoring advice to solve one's problems individually and recognizing instead the need for collective, structural changes" (p. 187).

I propose that critical interpretations of the lived experiences of these women are needed because were I to ignore the social forces which hinder the agency and empowerment of these women, I would have left unchallenged the status quo and would, by omission, be supporting it (Fine, 1989; Minton, 1993; Morawski & Steele, 1990; Sullivan, 1984; Thomas, 1993).

**Objectives**

Though guided by the issues emerging from the body of research on immigrant women, my investigation is largely exploratory in that no obvious hypothesis directs its course. Instead my basic objective is an in-depth understanding of the lives of immigrant women, as garnered from the study's sample, with emphasis on what is central to their experiences.
With data in a narrative form, these women are presented with an opportunity to let the stories of their lives be heard and their concerns and needs known. I contend that groups whose voices are infrequently heard have less socio-political power. The opportunity to be heard is a critical step toward empowerment, a second objective. This is a process whereby individuals and groups engage in activities to access resources through which their needs can be met and their concerns addressed.

Empowerment constitutes more than making voices audible, however. It also involves using understandings of people's lives to promote actions through which their interests/welfare could be realized (Mishler, 1984). My third objective is a logical extension of this process in my attempt to recognize and illuminate socio-political practices and structures requiring change to facilitate empowerment.

My last overall objective pertains to the practice of research itself. This is a study that values the subjective, takes a clear political stance, and proposes that its findings and conclusions are but part of a complex of multiple realities. I seek to demonstrate that despite the seeming unscientific characteristic of this attitude from a positivist framework, in its ability to offer a potentially fruitful and valid means of acquiring knowledge, the perspective that I am using has the possibility of
transforming the nature of scientific practice.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

An attempt was made to obtain participants who varied with respect to cultural, educational, and immigrant experiences and basic demographic factors. This diversity was appropriate to the goals of this project. Sample selection in this instance was not based on a desire to obtain normative data but to get an understanding of experiences that are both varied and shared through qualitative, detailed cases (Patton, 1990). This goal is based on the premise that structural changes aimed at meeting the needs of the community must consider, in addition to shared concerns, the varied nature of the experiences of any identified group.

Participants were 19 women from Windsor, Ontario, who ranged in age from 22 to 49 years ($M = 34.7, SD = 6.2$). Seven participants were from the Middle East (six from Lebanon and one from Iran), four were from Asia (two from China, one from Cambodia, and one from Vietnam), four were from eastern Europe (two from Russia, one from Hungary, and one from Bosnia), two were from Central and South America (one from Guatemala and one from Chile), and one each was from Africa (Ethiopia) and the Caribbean (Jamaica). Eleven women were refugees as defined by the Organization of African States. My decision to use this definition related
to my observation that nine women had refugee status according to the Convention definition but two other women, who had experiences compatible with that of refugees, were designated as family class immigrants because their experience of civil war in their countries is not included in the definition of the Geneva Convention. I therefore chose a definition of refugee that is more inclusive and based on the experience of being compelled to seek refuge. The remaining eight participants were family class immigrants and had migrated voluntarily.

Although English was the first language for only one participant, ten participants (seven refugees\(^1\) [64\%] and three immigrants [37\%]) were fluent in English. Of the remaining eight participants, four showed some difficulty with English (one refugee [0.09\%] and three immigrants [37\%]) while four evinced marked difficulty (three refugees [27\%] and one immigrant [12\%]). Though participants were assigned to these categories based on my subjective experience of communicating with them, the designation is compatible with their status relative to ESL classes (i.e., beginners, intermediate, or graduates). It should be noted that all but three participants were either graduates of ESL classes.

\(^1\)Refugees are one class of immigrants. The other two classes are family and independent. I am using the terms refugee and immigrant to differentiate between immigrants who qualify for refugee status based on the definition used by the African Organization of States versus those belonging to one of the other two classes.
or present students.

Participants had been in Canada for an average of 5.6 years (S.D. = 6.8) with a range of four months to 25 years. Participants with refugee status had been in Canada for an average of 4.2 years (S.D. = 3.3), whereas those with family class immigrant status had been in Canada for an average of 7.6 years (S.D. = 9.9).

With respect to marital status, 14 participants had spouses, three were separated, and two were single. Sixteen participants had children. Regarding employment status, ten participants had been employed at some point in Canada, including five (four refugees and one immigrant) who were currently employed. Of the 13 participants with some post-secondary education, eight were refugees and five were immigrants.

Procedure

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through three approaches. Eight participants were recruited from English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) at the YMCA in Windsor. The director of this program also recommended this project to nine women associated with the ISAP either as graduates or employees, with whom she had a good relationship. The remaining two women were acquaintances of mine.

Pre-recruitment Contact
For participants recruited through ESL classes, I assumed that they had no basis to trust me or the purpose of the project. I therefore spent approximately two months sitting in on their classes, assisting students during classes and chatting with them during the break. The goal of this pre-recruitment contact was to foster trust and comfort with me. This goal was made explicit to potential participants. As an anthropologist, Briggs (1986) has learned the importance of investing time in preliminary observations of the people with whom the researcher intends to work. He believes that it sensitizes the researcher to what constitutes an appropriate question and to the communicative practices that facilitate open and informative responses. This period was thus useful in getting a sense of the interactional style of potential participants, and in sensitizing me as to how I could approach and talk with them. At the end of this preparatory phase, participants were solicited.

Information Provided

Participants were informed that I was a student at the University of Windsor who was interested in learning about the experiences of women who are immigrants to Canada, as part of a study that I was conducting. I explained that as an immigrant to Canada, I have been interested in the experiences of other immigrant women. I conveyed to them that as a researcher, I wanted to learn in detail about
their experiences and sought their input regarding what is important for other people to know about their experiences. Further, I wanted to be sure that their story was told from their perspective. Participants were also advised that I would provide them with a report of the collective experiences of immigrant women in the study, in the hope that it would be meaningful and useful to them. A written consent form consistent with the above verbally conveyed information was also provided (see Appendix A).

**Interview Format**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed. Participants had been asked whether they would allow me to tape our interview. However, because considerable discomfort was expressed with this procedure, I opted to take detailed notes, and attempted to write verbatim participants' narrations. Participants were later given typed copies of their stories and were asked to check them for accuracy. They also then had the opportunity to retract portions of or the entire interview.

Participants were asked to share their experiences in various areas of their lives as immigrants (see Appendix B). Broadly, these included their experiences with the dominant language, employment issues, their domestic lives, friendships, social contact with Canadians, emotional and physical health, and their experiences with leaving their homelands. They were also asked what they believed they
could do to improve their lives and how Canadians could be helpful to this end. Participants also provided some demographic information (see Appendix C).

As they narrated their stories, participants were asked to elaborate or explain when clarification or more depth was needed. I also probed for related components of their experience such as feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. Periodic evaluations were made regarding perceptions of our communication to that point, as well as the participants' degree of comfort.

Mutual self-disclosure purportedly fosters trust and open and honest communication. It has been proposed as a means of diminishing the sense of power and interpersonal distance between the interviewer and the interviewed (Lather, 1991). Where it was judged appropriate or requested by the interviewee, I disclosed personal information relevant to the ongoing discussion.

At the end of each interview, notes were made relevant to aspects that would not be obvious from the transcripts (e.g., my perceptions of the participants' presentations; my experience of the interviews; my perceptions of our relational dynamics).

**Feedback**

The outlined feedback process has a dual purpose. On the one hand it was meant to serve as a means of validating my interpretations; on the other hand, it was designed to
compensate in some way for the time, energy and other personal investments that participants contributed.

Participants were apprised of my interpretations in writing. They were invited to dialogue with me as a group or individually. The purpose of this meeting was to ask for their evaluations of the accuracy of my descriptions and conclusions regarding their experiences and for perceived omissions of import. Their feedback is included in this document and was considered for further revisions. Feedback was also requested of participants, if they felt sufficiently safe to do so, regarding their perceptions of the process of their interviews with me (e.g., whether they had felt comfortable during the interview; whether I seemed to understand them or not).

The described feedback process constitutes an activity of reciprocity (Lather 1991) and provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their lives, hopefully with new understandings and as well to respond critically to my interpretations of their lives. It therefore has potential for mutual teaching and learning among researcher and researched. Insofar as it presents a forum for the initiation of personal change and social change, this avenue of dialogue may function as a means of empowerment.

A separate document was also prepared for the ISAP summarizing the information regarding the reported experiences of these immigrant women in Windsor. It is
hoped that such a document would be useful in enhancing a sense of connectedness with others whose experiences are similar to one's own. It is also hoped that it would function as support for the continued existence of the agency with respect to its role in meeting some of the pressing needs of immigrant women in Windsor.

Data Analysis

A Phenomenological Perspective

General Description

Data analysis was based on a phenomenological approach. The term phenomenology has slightly different meanings depending on whether it is used to describe a philosophical or psychological perspective, or a mode of inquiry (Patton, 1990). However, in my readings of different texts employing a phenomenological perspective, a number of common features seem to emerge.

Proponents of the phenomenological approach argue for the legitimacy of the subjective. Husserl (1925/1977), recognized as the founder of this perspective, asserts that even mind and nature are originally apprehended by "pre-scientific experience." The methodological implications of this stance are that our data are to be people's descriptions of phenomena as they have lived and experienced them (Davidson & Cosgrove, 1991; Giorgi, 1985; Kvale, 1983).

Giorgi's (1985) disenchantment with the natural science model for inquiring into human phenomena led him to
search for a method that would capture their richness and complexity. Phenomenology embraces the subjective as a means of gaining an understanding of how one experiences one's world and develops one's world view (Patton, 1990).

Primarily a descriptive perspective, phenomenology searches for the essences of people's experiences within their descriptions of phenomena which they have lived and experienced (Giorgi, 1985; Husserl, 1925/1977; Kvale, 1983). My understanding of essence is that which is most central or the thread of their experience, without which the parts do not cohere.

The researcher seeks to discover an individual's orientation or stance toward the world (Giorgi, 1970; Husserl, 1925/1977) and it is by examining the individual's relation to her/his world, or her/his existence, that behaviour is to be understood, not in terms of cause and effect or stimulus-response relationships. Through descriptive and reflective methods, the researcher comes to understand better, though never completely, this relational stance as one looks at the meanings or significance that events have for people.

**Phenomenology as a Mode of Inquiry**

With respect to the actual practice of phenomenological inquiry, although variations exist, there seem to be common aspects that characterize the approach.

Firstly, data are obtained and presented as
descriptions of the lived phenomenon, as they are communicated by the person who owns the experience. Giorgi (1992) contends that a descriptive approach adequately provides a rich and comprehensive understanding of human phenomena. He asserts that one need only present the experience "as it presents itself, neither adding nor subtracting from it." Further, descriptions can present the ambiguities, complexities, and multiplicities of meanings of the experienced phenomenon. These descriptions are to stimulate "psychological reflection and knowledge" (Wertz, 1983). However, in contrast to the interpretative approaches which bestow meaning based on a particular theoretical perspective or hypothesis, the descriptive approach "clarifies the meanings of the objects of experience precisely as experienced" (Giorgi, 1992).

In the search for the essence or structure of the individual's or group's experience, the inquirer adopts an attitude of reduction. In this context, reduction does not refer to that of the mechanistic paradigm, where the phenomenon is disassembled in an attempt to find its most fundamental unit, or mechanism which makes it work. Rather, it refers to the bracketing or suspension of the researcher's expectations, assumptions and beliefs about the reality of the person's experience. Our interest instead lies in what reality is valid for that person (Davidson & Cosgrove, 1991), in what meaning the event has for them
A reductionist attitude does not advocate that researchers ignore their preconceptions but that they be aware and critical of them (Kvale, 1983).

Imaginative variation (Giorgi, 1985) or free variation in fantasy (Kvale, 1983) is the means by which we arrive at the essence or structure of the phenomenon. The process involves varying aspects of the phenomenon to determine the structure, or that which remains constant throughout these variations (Giorgi, 1985; Husserl, 1925/1977; Kvale, 1983; Wertz, 1983).

**Application of Analysis**

The approach to data analysis is the outcome of the modification of work from two sources, Giorgi’s (1985b) phenomenological approach and Rennie's (1992; 1994) related approaches of grounded theory. The resulting approach includes several components: First, one looks for instances that pertain to the domains of interest (i.e., work, domestic lives, language/racial issues, social support/contact, and health/emotional functioning). Statements that indicate participants' psychological experiences (i.e., values, attitudes, feelings, cognitions) within the outlined domains are selected for analysis and examined for meaning units. Meaning units are parts of the text that seem to have a main psychological concept (Rennie 1992; 1994). All narratives are examined for meaning units related with respect to a main psychological concept.
Related meaning units are analyzed together as a cluster. Each meaning unit in each cluster is translated into psychological language, that is, descriptions of the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes evident in this part of the participant's narrative. The various experiences of participants reflected among translated related meaning units give rise to several components. Combined, these components form a category, and are distilled to reveal the essence of the target concept.

In the process of distilling the main experience of meaning units the researcher "immerses" herself in the world of the participant by imagining herself in targeted situations in a focused and intense manner. Details are mulled over, as the researcher searches for the meaning they seem to carry for the participant. Through this reflective process, the significance of details becomes "magnified or amplified" (Wertz, 1984, p. 205). Thus, that which initially appeared to be mundane may be of import. Reflections are made on significant aspects that are not explicit in the participant's descriptions but are nevertheless strongly implied.

Apart from the described empathic attitude, the researcher also engages in more abstract/logical operations in an attempt to make sense of the experience, to see how its various aspects are related to each other. Judgments regarding the veracity of the person's experience are
withheld. To grasp the specifics of a particular experience, the event is contrasted with a preceding period during which participants' life experiences were qualitatively different, if this information is available.

Throughout this process, notes are made relevant to the psychological experience that seems evident. From these noted reflections, the main experience is ascertained. These are then described in psychological language but remain detailed.

Once components are identified aspects of the experiences will be varied to determine which details are necessary to the understanding the psychological experience, those without which the crux of the experience is not preserved. Once these essential details are distilled, a descriptive label is then assigned to the category, generated by combined components. While capturing the participant's experience the descriptions omit the specifics of the event. Variations within categories are noted and illustrated by data. A final aspect of the analysis involves an examination of all categories for themes that transcend domains. This procedure is reviewed at the beginning of Chapter III and an example is provided in Appendix D.

**Approach to Discussing the Results: A Critical Interpretation**

**Elucidation of the Concept 'Interpretation'**
This section describes the orientation of the
discussion through which I propose to go beyond description
to an interpretation of the narratives of my participants.
One may ask, as Giorgi (1992) does, what motivates my desire
to interpret the experiences of my participants. He
contends that descriptions are sufficient to capture the
various meanings of experiences in all their ambiguity and
complexity and further, it is appropriate to describe the
participants' interpretations of their lives, rather than to
interpret these interpretations. These are legitimate
positions which I will attempt to address. First, however,
it is appropriate to elucidate the concept of interpretation
as it will be used in the context of the present study.

According to Webster's dictionary (1981), to interpret
means to (1) explain or tell the meaning of something; (2)
translate into familiar language; or (3) to understand or
appreciate in the light of individual belief, judgment,
interest, or circumstance. If we were to use the second
meaning – translate into familiar language – it could be
argued that I would have already engaged in interpretation
in my analysis of the data, by translating my participants'
expressions into psychological language. However, let us
consider the term language more broadly. We could
substitute language with code or symbol. I could then state
that I propose to recode or resymbolize the experiences of
my participants (Sullivan, 1984). As the recipient of the
communicated expressions, I would use a symbol or code that would enable me to make sense of my participants' experiences. I seek to make my readers aware that the process is a construction, founded on the world views that I have, on my biases and assumptions of what the world is like.

Am I suggesting that interpretations are not really based on the data but are instead simply projections of the interpreter? I would argue against this position. The process of interpretation is an attempt to balance two extremes. On the one hand, while we need to start from the participants' description of their experiences, we need to beware of becoming totally immersed in their perspective. On the other hand, we need to avoid so distancing ourselves from the person that our interpretations are alienated from their experience (Sullivan, 1984). Thus the interpreter attempts to illuminate explanatory relationships, while remaining rooted to the actors'/respondents' experiences.

We are able to communicate experiences and express the meanings they have for us and through dialogue we are able to screen out inaccurate understandings of these experiences (Ricoeur, 1976). However, we remain isolated insofar as no one is able to directly apprehend our experiences. Thus the recipient of communication is never certain of the accuracy of their understanding of what the communicator meant (Hirsch, 1967). Hirsch (1967) argues, however, that "it is
a mistake to identify knowledge with certainty" and that "the aim of the discipline must be to reach a consensus, on the basis of what is known, that correct understanding has probably been achieved". Since we can never be in someone's head and even if we share similar socio-cultural backgrounds, we will never experience everything someone else experiences, there is always a distance between the communication and our understanding of it. This Ricoeur (1976) refers to as "distanciation." What we attempt to do, as recipients of communication, is to appropriate the meanings of the communicator's experience. In this context, to appropriate means to make something alien one's own. Appropriation is achieved through a process where one moves from understanding (a naive grasp of the content) to comprehension, which is a more sophisticated understanding, supported by explanation (Ricoeur, 1976).

What occurs, then, is a dynamic or interaction, where the interpretation emerges from an interaction between the perspective of the communicator and that of the interpreter. Using Gadamer's language, Ricoeur (1976) refers to this as a "fusion of horizons," where horizon could be replaced by world view, perspective, way of being. According to Packer (1991), the resulting interpretation constitutes "a mode of comprehension, of grasping the world, rooted in our human way of being in the world." As Ricoeur (1976) argues, because it is a dynamic process, the reader/interpreter does
not project him/herself but is more appropriately "enlarged in his[her] capacity of self-projection by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself" (Ricoeur, 1976).

According to Ricoeur (1976), explanation is involved in the process of appropriation. However, here explanation does not refer to a linear, antecedent-consequent relationship, as it would in a positivist paradigm. Instead an interpretive explanation, as Sullivan (1984) points out, "explains by showing that an act makes sense against a background of a social code of rules, practices or beliefs."

To summarize, my interpretation of the meanings of my participants' experiences is designed to help me (and my readers hopefully) make sense of these meanings. The interpretation will emerge out of a dynamic process where my perspective (or way of being in the world) interacts with that of my participants. My readers, in turn, may agree in varying degrees with my interpretation depending on their own perspectives. The legitimacy of my interpretation is not based on a judgment of certainty because, it is argued, certainty is not attainable but is instead based on how probable the explanation is. However, this judgment is ultimately an intersubjective one. Additionally, each time we examine a phenomenon anew, we see or apprehend something differently or our conclusions are modified. Therefore the meaning it had for us at one point no longer exists, or at the very least changes from its previous form. This is what
Sullivan (1984) refers to as "recursive meaning" which suggests that "the text does not establish meaning once and for all" since "horizons, whether from the point of view of the interpreter or interpreted, are subject to change" (p. 120).

**Rationale for an Interpretation.** In this section, I will attempt to explain my reasons for going beyond description to interpretation. Perhaps we can call what would have been accomplished at the end of data analysis, understanding. We would have, that is, gained some sense of participants' points of view or perspective, some idea of the phenomena to which they referred, some glimpse of what their lives are like. However, to reach a more enlarged understanding (what Ricoeur refers to as comprehension) of the person's world necessitates an interpretative endeavour designed to elucidate less obvious aspects of the described experience (such as the context in which it emerged, implicit contradictions, power relations).

One of the objections that proponents of alternative post-positivist paradigms have to the positivist tradition is the latter's Cartesian search for the truth or the cause of a phenomenon. The implications of this positivist attitude are that there is a single reality that exists independently of the observer/scientist (Giorgi, 1970; Sullivan, 1984). In contrast, alternative paradigms suggest that reality is socially constructed and given the existence
of multiple social experiences, groups and systems, it follows that there are multiple realities (Gergen, 1985; Minton, 1986). Science does not escape this condition since it is carried out by "flesh and blood scientists" (Ibañez, 1991) who are participants in social communities. Thus when scientists identify and categorize phenomena, they do so using categories which they possess and which are delimited by the socio-linguistic communities to which they belong. Thus while scientific communities use and disseminate categories and knowledge in a hegemonic fashion, rarely questioning the legitimacy of the latter, Gergen (1985) contends that these are typically "either highly circumscribed by culture, history, or social context or altogether non-existent" (p. 267).

Steeped within the epistemological tradition of positivism as we have been, some of my readers may contend that the message implicit in the present discussion is that all is relative, a conclusion that leaves tenuous any claims to knowledge. Lather (1992) counters that the concept of relativism emerges from a culture in which the majority of its participants are convinced that truths are absolute and that our world is ultimately knowable, if we only discover and implement the right methods. As an alternative to the concept of relativism, she posits "partial, locatable, critical knowledge" (Lather, 1992, p. 101).

In my use of an interpretative approach, I acknowledge
that multiple interpretations are possible. Even as we listen to another person, we make sense of what they express by interpreting it in some way. The very categories we use to describe their experiences indicate the way we are interpreting the information. Each person who reads the transcribed words of my participants will be engaged in an interpretative process as they attempt to make sense of them. The particular reality that they extract will be based on the socio-cultural factors that influence who they are (e.g., their culture, race, gender, age).

A dynamic exists not only between me, the interpreter, and the data I interpret but it is also evident in the production of the data itself. The research interview or situation is itself a context in which the involved actors occupy certain roles, each of which is influenced by their multiple identities and the socio-cultural and historical contexts from which they extend (Mishler, 1986; Briggs, 1986). Thus the participants' descriptions of their experiences occur within the context of the researcher-participant relationship and the research environment. An interpretative approach is useful in illuminating these particular contextual influences on the data produced.

The phenomenological approach describes individuals interacting with their personal and social worlds and the meanings that they extract from and attribute to these interactions. It takes an interpretative approach, however,
to highlight alternative ways of being in the world, as well as alternative worlds. As Packer (1991) maintains, "interpretation illuminates the different aspects of a phenomenon, along with the ground upon which that phenomenon stands out and from which it draws its possibilities" (p. 74). Packer (1991) also points out that it is "the articulation - the laying out and explication - of possibilities that have been projected and have become available in practical understanding" (p. 71). Thus an interpretative approach can be used to help participants and researcher gain insight into alternative courses of action for both the participants themselves and the larger social community. Using the example of psychoanalysis, Sullivan (1984) identifies the value of an interpretation to the analysand by stating, "An alternative interpretation has an adaptive communal function. Experience is resymbolized into a form with which consciousness may take more initiative,...it makes the patient more of an agent and less of a patient!" (p. 116). The participants and researcher come to recognize that they need not be constrained by one mode of being and that alternatives could be realized either by initiating personal changes or by modifications to extant social relationships and social structures.

A Critical Approach. I have suggested that multiple interpretations of any text or communication are possible. It is my present task to outline the specific interpretive
perspective that I have chosen for the discussion. At various points in this introduction, I have alluded to the positivist assumption of an absolute, single truth existing out there, and independent of the observer. Critical approaches challenge unquestioned purported truths and instead posit and argue for the legitimacy of alternative perspectives that have been repressed (Thomas, 1993).

Far from taking a value-neutral stance as science is presumably supposed to do, critical interpretations embark on a normative quest, illuminating power inequities (Sullivan, 1984), giving voice to silence (Espín, 1993a), presenting new ways of being (Packer, 1991) where power is more equally distributed (Minton, 1993)

Critical approaches are often used to analyze the experiences of marginalized groups. The term marginalized is a contemporary term that describes groups whose interests are subordinated relative to those of other groups in society. The communication of their issues, concerns, and needs are repressed in the sense that they are not represented in the implementation of policies, in the distribution of social and economic resources, and in the articulation of the agenda of social, gubernatorial, and business organizations. In other words, as Minton (1993) states, their rights to "self-determination, distributive justice, and collaborative and democratic participation" (p. 3) are thwarted.
I recognize that at this point, my readers may have but a vague understanding of what I mean by a critical approach and that the task remains for me to clarify and demystify my intentions. The critical approach which I propose in this study is based on Jim Thomas' work in his treatise on critical ethnography. Critical ethnographers attempt to describe, analyze, and illuminate agendas and power relationships which are constraining and repressive (Thomas, 1993). From his examples and his explication of critical thinking, I have generated several components of the main approach to the discussion: (1) First, attention is drawn to instances in the data where the participants' equal and effective participation in society was hindered. By participation, I am referring to (a) one's opportunities to convey needs and concerns and to have these heard and understood; and (b) the degree to which one is able to access resources and services. Equal participation refers to having equal opportunities compared to other members of society; effective participation refers to being able to pursue one's plans and realize one's goals. The contexts within which participation occurs are the various social systems (e.g., health, employment, educational) and community life (e.g., interacting with other members of the community, purchasing commodities); (2) I will also suggest possible impediments to equal and effective participation in society. I will identify both participant variables (e.g.,
language, lack of information, negative attitudes) and structural and societal variables (e.g., lack of knowledge and cultural sensitivity, service gaps, and prejudicial attitudes) that may have impeded such participation. My ultimate design is to advocate for social changes through which the fuller participation of the women represented here may be facilitated. This intention is consistent with the research attitude advanced in emancipatory approaches (Lather 1991) where the researcher, as advocate, consciously sets out to critique the status quo and encourages the kinds of awareness and change in participants and within their social environment that promote a more just society. It is hoped that the research process itself, in its attempts to be participatory by inviting the participants to voice their experiences and to be involved in processes of verification and dialogue, mirrors this over-arching, macro-level goal of empowerment.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Overview of Approach to Data Analysis

Participants' narratives were organized on the basis of different areas or contexts of their lives, which I have called domains. This organization follows the content of interview questions, which were derived from the body of literature on immigrant women as well as from informal conversations with immigrant women regarding what was important to them.

Data analysis included several steps: First, instances that pertained to the domains of interest (a total of 11 were used) were combined and analyzed separately. The text was scanned for statements that indicated participants' psychological experiences (i.e., values, attitudes, feelings, cognitions) and a search for meaning units (statements with one main psychological concept) was conducted. As a meaning unit was examined, the evident psychological concept was noted. A search for this concept was made among other meaning units and those sharing this concept were combined, forming a cluster. I then began the in-depth analysis described in the methodology, the first step of which was to translate each meaning unit into psychological language. These psychological descriptions were then organized based on various components of the concept. Combined, these components formed a category and
they were distilled until the essential experience of the overall concept remained. (See Appendix D for an example of the analytical process used.)

Domain categories were also examined for themes that transcended domains and linked generated categories. The question, "What psychological/existential experience(s) resurfaces among categories?" guided my reflection of the components of categories, through which I extracted two abstract existential experiences. While the specifics and context of the relevant situations varied, these core phenomenologies connected them. Either or both of the two themes were evident in all categories except for "Positive feelings" in the "Being with Canadians" domain and "Bridges" in the "Friendships with Canadians" domain.

The results of the final analysis are reported as follows: Firstly, for each of the 11 domains, relevant participant characteristics are provided. This is followed by categories of detailed psychological descriptions of essential experiences. These are illustrated by verbatim raw data, which are included based on their illuminative capacities and are chosen from the narratives as a group, not individually. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identity. Although categories may not represent the experiences of all participants, an attempt was made to represent in the appropriate categories the meaningful experiences of all participants as conveyed in
their narratives. Components are embedded in the text and organize the write-up of the data but are not highlighted. Table 1 provides a list of the 11 domains used and the categories and components that emerged out of participants' narratives. (See Appendix E for a list of categories, components, and meaning units for all domains.)

Subsequent to the presentation of categories, two themes that seemed to underlie and link many of the generated categories are presented. As with categories, raw data are also used to illuminate described experiences.

Domain Categories

Language

Of the 19 participants, two were completely fluent in English before their arrival in Canada. The remaining 17 participants had arrived with little or no English language skills. Of these, at the time of data collection, ten were mostly fluent except for mild grammatical errors or
### Table 1  
**Domains and derived categories and their components**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Categories</th>
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#### I. Language

**A) A threat to self-worth**
- (1) Negative responses/messages and participants' reactions
- (2) Anxiety, discomfort and their effects
- (3) Consequences of negative experiences and fears related to speaking English
- (4) Self-image; contrast to the past

**B) Effective participation in society**
- (1) Assertion
- (2) Participation in the area of employment
- (3) Participation in the social arena
- (4) Securing one's welfare

#### II. Work/social status

**A) Identity/self-image**
- (1) Worth, purpose, and identity

**B) Disappointments: Expectations vs reality**
- (1) Disappointed hopes
- (2) Coping with new realities
- (3) Contrast between past and present

**C) Anxieties of job insecurity**
- (1) Fear of being judged incompetent
- (2) Fear of being unable to meet demands

**D) Difficulties in pursuing one's goal to be employed**
- (1) Helplessness, despair, and the temptation to give up
- (2) Frustrated with obstacles

#### III. Being with Canadians

**A) Unwelcome**
- (1) Sense of being resented and unwanted
- (2) Perceptions of being discriminated against and being unvalued
- (3) Varied emotional and behavioural reactions to perceived negative attitudes

**B) Positive feelings**
- (1) Preference for Canadian attributes
- (2) Other positive attitudes

#### IV. Friendships with Canadians
A) Walls of fear of rejection/of perceived rejection
   (1) Fear of hurt and rejection
   (2) Perception of rejection

B) Walls of dissimilar values and cultural lifestyles
   (1) Dissimilar values
   (2) Dissimilar cultural lifestyles

C) Bridges
   (1) Identified facilitative personal attitudes
   (2) Facilitative attributes and actions of Canadian friends

V. Leaving their homeland
A) Safe but unsettled
   (1) Priority of personal safety
   (2) Homesickness and helplessness and uncertainty regarding reunion with family
   (3) Difficulty feeling settled and at peace

B) Separated but attached
   (1) Contrast between positives of the past and implied negatives of present
   (2) Strong attachments to homeland
   (3) Factors of current homeland that discourage attachment

VI. Health
A) The impact of emotional distress on physical well-being
   (1) The impact of worry and anxiety and a contrasting experience
   (2) The sense of deterioration

VII. Dealing/coping with distress
A) "Sharing my pain is an exercise in futility"
   (1) Discouragement of disclosure
   (2) Philosophy of coping

B) Distance and connections
   (1) Isolation and escape
   (2) Loneliness and the need for connections similar to those past

VIII. Spousal relationships
A) Migration provides a potential for growth or deterioration
   (1) Drawn closer by hardship
   (2) Increased conflict and distance

B) Role as a woman: the potential for shifting perspectives

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IX. Children
   A) Disconnection from native culture and family
      (1) Positive elements in homeland and the
          contrasting threat of the present environment
      (2) Fear of children being deprived
      (3) Lack of support and concern for children's
          well-being and development
   B) Concern about Canadian enculturation
      (1) Concern over Canadian influence and
          concomitant waning influence of indigenous culture
      (2) Concern regarding conflict and separation
      (3) Concern for moral development

X. Achieving a successful life
   A) Connecting with Canadian culture
      (1) Demonstrating worth to Canadians
      (2) Seeking connection, intimacy, and
          communication
      (3) Willingness to learn, make changes, expand
          horizons
   B) Persisting to effect change
      (1) Sense of having to persist and endure the
          battle of pursuing one's goals
      (2) Belief in individual responsibility and
          ability and a contrasting sense of helplessness

XI. Help from Canadians
   A) "See me with different eyes"
      (1) Appeal for an empathic attitude
      (2) Appeal to be seen as having value
   B) "Teach me"
      (1) Appeal for teaching with kindness and patience
      (2) Appeal for recognizing their need for
          basic/mundane information
   C) "Give me a fair chance"
      (1) Appeal to be unprejudiced
      (2) Appeal to not obstruct
structurally awkward expressions, four had moderate
difficulty and four showed marked difficulty speaking and
understanding the language. Language proved to be one of
the most critical factors implicated in their experience as
immigrants in its relationship to their self perceptions,
their experience of their new community, and their
participation as members of society. Relevant to their
experiences communicating in English, two categories were
distilled and include (1) A threat to self-worth; and (2)
Effective participation in society.

A Threat to Self-worth

Some of the interactions that participants had within
the English-speaking Canadian environment can be understood
as threats to their positive self image. I refer here to a
sense of self as confident, valued for one's personal
attributes, abilities, accepted, capable. This sense of
self is fostered by an environment which is supportive,
empathic, accepting, and encouraging. In contrast, an
environment which is unsupportive, rejecting, and
discouraging contributes to a sense of self as of low worth,
unvalued, and incompetent.

Seven participants were faced with situations in which
they were ignored when they spoke, or in which derisive
comments were made about their English. The message
received was that they were inconsequential, inadequate, or
inferior. Ella commented on her experience of people who
implied that she was inferior because of her difficulties with English, "I feel like they push you down;" "Some people use a situation like this to show they are superior."

Confronted with the difficulties presented by new vocabulary and the speed at which people speak, participants asked for clarification or for the repetition of a word. In response to these difficulties, some people were reported to become angry, impatient, or uncomfortable. "The problem," remarked Fada, "is when they speak fast and use different words and you can't say 'what does this mean?'; people get nervous or angry." In some instances, when there were errors in their vocabulary and the wrong word was chosen, the meaning received differed from the meaning intended and the misunderstanding sometimes led to offense.

Speaking English thus became a source of apprehension, anxiety, discomfort, and embarrassment. Ella explained her fear of making mistakes. "I'm afraid that sometimes people who speak English can understand what I say a different way. For example, if I want to say something kind, they understand that I want to hurt them." Four women reported that their anxiety was sometimes so elevated that their ability to express themselves or to recall information was compromised. "In these cases," Gael reported, "I feel nervous, feel blocked if I speak; I'm so incoherent, so I say [to myself] 'stop'." In the following comment, Fada demonstrated the anger that she experienced when she
received insensitive or rejecting responses to her difficulties with English, "Sometimes when you say, 'excuse me?' they say, 'forget it'. I feel mad." However, dejection was a pervasive experience for six women who faced such rebuffs. A loss was experienced when positive experiences of speaking in one's native country were contrasted with the sadness and loneliness experienced here, "Sometimes," explained Asti, "I have a bad mood, feel alone, feel sad." Participants were hurt that some people seem so lacking in empathy and did not try to understand their situation and felt humiliated when others found their predicament a source of amusement. As Fada narrated, "When I went to the doctor and said, 'this girl will translate for me,' he laughed. He laughed, I cried."

Participants spoke of how they attempted to avoid such negative interactions and associated feelings. Fada explained that she pretended that she understood what was said. Others reported that they evaded situations requiring English as much as possible, even at a risk of missing opportunities to promote their welfare. Fara attempted to minimize the impact of aversive experiences by trying to convince herself that she was not hurt or distressed. Some women became very vigilant and cautious when interacting with Canadians. Mila described how she became wary of people and would try to determine in advance whether the person was likely to reject her or to be sensitive and
Thus, in 12 out of the 17 narratives of women who did not speak fluent English on their arrival to Canada, it was evident that experiences associated with speaking English served to erode participants' self-esteem and self-confidence. "In some parts," commented Fara, "living in Canada gives you confidence, in others, it takes away your self-esteem." Difficulties in English were sometimes understood as reflecting some deficiency in themselves and instead of being indignant at the insensitivity of the other, they sometimes became angry with themselves. In Fada's case, while it angered her when the other responded negatively to her struggles to speak, she reported that she still felt stupid; "Sometimes they don't understand it's not our first language. If they went to my country, it's the same. I feel stupid, I don't know why. Sometimes when you say, 'Excuse me?', they say, 'Forget it'. I feel mad." Aversive experiences as described engendered a change in some of the women's self concepts. Loss and sadness were evident as women reflected that they no longer saw themselves as confident, effective, contributing, and outgoing. Fara commented that the withdrawn, quiet person she tended to be here stood in sharp contrast to her extroverted personality when she lived in her native country. "Back home, I am proud that I can talk, laughing, I talked with people."
Based partly on negative reactions, some women experienced themselves as being of low esteem in the eyes of others because of their difficulties with English. Tisa believed that her friendship might not be valued and fearing rejection, she did not allow others to get close to her. "If they want to talk, I talk a little bit. I'm afraid to get close; they would say, why bother to get to know somebody like that who speaks only few words."

**Effective Participation in Society**

For all of the women who did not speak English fluently, this skill was identified as a resource that was critical to their effective participation in society. They attributed many of their problems in Canada to their lack of English fluency.

Fluency in English was seen as a necessary tool to assert oneself and one's rights. Without it there was the possibility of vulnerability and defencelessness in situations in which one was demeaned or treated unfairly. "If you want to defend yourself," said Tisa, "you have to have the language; if not, you can't express yourself." Sue explained how because of their lack of English fluency, she and her husband were thwarted in their ability to present an argument in their favour that would be listened to: "Our English is not good enough to talk, argue. We keep quiet, (they) don't pay attention to us." Unable to make themselves heard, they were disregarded, and she recalled
feeling as a result, angry, distressed and inconsequential.

Many of the women believed that access to job opportunities was also restricted by their lack of English fluency. Self-doubt and fears related to language difficulty further impacted on the ability of some of the women to make use of potential opportunities. Faced with these obstacles and the responsibility of supporting their family, some of the women experienced feelings of frustration and desperation which were heightened by the difficulty of learning English.

Fada related incidents in which effective communication in English was critical to her family's or her own welfare, and in which her difficulties with English subsequently left her frustrated and distressed. Thus in the absence of support or assistance, emergencies generated feelings of helplessness, being overwhelmed and alone. As Fada narrated, "Before, sometimes I cry, especially at the doctor's office. I need to explain, I can't and when you're alone and have to do everything yourself."

Some women recalled their frustration with the obstacle that their difficulties with English placed on interacting and establishing friendships with others. They were only able to enter the world of their English speaking Canadian friends in a limited way. For Sue, when subtle meanings of the words of her Canadian friends escaped her, she experienced uneasiness and perhaps alienation. For many of
these women, the sense of connectedness and belonging that they had in their native countries was missing. Seven participants attributed the loneliness and alienation to their problems with English and associated negative experiences. Ada believed that her existence would be meaningless if she were unable to connect and communicate with others. "If I don't speak English, I don't like my new life, because I'm not a thing; the life for me is to live with people."

Work/Social Status

Eight of the 19 participants were employed and nine were seeking employment. It was evident from their narratives that all participants but one perceived that securing and maintaining employment played an important contributing role in having a fulfilling life in Canada. Being employed was seen as both a means in that it provided access to other resources, and an end, in its ability to provide a sense of being productive and accomplished. Four categories were derived from participants' experiences within the domain of work and include (1) Identity/self-image; (2) Disappointments: expectations versus reality; (3) Anxieties; and (4) Difficulties in pursuing one's goal to be employed.

Identity/Self-image

For seven of the women, employment status played a significant role in such existential concerns as identity,
purpose, and worth. Being employed meant that they were 'somebody,' that they counted as a contributing member of society. Tisa's comment relative to her state of unemployment, illustrates how being employed was linked to her sense of worth: "I was somebody in my country. Here I am nobody, I don't have self-esteem, confidence." Being employed also had implications for these participants' identity. For Ella, a large part of her self-image related to her role as a professional. It gave her respect and a sense of efficacy as a contributing member of society. As a full-time homemaker, she felt incomplete and unfulfilled and she yearned for any job that would gain her proximity to her profession. "I never liked to be at home, to be a housewife. All my life I worked, learned, was active."

Newly assumed roles were often incongruent with participants' identities. After years of working in her profession in her country, Fara gained employment in a job that required a lower level of education than she had achieved. As her narrative indicates, she had difficulty incorporating this new position into her concept of self: "I started to work as a secretary, which I thought I would never do - picking up the phone, listen to the boss. My social class changed. I hated it." For some of the women, employment was essential with respect to giving purpose and meaning to their lives. "If I always stay at home," remarked Gina "I feel like life has no goal/purpose. I
think the life of people is to achieve something."

Disappointments: Expectations vs Reality

For 14 of these women, migration was accompanied by a significant downward shift in their quality of life. They recalled with a sense of loss, sadness and yearning, their former lives, which in many cases were characterized by considerable occupational achievements, with corresponding respect, influence, and financial security. Among those who had established careers in their homelands, all expected, especially those who were well educated, that they would eventually, with work, achieve similar positions. But for many so far, the reality of their new situations did not conform to their expectations. They found instead that their job options were limited to those that most of society would reject, those which involved menial, low paying work, poor hours and exploitative management. Faced with having to support their families, meeting basic needs took priority over aspirations to more fulfilling jobs. It also necessitated that they ignore the shame associated with these jobs. Rae remarked that in her home country, she would have put her well-being at risk before doing such menial jobs but here, she was willing to do anything: "If I was in ___ I wouldn't do it if I'm starving. It would be a shame." Thus shame is ignored and pride swallowed. A sharp contrast existed between their perception of their current life and their life in their homelands and it was often
painful for them to experience such a dramatic change. There was a sense of having to "start from scratch" as reflected in Ella's words: "My husband and I were professionals. We had been working for a long time and during that period, we possessed everything we needed for a very good life. Since we came here, we had to start from the beginning."

For Fara, being on welfare and unable to provide the type of life she wanted for her daughter generated so much distress that she considered leaving Canada to avoid the temptation to end her life: "I told ___ it's too much, maybe I would leave. I didn't want to [commit] suicide, I didn't want to raise ___ this way." In the face of the contradicting bleakness that her situation presented, Ena felt duped for having believed in a promising future for those who are educated.

Anxieties Related to Job Insecurity

Though their quality of life improved upon securing employment, many of the women continued to have job related anxieties and insecurities. One salient anxiety was associated with a fear of being unable to keep their job. Sue felt that her energy was being progressively depleted while work demands were increasing. Although retraining did not seem a viable option because the demands of supporting her family were constant, she feared for her welfare and that of her family if she were unable to match the demands
of work. "We don't know if we can hang on till 65," she explained. "Now everything is computer and we didn't learn computers. Now we don't have time to go back to school, especially with our English. We start to worry about our children and ourselves as we get older; we don't have that much energy. We are afraid we will get laid off because we don't have enough energy."

Fara felt judged by others as incompetent given her lack of English facility and Canadian experience. She relayed her experiences with some Canadians in her field of expertise: "They asked me questions about tests which I didn't know so they thought I was stupid if I thought I could work as a ___." Even when she obtained a job, her lack of English fluency remained a source of anxiety as she feared being judged incapable of doing her job. Her fears were compounded by clients who rejected her or complained because she was not Canadian born. Thus a sense of security continued to elude her.

**Difficulties in Pursuing One's Goal to be Employed**

Somehow, despite heavy odds against them, these women found the strength and motivation to keep pressing toward their goals and dreams. Often however, they were tempted to give up as they experienced feelings of desperation, urgency, and helplessness. Some women felt it too difficult to muster the energy to repeat training they already had and began to feel helpless that they would ever realize their
dreams of continuing their career because of their lack of English facility and Canadian experience. Rather than pursue a seemingly unattainable dream, three women were tempted to give up and return to their homeland. As the years passed by while she waited for her degree to be evaluated, the discouragement that Rae felt led her to think that it would be easier to return to her war ridden country instead of wasting time. "At the beginning," she narrated, "it was very hard, evaluating my degrees...I spent a lot of wasted time...Now I feel good but not so before. So many times, I felt like going back."

Sara tried to do all that she could to make her skills marketable and yet had no success even with menial jobs. She began to feel as if it were beyond her control and felt disabled as she waited with weary helplessness. Many strikes seemed to be against her - her status as a racial minority, immigrant, and with no one to recommend her. She felt demoralized on welfare yet feared that her discouragement might grow to the point where motivation to keep trying might dissolve. She explained: "When you stay at home, you don't have the morality...We didn't think for three years we have to ask the government for money. Now we eat, sleep, that's it. Nothing...[If one doesn't] get the chance for three, four, five years, you get lazy. You don't have the possibility." Like her, other women felt frustrated by the perception of obstacles blocking their
path.

Other hurdles faced were understanding the procedures involved in getting a job. To Mila there seemed to be no one available to explain or clarify what steps need to be taken and she felt as if her cry for help went unheeded. As she narrated: "It is very difficult for me because I don't have the information about this. I try to ask many people about a job. But the answers are very different...We don't have the information to whom we must apply or who to ask. We don't understand the law of Canada...We ask relatives, 'Help us, help us', but they work during the day. We need information, information, and information. And I ask for help for this." The absence of the support these women had in their homeland, in the form of information, direction, a listening ear, encouragement, and recommendations, made the road to reestablishing themselves seem all the more long and arduous.

**Being With Canadians**

This domain refers to participants' general experiences of interacting directly with or being among Canadians, whether in the public among strangers, or with acquaintances. Two categories were distilled in this area and are differentiated by a negative versus positive dichotomy. They are respectively titled (1) Unwelcome and (2) Positive feelings, and describe how participants experienced Canadians and their perceptions of some
Canadians' views of immigrant peoples.

Unwelcome

Thirteen of the 19 women experienced rejection directly or indirectly, as, for example, when they overheard people expressing negative attitudes toward immigrants. Tisa, for example, overheard the following statement: "Fucking immigrants, they're here to take money, jobs." They concluded from such comments that many Canadians were hostile toward immigrants and suspicious of them as a threat to their resources and jobs. As a result they feel alienated and unwelcome. Tisa felt rejection and alienation so intensely that she was tempted to return to her war-torn country. "I thought why am I here. Better to be in my country. Nobody will say such things to me." Ella felt embarrassed when she heard expressions of hostility and resentment. She explained: "I feel that some people don't like to have immigrants around. I have heard a conversation between a bus driver and passengers. They were talking about immigrants, how they take their jobs, their tax money. I was very embarrassed while I was listening to their conversation." One senses that her embarrassment was related to the shame of experiencing herself as having done some wrong, given that a group to whom she belonged was a target of contempt. Some of the women reacted with anger. Gael reported being tempted to retaliate following an offensive remark but checked her impulse by attributing the
person's behaviour to personal problems. As she narrated: "In the moment I feel like punching them but I have sufficient control but if I didn't have it, oh wow! I think the problem is in childhood, abused." Rae on the other hand openly confronted the offending person and had such a strong emotional response that she shook all day. She explained: "I say it in their face, 'You're prejudiced.' One person I said it to, I didn't talk to him after. He said, 'What is our government doing bringing in ships of foreigners, giving them money, we're paying for it.' I said, 'I'm working, paying more taxes than you are.' I was shaking all day, didn't talk to him." As Nina saw discriminatory behaviour among government employees toward refugees, she felt helpless and unable to do anything to change it. Tisa too felt helpless that such attitudes would ever change and seemed resigned to endure it as long as she stays here.

Sensing that they were unvalued and not seen as legitimate participants of society, some women kept their distance and were distrustful of Canadians. Some of the women attributed prejudice to lack of education or personal problems. Although Rae espoused this belief, support for a contradictory position is evident when she spoke of sensing prejudice even among educated, "classy" people. In light of these experiences, when asked what they felt Canadians could do to make their stay here a good one, some of the women replied that they wanted them to empathize with and
understand their difficulties. Others wanted to be treated equally instead of being prejudged based on their immigrant status and lack of English facility.

Positive Feelings

Some of the women felt very positively toward Canadians. Some of them judged Canadians to be more generous, kind, and gentle than people in their own culture and desired to emulate these characteristics. Hara felt that she could be more open with Canadians than she could with people from her own culture, among whom certain opinions were not acceptable. "I feel I can be myself with them," she commented, "It doesn't happen with people from my own country, you have to act. You can be yourself with Canadian people." Fay felt that Canadian society was accepting of people from different cultures.

Friendships With Canadians

Variations were evident in the desire for friendships with Canadians and the depth of friendship desired. Among some women, there was the perception that certain barriers (walls) impeded the development of friendships between themselves and Canadians. Among those women who wished that the walls were not there, there were some who were more hopeful of the possibility that the walls could come down, and others who were pessimistic that a change could occur. Others, while cognizant of the walls, were either indifferent to them or were undesirous of contact. There
was a smaller group of women, five participants, among whom bridges across the cultural and ethnic gap had facilitated the development of friendships with Canadians. These women described these relationships in positive terms and believed, in some cases, that these relationships had bolstered their ability to cope. Three perceived obstacles (walls) to developing friendships were extracted and include (1) Walls of fear of rejection/of perceived rejection; (2) Walls of value conflict; and (3) Walls of dissimilar lifestyles. A contrasting last sub-theme, entitled "Bridges" describes factors through which friendships with Canadians were procured.

Walls of Fear of Rejection/of Perceived Rejection

Tisa saw that it was possible that there were open and accepting Canadians but withdrew because she was afraid of risking rejection. She feared that her friendship would not be appreciated because she could say little in English. Support for this belief came from the rejection that she had already experienced in her interactions with the public. For Eng fears of rejection were less extensive but she retained superficial friendships with Canadians, afraid to confide in them should they not understand or deride her problems. "I don't really talk much," she explained, "If I had a problem, I wouldn't talk to them, different culture, maybe they would laugh at me." Never having had an overture of friendship made toward her, Rose concluded that her
friendship was undesired.

Walls of Dissimilar Values and Cultural Lifestyles

Five of these women clearly believed that conflicts between their values and that of Canadians kept them from developing closer relationships with them. Gina explained that while their Canadian friends were helpful in teaching them about the culture, their friendships remained somewhat superficial: "We have some Canadian friends together with them we learn many things about Canada, USA, but I find I can't say very much and sometimes we don't have the same values. It's another problem in communicating with each other, not just language."

Some of the values perceived to be held by Canadians generated discomfort, distaste, or disfavour which led some participants to maintain some distance. For Nina, the conflicts are so pervasive and critical that she could see no benefit in initiating friendships with Canadians and she thus socialized exclusively within her own culture. "Canadian friends, I don't have it. They think different in the way they live." In response to being questioned as to whether she could think of anything she could obtain from a friendship with Canadians, she replied, "I don't think so. My people, the money they make today, they save for tomorrow. With Canadian people, they borrow for tomorrow. If we live like them, it's never enough the money you make."

Overwhelmed with dealing with her problems alone, Fara
longed for a Canadian friend who would "open their wings and support [her] just to feel not alone." She remembered and longed for the feeling of being cared for and supported in her homeland. She was however, reluctant to seek or ask for support because she perceived that people, being busy and focused on meeting their life demands, had little time to extend to others. She therefore concluded, "I have to learn not to have the expectations which I did from my culture. I expected that people would help me. Now I learned that I have to do it on my own."

Bridges

Five of the 19 women had been able to develop close and in some cases, very cherished friendships with Canadians. They spoke of the factors that enabled them to reach each other, which formed a bridge that facilitated the development of their friendships. Some women believed that they were able to forge friendships with Canadians because they approached them with a positive attitude. Gael believed that her relationship with Canadians would be mutually beneficial in that each party could learn from the other. Referring to Canadians, she commented, "Their way to be is different [but] I am a person who is adaptive so it's not a problem. I feel comfortable and we learn from each other." Some women spoke of striving toward a focus on commonalities instead of differences or divisions relative to cultural and ethnic origin. Rae's approach also focused
on the positive; she explained that instead of letting value conflicts impede relationships with Canadians, she did not attend to those with which she disagreed or which appeared negative, and adopted those which she admired. As she narrated: "I can adjust to anybody. Friends tell me that I am a fast learner. I adapt, I take the good and leave the bad. Not that I like everything Canadian."

Some of the women also identified that they had been able to develop friendships among Canadians because of the overtures these friends had made toward them. Chief among these were acceptance, encouragement and support, which they perceived as having contributed significantly to their ability to cope with the difficulties they faced. For Sara, the emotional and practical support she received from her Canadian friends generated a sense of security and feelings of being valued and cared for even in the midst of hardships and emotional pain: "They shared everything, when I cry, they feel to cry...If you have friends, even if you didn't have help from the government, everything you share, you feel good." Thus she had found the kind of friends for whom Fara yearned who would "open their wings and support you just to feel not alone."

**Leaving Their Homeland**

All the women came here seeking something which their country could not provide, whether it was safety, freedom, or opportunity and they came hopeful, sometimes excited,
expecting a better, safer life. However, though personal safety was achieved, many found that peace of mind and an ability to embrace Canada as their new home remained elusive as long as they were separated from their homeland and families. Two categories were generated from participants' narratives and are entitled (1) Safe but unsettled and (2) Separated but attached.

**Safe but Unsettled**

For refugee women, coming from countries where there was civil war, their urgency to achieve safety surpassed their concerns about separation from their families and homelands. "Our life was threatened, we didn't think," explained Tisa. For Sue likewise, getting to safety was the foremost priority, as she stated, "I just wanted to go." Once this primary need for safety was met, then their thoughts focused on the idea of being separated from their homeland and they were often inundated by feelings of homesickness. Distress was generated by the uncertainty of when or whether they would see their families again. Some felt helpless in changing the forces which prevented them from reuniting with their families.

Though physical peace is attained, emotional and mental peace and the feeling of being settled were tenuous as long as other family members remained unsafe. As Tisa expressed, "Now we are in peace, we still miss something, our roots are back there. We still worry about our family home, so we
don't have a stable life." Guilt was experienced when they thought of their safety and their family's danger. Tisa felt selfish for leaving her family behind and Ella felt guilty whenever she had a positive experience here and remembered the deprivation and hardship her family continued to face. "I feel guilty," disclosed Ella, "every time I have a good time because of happiness and they don't have anything to eat."

**Separated but Attached**

For these women, immigrant and refugee alike, leaving meant a loosening of the connection with their homeland. It was frightening and stressful to leave behind that which was familiar and dependable - cultural styles, physical environment, sources of support and caring - and venture into the unfamiliar and unknown. As they tried to make new lives here and faced difficulty, they recalled the past, which when juxtaposed against their current life and the difficulties and worries it presented, was seen as very positive and pleasant as Sue's words indicate: "peaceful and easy to make a living." They thus remained attached to the past, pre-war in the case of the women from war torn countries. Even when life went well here, an element of being foreign remained, as the saying Rae recalled denotes regarding those who leave their homeland, "they're going to stay strangers wherever they go." Thus for many of these women, a complete emotional participation in and adoption of
this society was precluded by their attachment to their native lands, especially when they were connected by their intense concerns over its situation and the plight of their families.

**Health**

Deteriorated health was noted by eight participants, most of whom clearly linked this phenomenon to the stresses they faced as refugees and immigrants. The following single category was distilled relevant to participants' experience of their health within the course of their lives as immigrants.

**The Impact of Emotional Distress on Physical Well-being**

For the eight women, health problems corresponded with their struggles as immigrants and they volunteered that their health had deteriorated since their residency. Some perceived that they had thrived in their native country and associated this with the sense of stability and security they had there, which disappeared with civil war and/or with the process of rebuilding their lives in a new/unfamiliar country.

As anxiety prevailed with the uncertainty of when they would regain financial and emotional security, they experienced themselves as deteriorating physically instead of thriving. To Sue, the future posed a threat to their already deteriorating health, since, as they aged, their ability to sustain employment diminished: "We don't know if
we can hang on till 65." Life was experienced as an unrelenting struggle to get out of their circumstances and search for solutions to change their circumstances or to free themselves from its burdens. This seemed to be experienced as a physical burden to which their bodies succumbed. As Ena stated: "All the time we're thinking, so our eyes are heavy, we are not as free." Their difficulties wore on them physically and their experience of aging and of losing their vitality was poignant, "It wasn't like this," Fada maintained, "I feel like 80 years old." Sara, who had experienced compromised health in the earlier part of her residency as an immigrant, was able to free herself from her mental and emotional struggles into peace and better health by waiting patiently for her opportunity. "Now I know I have to wait my day," she concluded, "I understand everything."

**Coping With Distress**

Facing multiple difficulties as immigrants and refugees, participants experienced emotional distress in varying degrees at some point in their new lives in Canada. Two categories were gleaned relative to their beliefs about and approaches to dealing with emotional distress and are entitled (1) "Sharing my pain is an exercise in futility" and (2) Distance and connections.

"*Sharing My Pain is an Exercise in Futility.*"

Many women believed that sharing their distress was an
exercise in futility, either because of the responses they obtained when they did or because of a personal philosophy about how one deals with emotional pain.

Some of the women's attempts to talk about painful experiences with friends or relatives were met with consequences that discouraged further sharing. In Sara's experience, the reaction of the other party was so negative and pessimistic that she ended up feeling worse and determined that it was better to keep her pain to herself. As she explained, "...the people I talk to, the more I talk, worse; they make me worry, so I keep it to myself. Some people who live here long don't encourage, they just try to make you feel bad." Mila continued to feel a need to share her pain but her attempts to do so were met by little understanding or support, as the other remained focused on self. The only recourse she saw was to bear her burdens alone, despite overwhelming feelings that led to frequent crying spells. Ella also felt a need to tell her story but when others minimized and discounted her distress, she felt "empty, angry, and sad."

In other cases, the view that it was futile to talk about one's pain pertained to a personal philosophy about coping. Fada's belief that talking would not lead to a change in her situation or pain alleviation led her to conclude that it was better to keep her experiences to herself and present a happy facade. As she explained, "I
laugh, smiling all the time, inside I'm upset and scared."
When asked what it might be like for her to tell someone,
she replied, "If you did, the pain stays, feeling bad stays
inside." Gina held a similar perspective, believing that
little in her situation would be changed. She tended to
believe that talking about pain conveyed self-pity. She
espoused a belief that a more effective approach would be to
focus on drawing on one's own resources to effect change, a
conclusion drawn by Mila based on her discouraging
experiences.

**Distance and Connections**

Participants seemed on the one hand to desire increased
closeness and contact or on the other, tended to withdraw or
desire escape. Tisa, like others, believed that because
people were not trustworthy and contact with them makes one
vulnerable to hurt, it is better to withdraw and isolate
oneself from them. "If they want to talk, I talk a little
bit," she explained, "I'm afraid to get close. They would
say, 'Why bother to get to know somebody like that who
speaks only a few words." Ena's need was not so much
distance from human contact as it was distance from life as
she knew it here. She seemed to desire to escape a life
that seemed unbearable, where her ability to change things
appeared negligible. As she expressed, "I closed my eyes,
closed my memories. We can only just wait, maybe it will be
better economically. What can we do...I am so tired, I
would like to live with our family quietly."

A related but contrasting need was evident among women desiring increased connection in their distress. It was an need to connect with someone who would listen, empathize, give support, and uplift. In a time when she was in particular need of support, Ella's social surroundings did not provide it: "If I tried even to talk about my feelings, not to ask for help, people I am surrounded by are not willing to listen." There was also a need to connect with those who met these needs in the past and the physical environments which represented them. Sue felt alone in a community of people who seemed too busy to give her the kind of support she had experienced back home: "People in Canada are too busy. In my country we live close, here, we live far. Deep inside, I'm lonely." Fara's words echo these sentiments: "I just wish I had a friend who is wonderful but everyone here is busy...I felt people cared back home. If you needed help, they would help, they had more time."

**Spousal Relationships**

Of 19 participants, 14 had spouses, three were separated, and two were single. Among the three women who were separated, this process had occurred prior to their arrival in Canada for two of the women, whereas for the remaining woman, separation had occurred after migration. In this section, spousal relationships are discussed in the context of the process of migration, with the aim of gaining
some insight into whether a change is experienced and how these changes are conceived. For one of the single women who was living with her family of origin, reference is made to personal changes and their impact on her family. Two categories were distilled relative to the domain of spousal relationships and include (1) Migration provides a potential for growth or deterioration and (2) Role as a woman: the potential for shifting perspectives.

Migration Provides a Potential for Growth or Deterioration

While five women did not perceive that migration and its various stressors had an impact on their spousal relations, five noted and understood changes in their spousal relations within the context of the difficulties and demands of their lives as immigrants. Among this second group, three women spoke of increased closeness and improved relationships with their spouses. They related this growth in their relationship to the need to become fortified through mutual support and unity, to successfully weather the stressors that emerged in the process of migrating. Gina noted that her relationship with her husband became stronger when they were faced with having no one else to turn to for support but each other. She explained: "In we have many friends, I have many and he. We had different circles and were busy working and also very young and did not understand each other very well. When we came here, we both face difficulties and I think that's why we became very
close." Ella felt that their experience of civil war led her and her husband to make shifts in their priorities. Putting aside petty issues in their relationship, they drew closer together and approached their relationship with a more mature attitude. "I think we became closer," she concluded. "Maybe before the war, we started to have too good a life and we made problems of little things. Now we know what is important and we grew up and are closer now."

Two women perceived that the stressors and demands of their lives as immigrants threatened the integrity of their spousal relationships. The anxieties of having to find a job to meet their family's needs, to make decisions with little knowledge, advice, or direction, placed increased stress on the relationship and generated increased conflict. As Mila explained, "It's a very difficult time. We must decide many problems and we become very aggressive because we don't know how to decide them." In contrast to other women who drew closer to their partners, these women felt more alone, and burdened by increased responsibility. Mila found herself feeling more distressed and alone as she felt impelled to be strong for her husband and carry some burdens alone. Anger was foremost for Tisa as she perceived reluctance in her husband to share equally in the responsibility of managing their lives. Her experience is discussed in the following section.

My Role as a Woman: The Potential for Shifting Perspectives
The question of gender roles became more salient for some women because of the prominence of this issue in this culture. For three women, the traditional division of roles was acceptable and/or preferred. Ame, for example, believed that this traditional division preserved harmony in the relationship because the activity in which each partner engages is valued and needed by the other. "When women and men are working," she maintained, "there is too much divorce. They don't care. Everyone has their own money so the marriage doesn't stay long. 'You don't need me'."

Among four women a philosophical and behavioral shift was evident. Tisa had a different experience of her marriage in this new social context, and as she began to question the norms of her culture that guide gender roles, she perceived inequalities and began to engage in behavior that deviated from cultural norms. She was aware that her assertion of independence conflicted with her husband's cultural beliefs that she should defer to him. However, she became indignant at the perceived inequities and his refusal to make corresponding shifts in his thinking and behaviour, although she was aware that to do so would be a source of shame for him in their culture. As she narrated, "In ___ the man controls, so if you want to go out, you have to ask the husband. If he says yes, then yes. When I came here, I saw women, they don't have these things. So I started to do a little, not asking. He's upset, says, 'You become a
Canadian'. I told him, 'Why she can do this and I can't do that?'"

Before migrating, Hara, a single woman, held beliefs about women's roles that were congruent with a feminist school of thought but placed in a social context where such views are more commonly held and expressed, she felt freer to act on them. "Now 50% of my personality changed because I have to live in Canada," she commented. "I will do it if I can do it, if not too much pressure...In ___ I had thoughts people didn't like; I believe in freedom for women. In our country, so much pressure on women, whether wife, sister, daughter." In contrast to Tisa's situation, little conflict was generated as family members were also making corresponding shifts in their beliefs. In Asti's case, it was her husband who initiated changes in the division of gender roles by assuming responsibilities that she had formerly performed. Having to work outside the home, she was appreciative of this change, since it mitigated against the stress of dual roles.

Upon her move to Canada, Fara experienced a sharp contrast to her past experience of herself as a working professional when her husband forced her to adopt a traditional role. Initially pleased to serve her family in this way, she came to hate her position as it became progressively imposed. She explained: "He didn't let me work...I just had to cook, wash. In some part, I enjoyed
it, doing it for my husband and child. But when it became a duty, I hated it." Her migration marked the beginning of an abusive relationship and the safety and freedom anticipated in her new life was a contrast to the reality of abuse, control, and domination.

**Children**

Fifteen of the 19 women had children who were still living with them. One woman had children who were adult and lived in another country. All of the 15 women were concerned either about their relationship with their children, or their children's moral and emotional development. Their concerns were related to raising their children in this new society. From their expressions of concern emerged two categories which include (1) Disconnection from native culture and family and (2) Concern about Canadian enculturation.

**Disconnection from Native Culture and Family**

Some of the women voiced concern related to the fact that their children were apart from their extended families and their culture. They believed that their children's involvement with their families and culture would contribute positively to their development in a variety of ways.

Ella believed that her children's separation from their extended family and estrangement from their current surrounding community deprived them of the fulfilment of a need to know and feel that there was a community of people.
who valued and loved them. She was concerned that this deprivation would somehow adversely affect their development, as she observed her daughter's loneliness in their new community: "Around her always were many people. Now sometimes, she's very sad. She wants to get friends here but can't. There she had her family, lots of love, lots of patience. We were with our friends, family. Now, we are more alone at home. It's very important for children to be with other people." For Fara, it was her child's lack of exposure to her native culture that concerned her. She was afraid that her child's disconnection from her cultural and religious heritage would hinder her development of a secure identity.

For some mothers, the disconnection related to the lack of support in raising their children. This issue was particularly poignant among single mothers who sometimes felt overwhelmed with the responsibility of raising their children in a country where they knew so few people. Fada worried that her son's behaviour indicated a potential for deviance, and her related distress was heightened by having to bear the burden of responsibility for her children's upbringing alone. As she expressed, "Every mother wants her children to be good. I'm looking for a good future for them to get good jobs, not for them to say bad words. I don't need it. Because I'm alone, it's not easy, it's a big responsibility." Another major worry for them was who would
take care of their children in the event that they were unable to.

**Concern About Canadian Enculturation**

Nine of 15 women with children believed that their parental role was threatened by cultural and legal elements of Canadian society and experienced themselves as competing with the latter for their children's values and moral development. They thus perceived a risk of losing their children either physically by having them taken away by legal authorities, or by their leaving voluntarily. They also experienced a fear of symbolic loss characterized by an inability to relate to them psychologically and culturally.

Some women perceived that their children were becoming increasingly involved in Canadian culture, adopting its values and rejecting those of their parents. For many, some Canadian values conflicted with their own and thus concern and fear were generated by what they perceived to be potentially negative influences over their children, which some felt powerless to counteract.

Fear was sometimes expressed that their children would leave home if they felt too restricted by their parents' rules. This fear impacted in some cases on the way some women related to their children. Tisa explained that she had become more tentative in disciplining her daughter for fear that imposed limitations would incite her to leave home. At the same time, she was concerned that by
neglecting to enforce household rules, she ran the risk of her daughter engaging in behaviour that conflicted with her values. She narrated: "A friend of my daughter told police her parents were abusing her because she didn't like the family ways. When my daughter saw that, I am more careful with her because maybe she will leave one day. Back home, when you say 'do this' they do it. You say 'no', it means no. When you say 'no' here, she might want to leave, so I say 'yes' but I'm afraid of what she will do."

The perceived influence of Canadian culture over their children engendered distress among nine of the 15 women with children who felt overwhelmed by having this responsibility of having to compete with this influence added to their other difficulties as immigrants. For some, this issue was one reason why they would have preferred to have remained in their homeland, as reflected by Tisa's words: "I regret to come here because I don't need these problems. In my country, I wouldn't have to think about it."

Many of the women felt that the legal and social systems magnified their struggles against negative influence over their children. They were indignant and upset that governmental bodies made it easier for children to leave home earlier and that restrictions were placed on them with respect to physical discipline. Nina was convinced that her physical discipline of her children was necessary for moral development and saw it as emerging from her love and sense
of parental responsibility. "Over here they say we cannot hit children, if you hit, we will call the police. To me, if they do something wrong, I have to hit them, I have to kill them if they do something wrong, even if I have to go to jail...I love them so I teach them." The emotionally loaded content of her words illuminates the intensity of her convictions.

Achieving a Successful Life in Canada

This theme reflects participants' perceptions of what they and other immigrants could do to engender a life for themselves and their families that was satisfying. In some cases, the target for change was their relationship with their community, in others, life satisfaction pertained to more goal-oriented issues. Categories in this area included (1) Connecting with Canadian culture and (2) Persisting to effect change.

Connecting with Canadian Culture

For four women, this solution emerged from feelings of disconnection and rejection from the mainstream culture or simply from sensing that they were on the periphery. Fara seemed to have a yet unfulfilled and pervasive need for connection and believed that a positive immigrant experience was founded on getting this need met. She thus believed that immigrants should seek dialogue, contact, and a demonstration of understanding, empathy, and acceptance, advising immigrants to "come closer to Canadians" and "be
more familiar with Canadians." For Tisa, this need was more clearly based on feelings of rejection, of being unvalued and demeaned in her interactions with Canadians. Thus her solution for a positive experience was for immigrants to communicate and demonstrate their unique value and worthy contributions. "Let Canadians be aware that we are not garbage," she asserted. "They can benefit from us. Maybe we have things they don't know." She felt that this approach would assist in dispelling the perceived belief of Canadians that immigrants are of low value and that it would lead to better treatment and acceptance from Canadians.

For four women, connecting with Canadian culture meant that immigrants needed to make changes in their customary way of life, adopting positive aspects of the new culture. Rae discouraged the tendency of some immigrants to distance themselves from other cultures, believing this to be detrimental to one's success and positive experience here. She believed that increased contact would be mutually beneficial. "Forget about staying in the community," she advised, "and start communicating with other nationalities. It's for your own good...the worst thing is to stay with your own nationality. The more open, the more benefits, more benefits to Canada, society."

Persisting to Effect Change

Having success very clearly for most women meant getting educated or having one's educational and
professional qualifications recognized, mastering the language, and securing employment. Eight of the women saw the process of achieving these goals as characterized by a battle in which one must persist. Thus Gael advised that one must "be able to fight for a while" and encouraged a hopeful, positive outlook to carry one through. To Mila the ability to persist corresponded to the ability to draw upon one's inner resources, especially inner strength and patience, recognizing that the process is slow and arduous. She maintained: "I must be very strong and solve my problems myself. But it must be step by step. I must be very patient." For three women, the belief was strong that the onus for success rested ultimately on the individual, the way to success involving hard work. They felt that the consequences of their efforts were largely within their control. This sense of personal effectiveness and control contrasted sharply with Fada's sense of helplessness and lack of control to effect a change in her situation. As she faced her difficulties and stressors, no solutions or direction seemed apparent and she felt at a loss to generate a response.

Help from Canadians

Four women could not identify anything more that Canadians could do to help them achieve a more satisfactory life. They felt that at a systemic level, sufficient resources were allocated to helping immigrants and refugees.
Two women were even concerned that the provision of money could foster dependence and laziness. Other women acknowledged difficulties inherent in the process of moving to a physically, culturally, and linguistically foreign country. In their responses to what Canadians could do, they identified aspects relating less to the systemic provision of resources or funding, and more to the social atmosphere, people's responses to them.

"See Me With Different Eyes"

Eleven women felt that Canadians could help by changing their attitudes toward them as illustrated by the way they responded to and interacted with immigrants. For many, an empathic attitude was central to a positive experience. "Just understand us." Tisa's plea reflects the appeal made by many others and refers to a desire for an understanding of the difficulties involved in making significant life changes, and in learning how to navigate a new, unfamiliar culture. The hostility, estrangement, and rejection that many experienced generated appeals for warmth, friendliness, and patience with their difficulties in mastering new cultural practices. Fara felt that if Canadians got closer to them they would perhaps appreciate their value. "If they go deeper," she contends, "maybe they can find something interesting." Likewise, Rae felt that if Canadians encouraged their potential contributions, the society would be enhanced. This appeal for connection was pervasive and
reflected a need to feel that they belonged and were accepted as a valuable part of Canadian society.

"Teach Me"

Mila's statement captures the essence of the experience of learning a new culture; "We are deaf and blind, we are as a new born baby." She thus appeals for "information, information, information." Like her, five other women acknowledge that they were willing to work hard to deal with the difficulties they faced but felt that the experience of difficulty was multiplied by lack of knowledge of even mundane affairs. They therefore requested to be taught and informed in ways that were patient and kind.

"Give Me a Fair Chance"

"Most thing we need" according to Sue is "to be treated fairly." Eight of these women perceived that they were prejudged and rejected before being given a fair opportunity to prove their skills or demonstrate positive personal characteristics. They saw roadblocks erected on the path toward their goals, which had less to do with the enormity of the effort needed than it did with people's negative attitudes toward them. In the face of their willingness to work hard at achieving their goals, these roadblocks made them feel frustrated and discouraged.

Themes Connecting Domains and Categories

There were two themes that seemed consistent among most of the various aspects of these women's lives as immigrants.
I have labelled the first theme "The phenomenology of marginalization" and it speaks to the sense of peripheral existence felt by many of the women relative to the larger Canadian community. The second theme, to which I refer as "The experience of deterioration" pertains to the sense that many women had, that life difficulties had increased and that their current circumstances in many ways constituted a decline in quality. Both themes are further divided into sub-themes. All participants are represented in at least one of the sub-themes and some are represented in more than one sub-theme.

Statistics are presented for refugees (n = 11) versus family class immigrants (n = 8) to provide some idea of how their experiences compare. The rationale for this distinction is that studies (see Chapter One) suggest that the lives of refugees are qualitatively and quantitatively (e.g., more stressors, more losses) different from that of other immigrants.

The Phenomenology of Marginalization

Three sub-themes were distilled relative to the phenomenology of marginalization and consist of (1) the experience of not belonging and of being perceived as an illegitimate member of society; (2) the sense that one's path to effective participation in society was blocked; and (3) the experience of disconnection.

Not Belonging
Through their interactions with the community, 13 of the women (eight refugees [73%] and five immigrants [62%]) became aware that they were included in a group that was devalued, demeaned, and unaccepted. They learned that some people resented having to share their resources with them and thus did not welcome their presence. In essence they perceived that they were seen as "foreigners," who then by not belonging were not entitled to the same kinds of opportunities as were Canadians. We can recall the comment overheard by Tisa: "Fucking immigrants, they're here to take money, jobs," or the indignation on the part of Rae's acquaintance that the government was spending money on refugees: "What is our government doing bringing in ships of foreigners, giving them money, we're paying taxes." They experienced people as annoyed and impatient with and contemptuous of their difficulties with the English language and felt judged as inadequate because of these difficulties. Thus the feelings of belonging, of having been adopted by the community, of identifying oneself as a member of the new community were elusive. Such estrangement is illustrated by Fara's words: "We live in the same country, it shouldn't be like that. I call them 'they'. They think we should adjust to their language, since we came to their country."

Effective Participation Blocked

Thirteen of the women acknowledged that they were not yet able to communicate fluently in the language of the
community and lacking this resource, perceived themselves as unable to participate effectively in the community and partake of its other resources. They feared that unless they gained this skill, they would continue to participate peripherally. For Ada, if she were to have a fulfilling life, it was imperative to acquire English language skills. "If I don't speak English," she stated, "I don't like my new life, because I am not a thing, the life for me is to live with people, to understand what they're talking with me, what they need and I need." However, while they continued to work and make gains toward its acquisition, eight women [five refugees (45%) and three immigrants (37%)] were frustrated and distressed by their perceptions that they were judged unfavourably on irrelevant characteristics instead of on merit. Sara believed that distinctions based on group membership corresponded to differential treatment, in which some groups were disadvantaged in another's favour: "They don't have to say this is Canadian, this is landed immigrant, Black, Chinese. They have to go inside, interview them, give them a chance for a job...not judge them before giving them a chance." Participants felt that this unfair, prejudicial judgment of their abilities, potential, and personal qualities further impeded their occupational and social participation and access to services. Tisa spoke of barriers faced even within services designed to help: "You should go to social services and see
how they treat them - very nasty...Sometimes I see Canadians kick the door with their feet and swear, they're afraid of them. But we, they talk to us like we're nobody." In their limited participation, some participants were characteristically anxious, timid, and tentative because of the difficulties experienced in communicating in the language of the community, and the expectation of rejection and hostility related to these difficulties and their status as immigrants/refugees and in some cases, visible minorities. Referring to her occupational goals, Tisa remarked: "I'm afraid to look for a job, to have an interview because the language is the main barrier." Mila's statement pertains to the anxiety she experienced as a consumer of services: "If I feel people don't have patience, I don't speak, I tremble."

Disconnected

The feeling of being disconnected in some form from the community in which they were physically situated was pervasive among this group of women (seven refugees [64%] and six immigrants [75%]). Very few of them had Canadian friends, and among the five women who did, with one exception, these friends were few. While they expressed a continued attachment to their families and homelands, from the women's perspective, the disconnection appeared to be largely generated by the quality of some of the interactions they had with their current environment. For four of them,
interactions within their community had discouraged the forging of connections when for example contempt, disinterest, or annoyance was expressed by the other. Tisa recounted the behaviour of classmates in response to her attempts at communication: "They didn't come and sit with us or talk to us. When we talked with them, they turned their face and giggled." Based on these experiences, she developed the tendency to keep her distance. "I'm afraid to get close," she commented. "They would say, 'Why get to know somebody like that who speaks only few words.'" The fear that these experiences would reoccur engendered wariness, mistrust and even withdrawal, which further diminished the likelihood of establishing connections. A sense of disconnection was also fomented by difficulties relating to members of the community. In many cases, this difficulty was attributed to language, in others, it was associated with a perceived discrepancy in cultural values, which from the extreme viewpoint were irreconcilable but which for the majority indicated that connections would be more superficial. As Gina explained, "We have some Canadian friends. Together with them we learn many things about Canada, USA but I find I can't say very much and sometimes we don't have the same values." In other cases, the perception that it was difficult to relate to the community around them pertained to instances when it was difficult to capture the significance of traditional cultural expressions...
or understandings of the new community. Thus there was a sense of discomfort that one had not been able to fully enter the world of the other and therefore remained at least partially alienated. As Sue remarked, "[S]ometimes because of English, I can't make them understand. Sometimes when we sit and talk they laugh and I don't feel it's funny. It feels funny, and I feel 'Am I wrong?' or 'What's wrong?'

The Experience of Deterioration

Difficulty and deterioration were experienced and understood within a temporal context where distinctions relative to one's quality of life were made between one's present, past and future life. In the narrative of twelve participants, there were clear indications that they perceived their present lives as constituting a deterioration relative to financial and job security, and feelings of being settled and supported that they had in the past. (While the remaining participants may have had similar experiences, this was not clearly conveyed in their narratives.) Sara's recollection of her life in her homeland contrasted with the hardship of her present life. She explained, "I feel bad, I think about back home, I think if I'm home I have a good job, good family. I came here, everything's different. If I'm home, high level, not down." In contrast to the past, participants experienced their current lives as a relentless struggle to improve their situation, with little financial security, and with few
possessions with which to start over. (It should be noted that for women whose countries were experiencing civil war, the past refers to the pre-war era). With respect to the future, most of the women were anxiously hoping for improvements. While most were uncertain of what it held, Sue and Tisa were clearly less hopeful, fearing further deterioration or sceptical that any significant change in their status would come about. Tisa felt that her situation would not improve. When asked what she anticipated in the future, she replied, "No changes. Maybe I will stay like that, low forever." Sue feared further deterioration and was anxious for the welfare of herself and her family. As she conveyed, "We start to worry about the children and about ourselves as we get older, we don't have that much energy. We're afraid we will get laid off because we don't have enough energy." Sub-themes are organized based on the parts of their lives in which deterioration was experienced and include their (1) socio-economic status; (2) sense of well-being; (3) self-esteem; and (4) relationships.

Socio-economic Status

Twelve of the women (11 refugees [82%] and three immigrants [37%]) had held, in their homelands, professions which afforded them a comfortable lifestyle. Therefore, when migration was accompanied by a dramatic downward shift in their socio-economic status, which was difficult to surmount, there came a sense of loss, not only of financial
assets but also of identity and sense of purpose. Thus starting over not only meant rebuilding one's financial assets but also trying to reclaim a meaningful identity of oneself as productive and accomplished. Ella's words reflect this process: "All my life, I worked, learned, was active. It's difficult just to be a housewife. I used to make something, now everyday, it's the same." The stigma attached to being unemployed, on social assistance, or working a low-status job generated shame and a sense of inferiority. Constraints imposed by their financial status were additionally distressing to those women who perceived that their children's quality of life had diminished as a consequence.

Well-being

There was a perception among eight of the women (seven refugees [64%] and two immigrants [25%]) that the difficulty of their lives as immigrants had taken a toll on their well-being, that they had suffered a decline in physical and/or emotional health. In contrast, many had seen themselves as thriving in their homelands, where having stability and financial and socio-emotional security, there were fewer anxieties and stressors. Several of the women experienced worsened health, which some related to a constant struggle to improve their lives, and to an anxious uncertainty about whether or not their efforts would be successful. Sara spoke of the physical effect of ruminating about what she
could do to improve her family's situation. As she explained, "Because I think too much about my family, I have gastro, acid stomach, and vomit. I think I have to help my family, have to go to school. I think I don't have to sit at home like a housewife. I have to go out and get money, get what the children want." The various stressors they experienced, including hostile or hurtful attitudes toward them, limited social and emotional support, and separation from their families, came to weigh on them physically and emotionally, as indicated by crying spells, withdrawal, anxiety, and feelings of sadness and loneliness. For Mila, attempts to secure support from relatives came to no avail and instead culminated in increasing her sadness and loneliness. "I'm feeling very lonely," she disclosed. "I tried to explain my problems to my relatives. They listened to me but I felt sad because I understand it was my problem only. They have their problems. I began to feel more loneliness than before."

**Self-esteem**

The current lives of 9 of these women (six refugees [54%] and three immigrants [37%]) brought about situations through which their self-esteem suffered several blows. They perceived that people treated them with contempt, ignored them, and believed them inferior because of their difficulties communicating in the language of the community. As a consequence, they experienced decreased confidence when
speaking English and a sense of being foolish when they were aware of their mistakes. These feelings became pervasive through the necessity of using the community's language to get basic, everyday needs met. In relaying her experiences of communicating in English, Fada noted a change in confidence and presentation in her interactions with her surrounding community. Of her current interactional style, she remarked, "I prefer to not talk or to have a short conversation. In some parts living in Canada gives you confidence, in others, it takes away your self-esteem. Back home I am proud that I can talk, laughing, I talked with people."

Their self-esteem was also threatened by a change in occupational status. Faced with the challenges of securing employment already described, they had moved from being securely and well employed to being unemployed, on social assistance, or employed in menial work. As many recalled their thriving careers of which they spoke with pride, it was painful to reconcile their present status with the identity or sense of who they were, derived from past successes. Not only was there a loss for Ella regarding social and financial status but also a loss of a meaningful role she had filled and a sense of independence and accomplishment derived from it. "My life is completely different," she explained, "I started from nothing. I had to learn to talk and write again. From a very well situated
person, I became in the situation to depend on my poor husband's earnings."

Relationships

Nine of the women perceived that their current life situations had precipitated or threatened to precipitate a decline in important relationships in their lives. For example, Mila and Tisa believed that the stress generated by the difficulties in their lives as immigrants had an adverse impact on their spousal relationships. Mila perceived that the stress brought on by having to deal with many problems with uncertainty regarding optimal solutions generated arguments between herself and her spouse. As she commented, "We must decide many problems and we'll become very aggressive because we don't know how to decide them." Some women also experienced a negative change in their relationships with their children, which they attributed to an environmental influence. In some cases, they believed the environment threatened their children's development, identity, and/or value system. Ame for example, believed that her children's behaviour would have been more commendable had they been raised in her homeland. As she expressed, "How much I try my best, still my kids are not respectable as I want. They were raised a different way. I like Canada but I wish I raised my kids in my country." Tisa worried that through peer influence her children would adopt values of which she did not approve. She explained,
"I brought my customs and expect my children to carry on. But there is peer pressure...Here if you want to enjoy life, it's party, friends, sex. There, girls just enjoy being girls...These things are normal for Canadian girls but not for us."

The presentation of the two themes served to draw attention to two phenomenologies that seem to underlie most of the experiences described in the domain categories. The first theme, "The phenomenology of marginalization" captured participants' sense of not belonging to or not being valued by the larger society, being blocked from reaching important goals, and being disconnected from the Canadian community. The second theme, "The experience of deterioration" spoke of the sense that one's life had worsened with respect to social and economic status, self-worth, and in one's important relationships.

Results of Feedback

Written feedback, consisting of a summary of the results and discussion was mailed to 12 participants, 11 of whom were subsequently contacted by phone or in person to discuss their assessment of and attitudes toward the feedback. The twelfth woman was recuperating from surgery and recovering emotionally from a traumatic experience. Among the remaining seven participants the addresses of three had not been obtained during data collection, while the other four appeared to have moved. Participants'
schedules could not accommodate a group feedback discussion session so this took place individually either in person or by phone. The following is a summary of the 11 women's comments about and attitudes toward the feedback.

All contacted participants expressed the belief that I had captured the essence of their experience and that I had conveyed their most important concerns. This is illustrated by such comments as, "I saw myself in there;" "It was true, all that you said;" and "You wrote all that I was concerned about."

Participants believed that their stories were important to share with Canadians so that they could understand and empathize with their difficulties. They hoped that this knowledge would lead to positive structural and relational changes. The view was also expressed that this knowledge would benefit recent immigrant women to the extent that it might better prepare them for their lives here. Sara for example, commented that she might have been better prepared mentally and emotionally if she had received some idea of what the experiences of immigrant women were. She believed that this information should be available through support services for immigrant women.

One additional perspective, which was not evident at the time of data collection was shared by one participant who reflected that over the course of the two-year period since data collection she came to the understanding that
although English has a significant impact on one's job opportunities, having Canadian contacts and references seemed even more critical.

With respect to these participants' views of the research process, they indicated that they had valued talking with me and had felt understood. With respect to their sense of effectiveness, some felt that their stories had been helpful to the purpose of the study whereas others were unsure whether or not their stories had been useful. In our feedback discussions none of the participants indicated that the research process had been an impetus for significant personal changes either in behaviour or perspective. I attribute this to the shortcomings of the research process used here and will elaborate on this in the discussion. However, our discussion did seem to facilitate self-reflection (i.e., looking at the role of one's actions and attitudes on one's experiences) as well as a critical evaluation of society (i.e., identification of hindering elements in their social environment), both of which are beginning steps toward empowerment. For example, several participants considered how their personal characteristics (mistrust and shyness) impacted on their establishment of social relations with Canadians. Some participants also reflected on the way in which the discrimination, hostility, individualism, and self-involved lifestyle of Canadian society continued to obstruct their achievement of such
goals as securing employment and developing relationships.

The above section provided a synopsis of contacted participants' attitudes toward feedback of the results and discussion. This will be referred to again in the discussion section in the context of the value of the methodology of this study.
 Results of the phenomenological analysis reflected participants' experiences of their lives as immigrant women, indicating what they saw as they gazed at and lived certain aspects of their world. Remaining wedded to my participants' interpretations of their lives, I will propose understandings suggested by their experience but not directly explicated in their narratives. This is the business of explanation in which the interested observer (the one who studies or apprehends another's behaviour) engages to make some connection with or to grasp the other's experience. It is what we do in our routine interactions with others when we receive some communication from them and involves a dynamic of the other person's expressed meaning and our particular apprehension of that meaning derived from our experiences and corresponding perspectives (Ricoeur, 1976).

Based on my particular interests and socio-political perspectives, I have chosen in my discussion to consider how the phenomenon of equal and effective societal participation is interwoven with the more psychologically oriented experiences of participants gleaned from the phenomenological analysis. My assumption is that equal and effective participation in society is a goal common to the majority of members of a community and the extent to which
it is realized impacts on how one feels about oneself, one's world, and one's consequent response to the latter.

The existence of inequality and marginalized groups is a social concern for me and its redress, a political desire. From participants' narratives, it became apparent that in daily living, there were certain goals and desires that they wanted to fulfil. The significance of the latter to participants' is indicated by their psychological responses (high distress and frustration and other strong negative emotional and cognitive responses) to being thwarted in realizing them. My objective then is to illuminate structural changes suggested by participants' experiences.

It is not a tradition of psychology to examine or discuss the implications of the socio-cultural context for the experiences of participants. Rather, psychological studies of immigrants have focused on process (e.g., adjustment Grove & Torbiorn [1985] or acculturation, Berry et al [1986 & 1989]) or symptoms (e.g., depression, loneliness Bagley, [1993]). In studies lacking an examination of the contributing role of the social environment on immigrants' experiences, no societal responsibility is indicated. Instead, intervention within the variables selected for analysis (symptoms, processes) is implied as the primary means of alleviating the distress and problems of this group. I do not wish to diminish the fact that it is a useful and necessary enterprise to help
distressed newcomers cope with their various difficulties and to encourage certain behaviours (e.g., risk-taking, assertiveness) that may be helpful in meeting their goals. However, I believe that responsibility is also held by the receiving community to create an ambience that is encouraging and facilitative. Based on participants' stories, what then are some societal elements toward which change should be directed?

It should be made clear that there was not a consensus or single perception within participants' commentary on their social environment. Positive elements or their possible existence were noted even by those most dissatisfied. These positive aspects are important to note insofar as they are instructive by way of the facilitative effects they had on the lives of participants. However, from the standpoint of social change, it is critical to delineate negative, disabling characteristics of the social context and their corresponding impact on participants' experiences. I do so in the hope that the need for social and political changes will not be ignored.

Three contexts were identified relative to situations in which participants' equal and effective participation was compromised. They include (1) employment; (2) services; and (3) the social sphere. As defined in Chapter Two, equal participation refers to equal opportunity and treatment relative to other members of society, and effective
participation applies to the ability to pursue one's plans and realize one's goals. Within each domain, pertinent goals are detailed and discussed in terms of how their attainment might have been impeded. I shall then consider what significance this state of affairs holds for social change. The discussion will conclude with a consideration the study's shortcomings, recommendations for future investigations, and lastly, some examination of the study's implications.

The stance that I have assumed in the discussion then is an application of critical interpretation as outlined in Chapter Two. In keeping with Sullivan's (1984) definition, in critical research an endeavour is undertaken to understand or make sense of some of the experiences voiced by participants relative to the social systems and social relationships in which their lives are interwoven by drawing attention to practices and norms within these social phenomena that hindered the effective participation of participants.

My role as researcher is consequently enlarged by the role I have undertaken as advocate in using this inquiry as a channel to broadcast their voices and hindering elements in their lives. Whereas this act of announcing one's values and being directed by them is eschewed in conventional research paradigms, it is a feature that predominates and is promoted in post-positivist approaches, to the extent that
it seeks to have some positive effect on our social milieu.

Equal and Effective Participation in Employment

Participants' narratives conveyed how important employment was with respect to supporting their families as well as to providing a sense of purpose and personal accomplishment. This section considers a number of arenas related to employment, suggesting ways in which related goals were impeded. Arenas include (1) securing employment; (2) gaining access to the job market; and (3) equality and fairness at the workplace.

Securing Employment

It is acknowledged that at the time of data collection, an economic recession in Ontario made securing employment difficult for unemployed residents in general, not only for immigrant peoples or this subgroup of immigrant women. However, while economic conditions remain one of the contributing factors, those particularly germane to immigrant women and in some respects immigrant men as well, are discussed here.

Jobs for which participants applied varied in their demands for specific skills and expertise. There were instances where the expertise required for the job was compatible with participants' training and experience. However, even when participants had held related occupations in their country for many years, their applications for such positions in Canada were unsuccessful. Several factors

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seemed implicated in their lack of success. One of these was the lack of English language fluency. In the domain, "Language", the category "Effective participation in society" demonstrates how critical English ability is to various aspects of societal life including employment and illuminates the frustration and desperation participants experienced as they faced the urgency of providing for their families and sought to improve their quality of life. ESL classes seemed insufficient in contributing to significant improvements and the problem was aggravated by spending a major part of their day in their home environment where they spoke their native tongue.

Women varied in their degree of English language fluency but even those whose English was good felt that employers wanted perfect English. One may hypothesize that in some cases, employers may have tended to over-emphasize the importance of English fluency, instead of focusing on more relevant job skills. There may have been a biased assumption that lack of English language fluency corresponds to lower competence or qualification to meet the demands of the job. As was apparent in the "Language" domain category, "Threat to self-worth," the women's experiences of speaking English to the general public were sometimes characterized by negative responses to their difficulties with English, through which they felt treated as if they were stupid or inferior because of these struggles. Thus the possibility
exists that employers, not immune to such biases, drew similar conclusions relevant to the women's capacity to perform the job in question. Sue seems to have suspected this possibility as this request that she made of Canadians suggests, "Most thing we need is to be treated fairly, not because of our English."

Another factor related to restricted success in securing employment was lack of Canadian training and work experience. Participants perceived that employers were reluctant to hire them because they believed that having been educated outside the Canadian or American systems, or not having worked in Canada, the extent to which participants were qualified for the job was questionable. In the "Work/Social Status" domain, the categories "Identity/Self-image" and "Disappointments: Expectations versus reality" demonstrated the detriment to hopes, self-esteem, and sense of purpose and fulfilment as a result of being unemployed or having many obstacles to reentering one's area of expertise. It appeared that employers harboured doubts that training and experience gained outside of Canada or the United States were equivalent. Participants who wanted to pursue a career in their field of expertise were faced with the option of going through an elaborate process to get their degrees evaluated, which would have resulted in them having to spend a few years taking courses again, or having to complete a program again
if no component of their training was recognized and credited. It was noted in the "Work/Social Status" domain through the category "Difficulties in pursuing one's goals to be employed," that the time and energy involved in the process of evaluation so discouraged some women that they were tempted to give up and return to their homelands. A sufficiently comprehensive means of testing equivalence was lacking, reasons for which may include financial constraints and a resistance to investing energies in this process. This deficiency has been demonstrated and acknowledged but no resource allocation for its remedy has occurred (Fincher, Foster, Giles, & Preston, 1994). A locus of this problem may also exist in a preference for hiring Canadians irrespective of job qualifications, behaviour which amounts to discriminatory hiring practices.

Situations described in this section illustrated ways in which participants' equal participation may have been thwarted by unfair judgements of their occupational skills and training, unfavourable conclusions about the latter based on English difficulty, and a preference for Canadian workers. As a consequence of the possible inequalities described above as well as legitimate and relevant English difficulties and lack of Canadian experience, effective participation was hindered relative to securing gainful employment. Important related goals to support themselves and provide for their families were also negatively
affected.

Gaining Access into the Job Market

This goal refers to the ability to freely participate in the process of searching for a job. Among participants there were women who felt tentative about entering the job market or felt that they had limited access to this arena. For several women, based on the norms that governed their spousal relationships, they occupied a gender role which made them more likely to be designated as primary care giver for their children. Although these norms were culturally influenced, they were also consistent with the Canadian social environment (Mackie, 1983). Having the major responsibility for child care limited their access to the job market. While they spoke of enjoying their time with their children, they were more vulnerable to feeling a loss of self-esteem by not fulfilling their need to be productive occupationally, as was evident from the "Work/Social Status" domain in the category "Identity/Self-image." Of the two parents, they were the ones who would have to delay their careers, to find jobs with flexible work schedules, and it was their incomes that would be assessed in its capacity to compensate sufficiently for the cost of child care.

Specifically, having young children, particularly for single mothers, limited job options. As indicated in the category "Disconnection from native culture and family" in the "Children" domain, having no extended family and knowing
few people here, many mothers had limited sources of support for the care of their children and were distrustful of strangers. Jobs that would facilitate a flexible schedule were hard to obtain and often did not pay sufficiently to make it worthwhile.

Limited participation in the job market also derived from self-doubts and fears associated with speaking English. As was noted in the category "Threat to self-esteem" in the "Language" domain, these fears related to negative experiences in the English speaking community (e.g., contempt, ridicule, and impatience) and were aggravated by the sense that one had limited opportunity to practice to increase one's proficiency. Thus interviews for employment or job search procedures requiring that participants speak English were dreaded and sometimes avoided. Self doubt and fear elevated anxiety, which in turn interfered with their ability to express themselves. Avoiding evaluative situations in which English was required, they were relieved from experiencing the anxiety and unpleasantness they dreaded but simultaneously diminished their chances of securing employment. Practical constraints to increased exposure to hearing and practising English were child care and household management responsibilities, which were activities that tended to isolate them from the community. Many women felt that the effectiveness of ESL classes was constrained by few opportunities in class to practice
conversational English, compounded by a return to their own linguistic environment for the major part of the day.

These examples demonstrate that participants were at a disadvantage in entering the job market and having a greater number of employment options as a result of having to juggle and consider additional responsibilities. Also, the outcome of their fears and anxieties associated with speaking English was limited effective participation relative to feeling confident about entering the job market. The existential concern of feeling productive and effective was also threatened as a consequence.

Equality and Fairness at the Workplace

Participants described incidents in which the behaviour of coworkers, clients, and employers seemed to be associated with participants' status as immigrants and resulted in a situation of disadvantage to participants. In described situations, equal and effective participation referred to equity in work demands, fair working conditions, and the opportunity to complete one's work as required.

In one situation, equity in work demands across workers in the same position was perceived to be absent. The distribution of work appeared to be uneven, with immigrant workers bearing the greater burden. The participant imputed this inequity to the belief held by other workers that for the immigrant workers, finding a job is more difficult and they are therefore willing to work harder and are unlikely
to complain.

In another case, equal participation was compromised when fair working conditions were found wanting. The employer, who hired immigrants only, misrepresented the number of hours of work legally allowed and provided discrepant information to employees. The participant had been requested to work at the last minute at late hours, and had to wake her son to take him to work with her.

In both situations there was an apparent tendency to exploit the predicament of immigrants of having difficulty finding work and being constrained by their lack of English fluency. In the second situation, the employer further exploited the participant's and other workers' ignorance of their legal rights as employees as stipulated by labour laws. The category "Disappointments: Expectations versus reality" from the "Work/Social Status" domain, demonstrated that in the practical necessity of providing their family's basic needs, some participants found themselves having to endure such unfair treatment.

Equal and effective participation was thwarted when a participant attempted to provide services, as her job demanded but was met with objections from clientele when they perceived that she was an immigrant. In some cases, clients went to the extreme of refusing her services altogether. Thus the participant's ability to perform her job as she desired was either obstructed or met with
resistance as a result of some clients' prejudiced conclusion of worth based not on merit but on her status as an immigrant and ethnic minority. Feeling that a repeated rejection was too hurtful, she did not return to these clients. Her situation is one example in the category "Anxieties" from the "Work/Social Status" domain, of feelings of insecurity that endured despite being employed.

Implications for Structural Change

Participants' stories indicated that in employment related situations, not only was there a negative impact on their ability to provide for their families but there was also an adverse effect on their self-concept, sense of purpose, and identity. Feelings of discouragement, frustration, and demoralization were also evident.

Their experiences in this sphere highlighted several important negative societal elements including hostility, discrimination, and instances of exploiting their vulnerability as immigrants. Their difficulties in this area also illuminated numerous resource gaps, examples of which are the structure and content of ESL classes and a means of objectively evaluating their skills and training.

Their expressed concerns and the distress they experienced in employment related situations tell them of the need for certain structural changes. Many of the participants had years of expertise and training in their fields. These resources however, were wasted in the absence
of a medium to evaluate their equivalence to Canadian standards. Such a service is a dire need since many immigrants face the frustration and distress of being unemployed or under-employed simply because their training and experiences are not recognized.

Another change implied from participants' experiences is an examination of the effectiveness of ESL classes. Relevant issues include whether or not their content is compatible with the daily life demands of students and the need to extend day care services to suit the needs of mothers with young children. Generally, child care services that are accessible and affordable are needed so that working mothers would have greater flexibility and more options. Relatedly, employers should be encouraged to offer such options as job sharing, and home-based employment.

The phenomenon of discriminatory hiring practices, where White Canadians are preferred over other groups was suspected by some participants to have played a role in their unsuccessful attempts to get a job. These suspicions cannot be confirmed here but there is evidence of discriminatory hiring practices in Canada (Kallen, 1995). I believe that such evidence bolsters the argument for maintaining Employment Equity laws, and contradicts the recent decision of the Progressive Conservative government in Ontario to repeal this policy.

Situations were described in which participants were
exploited because of their vulnerable position of urgently needing some kind of employment to meet their family's needs. These situations speak to the need for a means of making all workers aware of their legal rights and a safe and efficient forum for lodging complaints.

Several participants described situations in which as a consequence of negative reactions toward them from some members of the community, resulting fear and anxiety hindered their ability to express themselves effectively or led them to avoid, for example, interviews. These are good reasons to implement and maintain support services designed to improve employment skills and to enhance assertiveness, confidence, and self-esteem.

Equal and Effective Participation for Services

Here, the service arena includes health, social, and consumer services. Participants spoke of instances when success in conveying their needs, obtaining service equal to Canadians, and obtaining information necessary to meet their goals was compromised. The areas served as a primary medium for contact with their community and involved positive and negative experiences. It was from the latter that such feelings of alienation, lack of control and incompetence were generated. Goals relevant to this domain include (1) conveying one's needs; (2) gaining access to information; and (3) receiving equal service.

Conveying One's Needs
Difficulty was experienced in their ability to fluently express their needs to access services critical for their welfare, having been unable to or not knowing how to secure a translator. This was demonstrated in the category "Effective participation in society" under the "Language" domain. Difficulty was compounded when in reaction to participants' attempts to convey their needs, insensitive and hurtful comments were made by service providers who were sometimes reluctant to make accommodations for participants' difficulties.

For participants, equal participation was compromised to the extent that people's response to them was unfavourably different because of their English language abilities. As a result of language difficulties and hurtful, unempathic responses, their ability to convey needs important to function effectively in their environment was hindered.

Gaining Access to Information

Lacking relevant information is a significant contributing factor to not meeting one's goals. Recall the ardent and urgent appeal for "information, information, information" made by a participant in the category "Teach me" in the "Help from Canadians" domain. Participants referred to occasions when they sought information that was clear and complete but instead found themselves having to visit numerous sites consequent to receiving inadequate and
confusing information. Efforts to gain access to facilities and resources were frustrated by lack of even basic information and were sometimes met with impatience and contempt for their difficulty. Initiating a request for information was further hampered by the anxiety of having to communicate in English.

As similarly described in the above goal, equal participation was absent to the extent that participants' pursuit of information was met with a negative response to their difficulties with English. Failure to obtain information may have impacted negatively on their ability to pursue important plans and goals. These situations left involved participants feeling frustrated, helpless, and blocked. Feelings of deficiency were also evident, as captured in the description "deaf and blind...as a newborn baby."

**Receiving Equal Service**

Instances of being treated unfavourably by service providers relative to Canadians were reported by participants. This was apparent in the category "Unwelcome" from the "Being with Canadians" domain, in which participants referred to incidents in the public sector where they noted that the disdainful manner in which service providers interacted with immigrants and visible minorities made an unfavourable contrast relative to services provided to White Canadians. Similar experiences were encountered in
the private sector where, as consumers, they felt that they were not respected or valued or detected a belief on the part of service providers that they were unlikely to have sufficient purchasing power and hence were not legitimate consumers. Participants perceived that this treatment was associated with their lack of English language fluency, and their status as immigrants and/or visible minorities. These examples illustrate that participants' desire for receiving equal and fair treatment relative to other members of the community was not fulfilled. Instead, their equal participation appeared to be thwarted by discriminatory behaviour, rooted in the perception that immigrants are less valuable, or are illegitimate consumers or clientele. The deleterious effect that this unequal treatment had on self-esteem was also noted in the category "Threat to self-worth" from the "Language" domain.

Implications for Structural Change

A synopsis of participants' psychological experiences in this sphere indicates feelings of frustration when blocked from meeting their needs. There were also feelings of rejection and being unvalued when others responded in hostile, unkind, and discriminatory ways, which resulted in some participants being hampered by their anxiety that such treatment would be repeated in other situations. Their experiences indicate an environment that is sometimes insensitive and unempathic to the difficulties of vulnerable
people and discriminatory based on one's lacking proficiency in the dominant language. Participants' experiences also revealed structural gaps. It was difficult to obtain clear and comprehensive information so that important resources and facilities could be accessed and they were either unaware of or unable to access forums for lodging complaints or obtaining advocacy.

Participants' stories call for the need for structural changes in numerous facets of the service area. There is a pressing need to implement and extend cultural sensitivity training and other forums for improving ethnic and race relations in both public and private sector services. These efforts should be combined with well advertised and accessible commissions through which complaints can be issued. Additionally some medium of advocacy is needed to support immigrants who might feel vulnerable to retaliation or those who might be unsure of available recourse.

During feedback, one participant suggested that ESL classes could serve a dual purpose of practising English skills and providing a means for immigrants to discuss the kinds of problems outlined here in accessing services. She believed that this would be a good opportunity for people to share not only their problems in this area but also successful solutions and helpful information and resources that they had discovered.

Equal and Effective Participation in the Social sphere
The social sphere provides the possibility of forging friendships and other types of social connections. When one interacts with members of the community, there is an opportunity to get feedback about their reactions toward you and obtain some sense of where one fits into the community. It follows then that it is a domain critical in its effect on self-esteem, sense of belonging, and social support. Goals related to this domain include (1) connecting with the community; (2) communicating; and (3) self-advocacy.

Connecting With the Community

Many of the women wanted to feel connected with their new community, as reflected by a sense of belonging and by an establishment of friendships with members of the community (for comparable reports, see Espín, 1993b and Lynam, 1985). However, for many this goal was elusive. Attempts made to become engaged in the community sometimes resulted in experiences of rejection and ridicule. Thus discouraged, some participants became tentative about extending their friendship and wary of further hurtful experiences, and consequently withdrew or avoided much social interaction. This was evident in the category "Walls of fear of/perceived rejection" from the domain "Friendships with Canadians". In other cases, it was simply that overtures of friendship were rare. Members of the community were perceived to keep their distance. The idea was entertained that perhaps some people were interested in
initiating social contact but were uncertain of how to approach someone from another culture.

Some women's isolation from the larger community by almost exclusive interaction in their own ethnic community precluded the opportunity to interact with Canadians and to improve their English. It was noted in the category "Threat to self-worth" from the "Language" domain that this isolation seemed to emerge from a fear of not being able to communicate effectively in the language of the larger community and consequent rejection by its members. Primary responsibility for child care and household management were also influencing factors.

These instances relative to making some social connection with the host community suggest that equal participation was lacking for participants given the different social response toward them. Consequent feelings of insecurity and fear and associated self-protective behaviour (e.g., withdrawal) also impacted negatively on their need to feel connected and a sense of belonging.

**Communicating**

Many participants recalled instances of foiled communication, either in conveying or receiving messages, which they attributed to lack of English proficiency but which also appeared to be related to differing cultural meanings (see Lynam, 1985). Angry and impatient reactions to their difficulty further exacerbated their ability to
speak and understand English as they were unable to manage their heightened anxiety and self-doubt to use existing language skills effectively. These problems were evident in the "Language" domain in the categories "A threat to self-worth" and "Effective participation in society".

The obvious importance of communication for the effective satisfaction of both basic and high level needs emphasizes the unenviable plight of these women whose difficulty with the English language was magnified by negative responses of some host nationals.

**Self-advocacy**

This refers to the ability to defend one's position, or to vindicate and assert one's rights. The ability to self-advocate in social settings facilitates effective participation insofar as one is able to impact on one's environment. Facing situations of deprecation or ridicule, one's desire to confront the offender and assert one's position is hindered when one lacks English facility, reflected by the category "Effective participation in society" from the "Language" domain. One is therefore thwarted in one's desire to effect a change in one's environment through verbal means.

**Implications for Social Change**

To summarize, participants' psychological experiences included feelings of rejection, loneliness, and a sense of not belonging. Distrustful and wary of being hurt, some of
them tended to withdraw and isolate themselves. Of the community, their stories spoke of one that was sometimes rejecting, ridiculing, and alienating. One participant during feedback surmised that a prevailing individualism made meaningful social connections an infrequent occurrence. This was a contrast to her culture, in which a sense of community and closeness was more evident.

Studies have reported insular tendencies among some immigrants and other migrants (Kealey, 1989; Pohjola, 1991; Searle & Ward, 1990). This inclination to restrict one's social and occupational life to environments where one's co-nationals and ethnic group predominate has been explained by a need for social support and security when faced with the overwhelming unfamiliarity of the new residence (Pohjola, 1991). While fulfilling this need, negatives have also been associated with this coping strategy including higher stress, poorer psychological adjustment, a narrow perspective of their new environment, and restricted options (Chataway & Berry, 1989; Pohjola, 1991; Searle & Ward, 1990). While immigrants may restrict their search for security and social support within their own ethnic community, the results of the present study are important in demonstrating that although many of the immigrant women in this study wanted social contact with host nationals, they experienced encounters that discouraged such initiatives.

The isolation, distrust, and loneliness that many of
these women experienced argues strongly for a need to structure positive relations since it appears that it is difficult for immigrant women to find this naturally in their community. This could be achieved, for example, through host programs offered by some resettlement agencies (e.g., Catholic Immigration Centre, Ottawa). Here, individual immigrants and families are linked to a member of the community who offers friendship, information and other kinds of assistance through a more natural relationship than that with a service provider. Support groups would offer the opportunity to share with and feel understood by others whose experiences are similar but they are limited with respect to making connections with the larger community.

What of the serious problem of rejection and hostility that many of these women faced in social situations? Obviously empathy cannot be structured in the public domain. However, schools are promising avenues to bring racial, multiethnic and multicultural issues to the fore, through discussion and other means of raising awareness and enhancing sensitivity and acceptance.

The three areas outlined (employment, services, and social sphere) were critical to participants' successful functioning in their community. Within these areas, disabling and delimiting features in the environment interacted with participants' personal reactions (e.g., fear, mistrust, avoidance) and culminated in hindering them,
to varying degrees, from meeting some important life goals. In light of the feelings of distress, frustration, and dejection associated with identified obstacles, this discussion lends support to the promotion of social change that would enhance the well-being of immigrant women and thereby diminish the sense of marginalization and deterioration evident in their experiences in Canada.

Shortcomings of the Present Study

I have identified three major areas in which the study could have been enhanced. The first, reserved disclosure, pertains to the data and relates to the degree to which participants may have censored the information offered. The other two areas are procedural and include participant selection and facilitating empowerment among participants.

Reserved Disclosure

One of the questions that may be asked of the study is whether or not the narratives were constrained with respect to the degree of disclosure made by participants and what factors relate to this reservation. Four factors that come to mind are language, insufficient trust, a need for privacy, and cultural norms guiding disclosure. Language may have been an issue to the extent that participants may have found it difficult to convey exactly what they wanted to say in English and might have been much more expressive and disclosing in their own languages. A translator with whom they were comfortable might have been an alternative if
resources could have been secured. However this presents the problem of relying on the interpreted language of the translator instead of the participant's expressions. Additionally, my desire to interact with and relate to participants might have been compromised.

A second factor that might have induced reservation is insufficient trust of me or the process. Although I made significant attempts to foster trust by, for example, spending two months attending their classes and talking with them informally or getting recommendations from someone whom they trusted in cases of those not taking classes, participants may still have been wary of my intentions or may not have felt comfortable with me. There is a possibility that although I tried to make the interview as relaxed and informal as possible, sharing parts of my history as it appeared appropriate, it may have been reminiscent of the detailed process of questioning that takes place when one applies for residency, particularly for refugees, for whose experience the term interrogation may be more accurate.

A third possibility lies in participants' need for privacy, which may exist for many different reasons ranging from shame to cultural norms about speaking of personal and family issues. Whatever the reasons, this need is to be respected and the researcher must be content with the information procured.
A fourth related possibility pertains to the findings that cultures vary in the philosophies that guide the verbal communication of pain or unhappiness. For example, studies have suggested that in Asian cultures, self-control and restraint is valued particularly in the verbal expression of dissatisfaction or criticism (Bradshaw, 1994; Kong, 1985). In contrast, Patai (1983) posits that in Arabic cultures, self-control is not conceived in dichotomous good/bad terms and feelings and emotionally laden perspectives are freely and unreservedly expressed. This phenomenon may have influenced the content and style of participants' narratives. I remain mindful however, of Klineberg's (1985) caution in making generalizations about a national character or personality. He suggests that those who study and work with diverse cultural groups must remain cognizant that in the complex nature of personality, general human tendencies interact with cultural norms as well as the unique history of the individual.

Participant Selection

Although the value of the findings is not diminished, a broader sample selection would have enhanced this study. All but three participants were either current ESL students or graduates. One group that I believe was not represented includes those who were denied support to attend ESL classes when it was determined that their work did not require English. These are women whose chances of moving into jobs
with better pay and conditions are lower than those who have the opportunity to learn English and eventually qualify for other training programs (although this process, based on reports of two participants, does not always work as smoothly). Attempts were made to recruit participants from a grass roots organization for women who are particularly vulnerable with respect to their history as refugees and probable victimization, their low level of education, and their marked lack of English. This is an important group that was not represented. The director of the agency advised however, that in consideration of the procedure and verbal demands of this study, communication would have been minimal, and that the women there were too vulnerable. One can assume that the stories of these women would have been characterized by greater distress, sense of loss, and feelings of marginalization than those of the participants in this study, when their relative conditions are considered. Their stories are important to tell however, and it is my hope that in collaboration with their representatives, this would be achieved in a vein similar to this study.

Facilitating Empowerment

A step toward empowerment may have been achieved in the lives of these participants in that they were able to voice their concerns and tell their stories not only so that they could be heard and understood but so that their experiences
lend support for the need for change. During feedback, it was evident that participants were engaging in both self-reflection and a critique of societal elements that they perceived to be impeding their pursuit of goals, both of which activities are averred to be essential to empowerment (Lather, 1991). Mila for example, proposed that the society's individualistic philosophy and behaviour contributed to her continuing sense of social isolation. Fada believed that her experience of social isolation was associated with the interaction between her hesitation to trust others and the devaluation of immigrants among some members of society.

Apart from the above indications, I cannot state with confidence that the process of empowerment was actually initiated through this study for all or most participants. I submit that it might have been facilitated to a greater extent with some modification to the process of generating and collecting data. Lather (1991) proposes that emancipation and empowerment among participants increases to the extent that reciprocity (defined as negotiated meaning and power in the generation of data and theory) is embraced. She delineates the procedures necessary to achieve this goal. They include: (1) interactive dialogues where the researcher also self-discloses; (2) sequential interviews with individuals and groups to foster collaboration and a more in-depth analysis of research issues; (3) negotiating
meaning - that is examining descriptions, analyses, and conclusions with participants repeatedly; providing opportunities for self-reflection and a critique of disabling and hindering factors in the lives of participants.

An evaluation of the present study based on these suggested procedures indicates deficiencies in the areas of procuring data through sequential interviews, collaborating more with participants relevant to description and analysis, providing group and individual opportunities for discussing research issues to foster greater reflection and critique than was provided through feedback. Had these procedures been implemented, participants might have felt a greater sense of having participated in the production of knowledge and having the potential to effect change.

Directions for Future Investigations

The methodology used in this study provided rich understandings of the lives of 19 immigrant women, understandings which were grounded in and derived from their phenomenological experiences. Perspectives of self and world analyzed from a critical stance suggested the need for social change and the locus of this need. This approach to knowledge, which starts from phenomenological descriptions, the understandings of which are then enlarged by critical interpretations, may prove valuable as one component of or as an alternative for future investigations.
Further investigation is needed in areas related to the present enterprise. The lives of these women were divided into domains and subsequently analyzed. Room for expansion in several of these domains exists. For example, rich investigative opportunities exist in the area of family relations. This is one area for which the development of trust is important because of the sensitive nature of this issue and the potential hesitation to make disclosures about such private concerns.

There are other related groups or sub-groups whose voices are rarely heard and whose vulnerability makes their expression urgent. Examples are immigrants who are victims of war and torture, immigrant and refugee children, and immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence. Their vulnerability necessitates that investigations be conducted within a structure that can provide necessary long and short-term support.

Implications of Study

The Value of the Study's Methodology

The existing body of research on immigrant women's issues has focused largely on the content of problems immigrant women encounter. I believe that this study adds to this literature by detailing the psychological experiences of participants. In comparison to the dominant research methods in psychology, the phenomenological approach used here affords richer and more complex
understandings of the lives of participants. Through their stories, we gained insight into the emotional experiences, needs and concerns of these women, further clarified and accented by implicit and explicit commentaries on the social environment.

The critical orientation of the discussion of my participants' descriptions was meant to broaden a psychological perspective on immigrant issues by examining the structural and relational elements of the social context in which the lives of the participants are situated. Although some may disagree that this perspective should come under the purview of psychology, this structural analysis offered the opportunity for a critical examination of the social forces that affect the lives of immigrant women. I believe that by extending our perspectives in this manner, we achieve a more holistic picture of human phenomena. Advocates of socially responsible and impactful research assert that researchers are accountable for the way in which their research is used. In the case of vulnerable groups, among which immigrant women are numbered, the ways in which research is used has critical significance insofar as its consequences can be enabling or disabling. For example, when the underlying philosophical assumptions of one's research reflect the belief in individualistic determinism and individual solutions, the implications for vulnerable groups are personal responsibility for their circumstances.
and for change (Fine, 1989). In the current research enterprise, I have sought to illuminate the connection between elements in the social context and their hindering impact on the effective personal action of participants. In so doing, I attempt to influence the use of my research in a direction of positive impact on the lives of immigrant women.

Traditionally researchers have been viewed as being primarily accountable to the institutions under which they work or the agencies that fund their research (Morawski, 1994). Morawski warns of the potentially compromising influence of these allegiances on the product of one's research. She contends that researchers should broaden their perspective regarding their audiences and groups to whom they are accountable, and identifies the study's participants as a high priority. In this enterprise I have sought to remain accountable to my participants with respect to the content of the study and its purposes.

A commentary on participants' views of the study indicates the extent to which accountability to participants has been achieved. It also adds support for the value of this methodology and the quality of information it generated. Participants indicated an appreciation of the goals of this study and a belief in its importance. For example, they all believed that their experiences needed to be told so that others (even, as one participant reflected,
if they were few in number) would better understand their situations and also so that changes could be initiated. They also felt that new immigrants could profit from this information by being prepared for what life here could be like. Sara for example, believed that had this experiential information been available to her, she might have been better prepared emotionally and mentally for her life here.

In most research practices, experts are considered to be derived from the peers in one's scientific community and it is against their standard that the validity of one's work is judged. A post-positivist research stance advocates for the inclusion of participants in the process of validation (Lather, 1991; Morawski, 1994). This practice is compatible with a democratic research practice advocated by Sampson (1991) in which participants are not only the subjects of research but are also involved in the production of knowledge.

In this study an attempt was undertaken to have participants validate the relevance and accuracy of the findings. Participants conveyed a belief that their stories were well represented in the results of this study, as Ella commented, "I saw myself in there." They were also satisfied that I had illuminated their concerns. As Tisa maintained, "You wrote all that I was concerned about." They were also gratified to know about the experiences of others both with respect to how it was similar to their own
and different. In their invitation to comment on the findings and explanations of this study, participants had the opportunity to offer differing or unmentioned perspectives. For example, Mila contributed to an understanding of why immigrants may feel socially isolated when she introduced the idea of a pervasively individualistic social milieu in which it is difficult to get connected when members of the community are wrapped up in dealing with personal concerns.

This blend of phenomenology and social critique through a participatory research approach has been a step toward the empowerment of participants. In the first instance, they were provided with an opportunity to air their seldom heard needs and concerns from their vantage point. Secondly, informed by a critique of the social context in which they live, their voiced experiences drew attention to changes that are necessary to facilitate their more equal and effective societal participation. Some participants also spoke of the sense of effectiveness they experienced in sharing their stories to enable me to inform others of the lives of immigrant women. Hara commented that as researcher and researched, we each gave to the other, they, by teaching me about their lives, and I, by being interested in and writing about their lives.

As a researcher, this methodology has been valuable in its impact on me personally. Having my perspective on
immigrant experiences enlarged has not only led to professional growth but also to my personal growth insofar as I have come to know better the realities of others who are like me in some ways and different in others. I also felt it a privilege to be the recipient of their narratives, to share in their lives even at a very personal level. This is the gratifying aspect offered by methodologies such as this, of knowing one's world by relating to or being in contact with it.

I believe that the study's objectives have been met. A more in-depth psychological understanding of some of the experiences of immigrant women as represented by this sample has been achieved. One could state tentatively that a step toward empowerment is indicated by participants' voicing of their concerns and needs, by the attention drawn to hindering factors, and by explicit implications for social change. Lastly, it was demonstrated that as an alternative approach to acquiring knowledge, the research method used here surpasses positivist approaches in the richness and contextual understanding that it offers.

Generalizability

In response to the question of the generalizability of the findings, I would first reiterate the point made in the methodology section that the rationale guiding participant selection was not based on attaining statistical representation but rather on obtaining a sample of women
varied in their country of origin, education, marital status, and age. I wished to see if among participants, there were common or related phenomenologies, given their group membership as immigrant women. I also wanted to come to know what their diversity, not only in demographics but also personality and individual life experiences, produced in terms of varied perspectives.

It is still reasonable to ask how common might the issues of importance that emerged here be among the population of immigrant women. Perhaps one way to evaluate this is to evaluate the compatibility of the findings of this study with those noted in the research literature. Many of the salient experiences and concerns expressed here are evident in some of the studies of immigrant women reviewed in Chapter One. Examples are: (1) The role of gender in language acquisition and its impact on job opportunities (Anderson, 1987; Gannagé, 1984; Miedema & Nason-Clarke, 1989; Prieto, 1986); (2) the pervasive experience of downward mobility (Kallen, 1995; Ng & Estable, 1987); (3) conflicts and concerns with children (Friedman, 1993; Hartman & Hartman, 1983; Kyung-Hee, 1993; Wittebrood & Robertson, 1991); and (4) the impact of English skills on isolation and difficulty establishing social relationships (Anderson, 1987; Seller, 1981) and the unmet need for connection with the host community (Lynam, 1985).

The study's findings are drawn from the narratives of
19 women whose voiced experiences are valid and valued. I noted in the section "Enhancing the study" however, that there were unrepresented voices coming from women who had some differences in their lives compared to the present sample. These voices would have added to the range of experiences expressed here and would have consequently expanded our knowledge. However the addition of voices does not correspond to a detraction or diminishment of the importance and validity of those expressed here.

The Role of Gender

The relevance of gender to immigrant experiences has been proposed (Boyd, 1986; Brettell & Simon, 1986; Hartman & Hartman, 1983; Pedraza, 1991; Segura, 1989) and was reflected in this study. Their status as women affected participants' accessibility to language classes and their opportunity to practice English. This, combined with their role demands as household managers and care-givers restricted their ability to participate in the job market. We noted in the category "Identity/Self-image" from the "Work/Social Status" domain, that the integrity of self was threatened during that period when women could not secure jobs or when they worked in unfulfilling jobs.

The issue of gender and related roles was also apparent in the "Spousal relations" domain through the categories "Migration provides the potential for growth or deterioration" and "My role as a woman: the potential for
shifting perspectives" where it was demonstrated that when women have to fulfil dual roles as home-maker/care-giver and employed worker, there is a risk for the marital relationships relative to increased stress and conflict, as well as a questioning of gender roles.

These examples suggest that their status as women contributed to the experience of these participants. I would contend then that the issue of gender should be factored into decisions relating to resource allocation of services for immigrants, as well as for changes to social policies.

Only five women spoke explicitly of the role of gender in their experiences. Does this mean that for the remaining women this issue was irrelevant or experientially insignificant? Numerous findings may have contributed to this circumstance. I did not solicit information specific to gender issues. Perhaps if I had, participants' narratives might have revealed greater concern than indicated here.

Socio-cultural influences may also have been relevant. Sundal-Hanson (1985) notes that several socio-cultural factors influence a person's concern about gender and gender relations including educational options and background, religious and other cultural traditions, and the extent to which the culture promotes individual versus societal/family goals. With reference to the latter, she contends that in
cultures where individualism and self-actualization is upheld, gender issues may have greater salience relative to cultures where the belief in strong ties and subordination to family is imparted. Boyd-Franklin and García-Preto (1994) point out however, in their observations of Hispanic women, that women's power and decision making in their families may contradict or qualify the traditional roles that they espouse.

The Relevance of Refugee Status

Results suggested that a higher percentage of refugee participants, except in the area of social connection (i.e., having Canadian friends), felt marginalized compared to other immigrant participants. Indications that refugee participants felt a greater sense of deterioration in various aspects of their lives were even more salient in the results. The fact that participants did not disclose instances of torture or other victimization does not preclude this reality, given the shame and consequent silence associated with such horrendous experiences (Friedman, 1993). Regardless of whether or not such victimization was experienced by these participants, the results are compatible with observations (Brody, 1994; Marsella et al., 1994; Westermeyer, 1989) suggesting that refugees are a particularly vulnerable group among immigrants and may therefore need additional and different assistance and resources.
Implications for Assistance

It was evident from this study that experiences of migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, have very intense connections to social contexts. Thus descriptions of the psychological aspects are richly informed by a consideration of what the social world looks like. The goal is not to impute a deterministic cause and effect relationship but to extend understanding. I believe that understanding of perspectives, feelings, concerns, needs, and desires as well as the contexts in which these experiences are couched is the starting point for action. I believe that for those wishing to be of some assistance to immigrant women, this approach would be most respectful and effective.

Socio-political Implications

I wish to clearly state that the outcome of this study is not to propose what immigrant women need to do to improve their lives. That would be to suggest that they are incapable of reaching such conclusions themselves. Instead, I believe that the study implies how the social environment is lacking in facilitating the pursuit and attainment of some of their goals. Thus the need for social change was also apparent. We saw how the distress and anxiety associated with having to get used to an environment unfamiliar in its linguistic, physical, and socio-cultural aspects, and the difficulty of accessing a means of
supporting oneself and one's family were compounded by
demonstrations of hostility, resentment, unwelcome, and
disrespect from some members of the receiving community.

This study has presented a rather negative picture of
the lives of immigrant women, highlighting psychological
experiences of distress, alienation, hurt, and frustration.
Is this a biased view skewed by the direction of my
questions and the research goals? It is not that
participants did not mention positive aspects of their
lives. Some participants were hopeful about their futures
in Canada, some believed that Canada offered them many
opportunities, some felt positive about their interactions
with Canadians, and some were grateful that their lives and
that of their families were no longer in danger. I contend
however, that the reality of the pain and struggles of these
women were poignant and pervasive, although the degree and
circumstances of their unhappiness varied. One may ask
whether or not over the course of time life satisfaction for
these women is likely to increase. Two participants who
felt the most optimistic and content had experienced
distress and hardship earlier in their stay. However,
circumstance and personality seemed to be more relevant than
time because one woman had been here for three years and the
other for 23 years. Many factors contribute to one's sense
of life satisfaction but in trying to understand
participants' pervasive sense of difficulty and pain one
could contend, based on their narratives, that the prevailing socio-cultural and political climate played a significant role.

Participants' negative perceptions of their social environment are compatible with the Longwood results (Holton & Lanphier, 1994) and observations of populist sentiment in such movements as the Bloc Québécois and Reform Party (Dorais, Foster, & Stockley, 1994) both of which indicate increasing opposition to the number and origins of recent immigrant groups. Most of the participants in this study were from cultures whose dissimilarity to mainstream Canadian culture is greater than that of groups from previous waves of immigration. As theories of prejudice discussed in the Introduction suggest, some mainstream Canadians may find it difficult to empathize and relate to these groups, particularly if they are seen as competing with them for resources (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Cook, 1990). In the current economic climate, where resources seem scarce, hostility toward immigrant groups may be fuelled by the perception that newcomers are being supported to the disadvantage of other Canadian groups (Langford & Ponting, 1990). In the domain of "Being with Canadians," the category "Unwelcome" demonstrated the resentment and hostility that some Canadians feel toward immigrants. Recall the hostile comment overheard by one participant, "Fucking immigrants, they're here to take money, jobs."
Thus it may be that some Canadians perceive that their world is changing in these harsh economic times, one representation of which is that a group to which they do not belong and which is very dissimilar to them is a threat to their financial security and thus the status quo (Bobo, 1983). Even if the threat is not immediate, resentment and fear may exist, given that members of the population who are similar to them are losing their security (Brewer & Kramer, 1985).

The tendency to devalue the worth and contributions of the group for whom resource allocation is opposed, as proposed by allocation bias theory (Cook, 1990) was also evident in the results. In the domains of "Language" and "Being with Canadians," the categories of "Threat to self-esteem" and "Unwelcome" that emerged provided examples of participants' experiences of communications from some Canadians that immigrants are inferior, of low value and illegitimate members of society. Cook suggests that these attributions then justify the removal or denial of resource allocation to improve the life conditions and successful societal participation of the opposed group.

I am offering hypothetical explanations regarding the kind of hostility and rejection participants encountered in their community, aware while doing so that the issues of prejudice and intergroup conflict are more complex and multifactorial than this. Regardless of the factors
involved and their dynamic however, what is noteworthy here is that to have a significant portion of the community feeling marginalized reflects a social unhealthiness, the roots of which need to be analyzed and addressed.

The Prognosis

Would the themes identified in these stories reflect a more empathic, socially concerned society if we were to sample a similar group of women in five or ten years? As I behold current social policies in Ontario in particular, and Canada at large, characterized by reduced support for the most vulnerable groups in our community, I cannot but anticipate that such stories might be filled with more distress, alienation, anxiety, and sense of deterioration. Appalling numbers of the population are losing their jobs. As members of the community see their own standard of living fall and the quality of life in Canada decline, will their capacity to empathize with those whose needs are great and their support for resource allocation to meet these needs diminish?

Holton and Lanphier (1994) assert that unpopular policies, a description which fits immigration policies, are unlikely to remain unchanged. Waning public support may translate into reduced political support and financial backing. Strategies aimed at justifying reduced support may involve linking immigration with other social concerns (e.g., crime, environmental crises, and the deficit).
Diminished resources for the various needs of immigrants may then compromise the ability of newcomers to cope and pursue their goals. As these struggles become evident, Holton and Lanphier (1994) contend, it may seem to observers that the expectation is justified that some groups of newcomers would not be a good fit for Canadian society.

Thus the outlook does appear bleak. Already in the city of Windsor, extensive cuts to social agencies and programs have been executed. The data base from Information Windsor, an information resource for social agencies, indicates that in the city of Windsor, from approximately the Fall of 1995 to Spring 1996, 3 social service agencies have been closed and 27 programs cut. A further 31 programs are earmarked for being cut in part or in entirety. This trend seems to portend further diminished support for individuals and groups needing assistance but perhaps we can hold on to Langford and Ponting's (1992) hope that the population might be stimulated by the current crisis to become unified in their advocacy for social change that would improve the quality of life for the population at large, appreciating that the marginalization of any one group threatens that standard of living for the citizenry at large.

Social Science Research and the Social Context

A critical analysis of the social context as implied by participants' narratives was emphasized in this discussion.
This choice derived from a desire for a contextual understanding of the phenomenological experiences of participants and was based on the contention that one's social context has significant bearing on one's experiences, actions, and options. Further, decontextualized records of the experiences of vulnerable groups are potentially detrimental to them insofar as the role of social influences in their lives remain covert and hence unquestioned and unchallenged. As a consequence, the researcher fails to capitalize on the opportunity available to them as a communicator of knowledge, to advocate for social change that could enhance the well-being of such groups.
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APPENDIX A
Consent Form

This study is being run by Jacqui Antonio who is a student at the Psychology Department, University of Windsor. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Psychology Department at the University of Windsor.

Purpose of study
The purpose of this study is to better understand the lives of immigrant women - the kinds of problems you face, what is important to you, and how your lives have changed since you moved to Canada. My hope is that when we understand the lives of immigrant women better, together we can suggest what changes can be made by society and by these women so that they can better achieve their goals and desires.

Description of study
I will be asking you to talk about your experiences as an immigrant woman. I will be asking you questions like what a situation was like for you or how you felt about it. What we talk about may be personal and sometimes difficult but you can choose whether or not you wish to tell me something. I will write down what you tell me. I will give you what I have written so that you can decide whether or not what I have written is okay.

You may change your mind about being part of the study at any time, even during the interview and when you are reading what I have written about what you said.

When the study is finished, I will tell each of you what I have learned about the lives of immigrant women from what you have told me. I will also ask you whether you think I understand your life well or not. I WILL NOT DISCUSS ANY PERSON'S LIFE WITH ANY ONE ELSE.

Since I am receiving training as a counsellor, if things we have talked about bother you, after the interview we can meet a number of times for you to talk about them with me. I could also suggest other places where you may get help.

Content of reports
A copy of the results of this study will given to the YMCA. This copy will describe the types of experiences and problems which the immigrant women who took part have. It will also suggest why such problems occur and what may be done to deal with them. THIS COPY WILL NOT HAVE PERSONAL INFORMATION.
A similar copy will be written up for the University so that my work can be judged. However, this copy will be more
APPENDIX B
Interview Schedule
The following underlined domains have been identified as relevant to the experiences of immigrant women. I initiated the interviews by describing the purposes of the study and allowed a natural start to our interview where any aspect of participants' lives that came up spontaneously was pursued. From that point, broad questions (Q) were posed, not necessarily in the order or form outlined but as narratives naturally led to them. Probes, similar to those outlined, were made for more in-depth information as appropriate.

1. English language

Q. I speak English and I am wondering what it's been like for you, with English not being your first language? (e.g., at work, in the public, going to the doctor or to your child's school).

Probe:
Do you think that because your first language isn't English it affects how people respond to you or treat you? How?

2. Work experiences

Q. Can you tell me about your work experiences?

Probes:
(a) What has it been like applying for jobs? What kinds of jobs have you applied for?

(b) What was it like when you were actually working? What kinds of jobs were they? Could you describe what it was like for you? What were your supervisors like? How did you get along with your co-workers?

(c) What have you been trained to do either in your home country or in Canada? Have you found work related to your experience and training?

(d) How do you feel about working/not working?

3. Social support/contact

Q. Do you have family in Windsor/Canada (siblings, parents, extended)?
Q. What about friendships in Windsor?

Probes:
(a) In your free time, who do you spend time with mostly? Do you have people that you can talk to about private things, or things that may be bothering you? Who are these people?
(b) Have you had opportunities to meet people?
(c) Do you have Canadian friends? What's it like being with them?
(d) What has it been like being with Canadians generally? What's it like when you have to get some kind of service or information (medical, child's school, grocery, employment agency)?
(e) What's it like being from a different racial/ethnic group?
(f) Do you think that because you look different, it affects how people respond to or treat you?

4. Motive(s) for migration

Q. What were your reasons for coming to Canada?

Probes:
(a) Did you come with family or on your own?
(b) When you think about ___ (home country), what do you think/feel?

5. Health/emotional functioning

Q. Since you've been in Canada, how has your health been? How is it different from what it was like when you were in ___ (home country)?

Q. Since you've been here, how have you been feeling—like your mood—happy, sad, lonely, stressed? Remember, you don't have to answer any question that you do not want to.

Q. Have you ever gone for help when you have had either a health or emotional problem? What has that been like—did you get the help you needed? Did you
feel comfortable?

6. Living arrangements/domestic situations

Q. What is your home life like?

Probes:
(a) At home you live with... (spouse, children, parents, other relatives, others)
(b) This is one of those questions where you may feel that you don't want to share the information with me and that's fine with me, that's your right. Compared to when you were home, have things changed in your relationship with your husband? In what ways?
(c) Again feel free to say you don't want to answer this question. How are things at home for you? What's it like having to work, or go to school and then attend to things at home?
(d) How many children do you have? What are their ages? How do you think things are for your children? How are things between you and your children? Have things changed since coming to Canada?
(e) Compared to when you were in ___ (home country), have things changed in the kinds of things you do, or the way you live?

7. Achieving a better life in Canada

Q. What do you think you can do to have a better life in Canada?

8. Help from Canadians

Q. How do you think Canadians can help you have a better life in Canada?

9. Open-ended

Q. Is there anything else you would like to discuss which we have not talked about yet?
APPENDIX C
Demographic Information

Name__________________________

1. How long have you been in Canada? (years or months) ______________

2. What country are you from? ____________________

3. Did you live in the city____ or country____?

4. Did you live in a place other than your home country before coming to Canada? Yes____ No____
   What country (countries)? ____________________________
   How many years did you live there? ____________

5. What is your native language? ________________________

6. How old are you? ______________

7. Are you Married____ Divorced ____ Single ____ Widowed____?

8. How many children do you have? _____
   What are their ages? ______________________________

9. What is your highest level of education (check one)
   (i) Elementary school ______
       Highest grade/level __________
   (ii) High school ______
        Highest grade/level __________
   (iii) College____ Number of years____
          Completed Yes____ No____
          If "yes" what diploma did you obtain? ____________________________
   (iv) University____ Number of years____
        Completed Yes____ No____
        If "yes" what degree(s) did you obtain? ____________________________
APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYTIC PROCESS
("Threat to self-worth")

The steps used to derive the category "Threat to self-worth" from the "Language" domain are provided here. The sources of this methodology are Giorgi's (1985b) work and Rennie's (1992; 1994) work. The analytical process used (i.e., reflexivity, empathy, abstraction, imaginative variation) is similar to that used by Giorgi. I have also included from his work the process of translating textual data into psychological language. However, in his work, he starts with a concept already outlined (e.g., learning) and proceeds to discover its phenomenology. However, in this study, concepts emerge from participants' narratives. This is similar to what occurs in the "Grounded theory" approach that Rennie uses.

1. Having combined instances relevant to the "Language" domain separately for the narrative of each participant, I scanned the text for meaning units. Meaning units are statements with one main psychological concept, reflected by participants' attitudes, feelings, cognitions.

2. As I reflected on the meaning units, I noted the psychological concept that seemed evident. One concept that emerged from this domain, "Language", seemed to relate to self-esteem associated with participants' perceptions of how others see them and the impact of these perceptions. I then scanned the rest of the text for meaning units related to this concept.

3. For subsequent participants, I made a similar search that culminated in combining all meaning units (across participants) that reflected this concept. These clustered meaning units (as delineated in the first column of Table D-1) were then analyzed together.

4. I then attempted to derive, through the process described in the methodology, what was the main experience reflected in the meaning units, generating a psychological description (second column of Table D-1).

5. A combined analysis of these psychological descriptions revealed several components or aspects of the concept reflected in participants' various experiences. These components correspond to the underlined headings by which meaning units are organized in Table D-1.
6. The components which emerged combined to form the category labelled "Threat to self-worth" and were distilled until the essential experience of the overall concept remained. Specifics were thus omitted as much as possible without detracting from what is the central experience of the concept. The resulting description, reflecting the crux of the experience, is represented in the final report contained in the Results section.
TABLE D-1.
Meaning units, psychological descriptions, and components associated with the category "Threat to self-worth" from the "Language" domain.

Negative responses/messages and participants' reactions
1. They didn't come to sit with us or talk to us. When we talk to them they turn their face and giggle. I would like to tell them to come to my country and let me see if you can speak my language.

2. People misunderstand, they get angry, I feel sad.

3. The people ignore you, they don't pay attention to you. [When people ignore you how do you feel?] Frustrated.

4. When I went to the doctor and said "This girl will translate for me," he laughed. He laughed I cried. Sometimes they don't understand it's not our first language. If

1. P. observes that there is no attempt made to befriend her. Attempts on her part are met with a rejecting response that generates hurt and anger. She sees their response as reflecting a lack of empathy insofar as they appear unable to imagine and have an appreciation of her plight.

2. P. perceives that when people have difficulty understanding what she tries to communicate, they become angry. She is saddened by her inability to communicate fluently and its effect on others.

3. P. perceives that people respond to her difficulties with English by simply ignoring her, by treating her as if she does not exist. The message she receives is that one is inconsequential and does not qualify for recognition unless one can communicate fluently in the language. She experiences this situation as frustrating.

4. P. is humiliated when she perceives that the doctor is not only extremely unempathic to her difficult situation of being unable to explain what is wrong but moreover
they went to my country, it's the same.

5. The problem is when they speak fast and use different word and you can't say "What does this mean?" People get nervous or angry.

6. Sometimes in stores when you ask the sales person something, when you make a little mistake, I think the person should understand. I think they don't want to try, they don't have the patience. [How do you feel to be treated that way?] I feel like they push you down. [And that makes you feel?] Sad. Some people use a situation like this to show they are superior.

7. Sometimes I think that people at the grocery or stores are not enough patient. It seems that they don't want to or like to help people who are not perfect in English.

8. If I say some words incorrect, even if it is a small mistake, I don't get an answer but an ironical smile.

9. They ask me to go and ask me to ask something. Then I found out they stand behind the door and listen and laugh. I go home and finds her solution ridiculous.

5. P. observes that there are negative consequences when one asks for clarification in instances where one has difficulty understanding the language. She has learned to desist from asking for clarification to avoid these negative reactions.

6. P. desires more empathy for her difficulties and observes instead that the response to her mistakes is impatience and a refusal to be understanding. She perceives that the intent of the other is to communicate that she is of low worth and inferior to the other.

7. P. perceives that these people are impatient with her difficulties with English and are reluctant to help those with these difficulties. The message she receives is that one's worth as a customer is lower because of these difficulties.

8. P. perceives a contemptuous and derisive response to her mistakes.

9. P. realizes that others are having fun at the expense of her difficulties. She is distressed and humiliated.
cry and tell my husband.

10. I don't understand, she speaks very fast. I ask her to speak slowly. She said bring someone who understands.

11. Sometimes when you say "Excuse me," they say "Forget it." I feel mad.

Anxiety and discomfort and their effects

1. At that time I understood many English word but I couldn't speak. Canadians speak very fast and I had difficulties to understand even the words I knew. I was very unsure. I felt unpleasant when somebody tried to talk to me.

2. I'm afraid that sometimes people who speak English can understand what I say a different way. For example, if I want to say something kind, they understand that I want to hurt them. The whole sentence goes upside down.

3. Some people treat me, look at me like "What?!" It makes me feel stupid but not all. In these cases, I feel nervous, feel blocked, if I speak, I'm incoherent so I say "Stop".

4. I'm very nervous, afraid sometimes, I'm tired, this is no good, I don't speak English.

5. If I feel people don't have patience, I don't speak, I tremble.

when she finds out.

10. P. observes that the person has no patience with or empathy for her difficulty.

11. P. is angered by the dismissive and impatient response to her request for clarification/repetition.

1. P. experiences a sense of insecurity and lack of confidence with her English skills. Communicating in English becomes a source of discomfort for her.

2. The risk of having people misunderstand what she is trying to communicate and being offended or hurt makes P. anxious when communicating in English.

3. In cases where P. perceives that people think her stupid because of her difficulties, she becomes so nervous that she is unable to speak.

4. Sometimes her difficulties with English is such a struggle that P. feels anxious and fearful.

5. When P. perceives that people are impatient with her difficulties, she
6. I did not understand anything, I talked by hand and I wrote the number, it was very difficult and I was very embarrassed.

7. Sometimes I have a bad mood, feel alone feel sad. It's not the same in your country you talk to mother, sister, you feel comfortable.

Consequences of negative experiences and fears associated with speaking English

1. If they want to talk, I talk a little bit. I'm afraid to get close. They would say, why bother to get to know somebody like that who speaks only few words.

2. Sometimes I say "Okay, okay," but I don't understand.

3. When I talk to Canadians at a party, I end the conversation at "Hi/Bye". Maybe they don't want to talk to bother you. So I never get a chance to talk.

4. I am afraid to look for a job, to have an interview. The language is becomes so nervous that she is unable to speak.

6. P. finds it embarrassing to be only able to communicate in such rudimentary ways.

7. P. experiences a sense of loss, loneliness, and unhappiness when she contrasts the ease and comfort she had communicating in her homeland.

1. P. is afraid that people may find interacting with her not worth their while given her difficulties. To avoid potential rejection, she limits her conversation and keeps to herself.

2. P. seeks to avoid negative reactions to her difficulties and her own consequent bad feelings by pretending that she understands.

3. P. keeps her conversation to a minimum to allay the other's awkwardness in feeling as if they are bothering her. She regrets the effect this has on limiting her opportunities to talk.

4. P. seems to dread going out to look for a job because of the fact that
the main barrier.

5. I really want to get a job but when I think about the interview, I feel scared, I have no confidence because of the language, not because I don't have the ability to do the job.

6. Now I try to look in the eyes and guess what answer. If I think they answer with patience, I will speak.

7. All days I stayed at home for no talking.

Self-image, contrasts to the past
1. Some people treat me, look at me like "What?!" It makes me feel stupid but not all.

2. I feel stupid, I don't know why. Sometimes when you say "Excuse me," they say "Forget it." I feel mad.

3. In some parts living in Canada gives you confidence, in other, it takes away your self-esteem. Back home I am proud that I can talk, laughing, I talked with people.

she will have to speak English in the interview and lacks confidence in her English skills.

5. When P thinks of going through a job interview, she feels afraid and unconfident because of the limits of her English skills.

6. P. seeks to minimize the occurrence of impatient responses to her difficulties with English and the negative impact on her feelings by carefully watching to determine beforehand how the person is likely to respond.

7. P's response to her negative experiences of speaking English is to avoid such situations by isolating herself.

1. As a result of her perception that others think her stupid because of her English difficulties, P's sense of self is one of inadequacy.

2. P. feels deficient and foolish even though she is angered when people are impatient with her requests for clarification.

3. P recalls how confident and at ease she was communicating in her homeland which contrasts with her experiences communicating in English in Canada. From the latter she feels that her self-
4. I was very active. I like to talk to people, my job was always to talk with people but here I had problems to talk with people.

4. P. contrasts her vivacious and outgoing character in her homeland with the limitations imposed by her difficulties in communicating with people here.
APPENDIX E

CATEGORIES, COMPONENTS, AND MEANING UNITS FOR ALL DOMAINS

I. LANGUAGE

A. Threat to self-worth

1. Negative responses/messages and participants' reactions

a. They didn't come to sit with us or talk to us. When we talk to them they turn their face and giggle. I would like to tell them to come to my country and let me see if you can speak my language.

b. People misunderstand, they get angry, I feel sad.

c. The people ignore you, they don't pay attention to you. [When people ignore you how do you feel?] Frustrated.

d. When I went to the doctor and said "This girl will translate for me," he laughed. He laughed I cried. Sometimes they don't understand it's not our first language. If they went to my country, it's the same.

e. The problem is when they speak fast and use different word and you can't say "What does this mean?" People get nervous or angry.

f. Sometimes in stores when you ask the sales person something, when you make a little mistake, I think the person should understand. I think they don't want to try, they don't have the patience. [How do you feel to be treated that way?] I feel like they push you down. [And that makes you feel?] Sad. Some people use a situation like this to show they are superior.

g. Sometimes I think that people at the grocery or stores are not enough patient. It seems that they don't want to or like to help people who are not perfect in English.

h. If I say some words incorrect, even if it is a small mistake, I don't get an answer but an ironical smile.

i. They ask me to go and ask me to ask something. Then I found out they stand behind the door and listen and laugh. I go home and cry and tell my husband.

j. I don't understand, she speaks very fast I ask her to speak slowly. She said bring someone who understands.

k. Sometimes when you say "Excuse me," they say "Forget it." I feel mad.

2. Anxiety and discomfort and their effects

a. At that time I understood many English word but I couldn't speak. Canadians speak very fast and I had difficulties to understand even the words I knew. I was very unsure. I felt unpleasant when somebody tried to talk to me.

b. I'm afraid that sometimes people who speak English can understand what I say a different way. For example, if I want to say something kind, they understand that I want to hurt them. The whole sentence goes upside down.

c. Some people treat me, look at me like "What?!!" It makes me feel stupid but not all. In these cases, I feel nervous, feel blocked, if I speak, I'm incoherent so I say "Stop".

d. I'm very nervous, afraid sometimes, I'm tired, this is no good, I don't speak English.

e. If I feel people don't have patience, I don't speak, I tremble.
f. I did not understand anything, I talked by hand and I wrote the number, it was very difficult and I was very embarrassed.
g. Sometimes I have a bad mood, feel alone feel sad. It's not the same in your country you talk to mother, sister, you feel comfortable.

3. Consequences of negative experiences and fears associated with speaking English

a. If they want to talk, I talk a little bit. I'm afraid to get close. They would say, why bother to get to know somebody like that who speaks only few words.
b. Sometimes I say "Okay, okay," but I don't understand.
c. When I talk to Canadians at a party, I end the conversation at "Hi/Bye". Maybe they don't want to talk to bother you. So I never get a chance to talk.
d. I am afraid to look for a job, to have an interview. The language is the main barrier.
e. I really want to get a job but when I think about the interview, I feel scared, I have no confidence because of the language, not because I don't have the ability to do the job.
f. Now I try to look in the eyes and guess what answer. If I think they answer with patience, I will speak.
g. All days I stayed at home for no talking.

4. Self-image, contrasts to the past

a. Some people treat me, look at me like "What?!" It makes me feel stupid but not all.
b. I feel stupid, I don't know why. Sometimes when you say "Excuse me," they say "Forget it." I feel mad.
c. In some parts living in Canada gives you confidence, in other, it takes away your self-esteem. Back home I am proud that I can talk, laughing, I talked with people.
d. I was very active. I like to talk to people, my job was always to talk with people but here I had problems to talk with people.

B. Effective participation in society

1. Assertion

a. If you want to defend yourself, you have to have the language, if not, you can't express yourself.
b. Our English is not good enough to talk, argue. We keep quiet, [they] don't pay attention to us.
c. In my country a long time ago, all the children have to go to school, still some people don't know how to write and read. I feel sorry for them. Now I don't know how to write or speak, my situation is worse...they could express their feelings, what they're thinking.
d. When at work, not your mistake but they blame you but you don't know how to tell them back, very upsetting.

2. Participation in the area of employment

a. I thought when I came here I would have a job easy but not so. I came to the Y to learn English but it was not enough, 3 hours. I speak my language at home. I was desperate.
b. I'm afraid to look for a job, to have an interview. The language is the main barrier.
c. But to get a good job it's hard, especially if you want to talk on the phone.
d. I really want to get a job but when I think about the interview, I feel scared. I have no confidence because of the language, not because I don’t have the ability to do the job.

e. The more I learn English the better it gets in Canada...because I don’t work, I don’t buy a house, I don’t have children, very difficult.

3. Participation in the social arena

a. Sometimes I feel angry, not with people, angry that I can’t speak the right way. People misunderstand, they get angry, I feel sad.

b. Sometimes when we sit and talk, they laugh and I don’t feel it’s funny. It feels funny, I feel, ‘Am I wrong?’ or ‘What’s wrong?’

c. It was hard to associate with the others, maybe the shame of my language; it’s a barrier between you and others.

d. If I don’t speak English, I don’t like my new life, because I’m not a thing, the life for me is to live with people.

4. Securing one’s welfare

a. I feel terrible, frustrated because sometimes for example when you go to the doctor, I have 2 surgeries, I have to say what’s wrong with me, this medicine isn’t good for me.

b. Before sometimes, I cry, especially at the doctor’s office. I need to explain, I can’t and when you’re alone and have to do everything yourself.

c. One time I went to the clinic, I tried to know what my daughter has. she had bronchitis before. I was really bad in English. I saw a lady on the bus who has a daughter 10-11 years. I asked for translation. The daughter would. When I went to the doctor and said this girl will translate for me, he laughed. He laughed, I cried.

II. WORK/SOCIAL STATUS

A. Identity/Self-image

1. Worth, purpose and Identity

a. I asked, why did I come. I was somebody in my country, here I am nobody. Don’t have self-esteem, confidence. People look at you like you are nothing. When you meet somebody they want to know you, the first thing they ask is what you do. I say I don’t work, they look down on you.

b. I never liked to be at home, to be a housewife. All my life, I worked, learned, was active. I used to make something, now everyday it’s the same.

c. From a very well-situated person, I became in the situation to depend on my poor husband’s earnings.

d. If I always stay at home, I feel like life has no goal/purpose. I think the life of people is to achieve something. If I was to spend time at home, no opportunities to do anything.

e. I started to work as a secretary, which I thought I wold never do - picking up the phone, listen to the boss. My social class changed, I hated it.

f. The supervisor interviewed me...I remember when we shook hands...I regained most of my self-esteem.

B. Disappointments: Expectations versus reality

1. Disappointed hopes
a. I thought when I came I would have a job easy but not so.

b. I have a feeling that I can find just the least paid and worse job at the beginning of my Canadian career. Now I can just work simple jobs.

c. When we came we didn’t think we couldn’t get a job...We didn’t think for three years we have to ask the government for money.

2. Coping with new realities

a. It’s important to do basic things, I don’t want to be a doctor or lawyer.

b. I was willing and able to do any job. If I was in __, I wouldn’t do it even if I’m starving. It would be a shame. Here in a strange country, I didn’t care, just wanted to work.

c. I don’t think about it because I have a small child.

3. Contrast between past and present

a. My husband and I were professionals. We had been working for a long time and during that period we possessed everything that we needed for a very good life. Since we came here, we had to start from the beginning. Back home we were very respectable people with a lot of connections and influence.

b. I told __ it’s too much, maybe I would leave. I didn’t want to [commit] suicide, I didn’t want to raise __ this way. I was on mother’s allowance and sometimes I wish I didn’t live anymore - I was waiting for the cheque. I didn’t live like that before.

c. In our country we had our apartment. Now we rent the apartment but it is empty. To do it comfortable is a very important task, because we live here every day and our son must feel himself as at home.

d. I feel bad, I think about back home, think if I’m home I have a good job, good family. I came here, everything different; I home, high level, not down. Because of war, I’m here. But now here, life is hard.

e. When I came here, I had to sleep on the floor for 3 months with my children. I had to eat on the floor. Believe me it was hard.

C. Anxieties of job insecurity

1. Fear of being judged incompetent

a. Sometimes I think I am losing the job. The thing is I can’t express myself. Maybe they think I, not capable, I can’t speak English.

b. They asked me questions about tests which I didn’t know so they thought I was stupid if I thought I could work as a __

c. They would open the door, look at you and right away say, "Where are you from? Couldn’t hey get a Canadian?" Another person wouldn’t even open the door which bothered me emotionally. I didn’t go anymore.

2. Fear of being unable to meet demands

a. We don’t know if we can hang on till 65. Now everything is computer and we didn’t learn computer. Now we don’t have time to go back to school, especially with our English. We start to worry about children and about ourselves as we get older, don’t have that much energy. Afraid we will get laid off because we don’t have enough energy.

D. Difficulties pursuing one’s goal to be employed
1. Helplessness, despair and the temptation to give up

a. I was desperate. Asked why did I come.

b. At the beginning, very hard, evaluating my degrees...I spent a lot of wasted time...Now I feel good but not before; so many times I feel like going back.

c. When we have no job, we have a black time; think about the future, don't see the way we'll go in our lives.

d. I feel everything is closed, black, depressed. You don't know what you have to do.

e. When you stay at home, you don't have the morality...We didn't think for 3 years we have to ask the government for money. Now we eat, sleep, that's it. Nothing...[If one doesn't] get the chance for 3, 4, 5 years, you get lazy. You don't have the possibility.

f. I told ... it's too much, maybe I would leave. I didn't want to [commit] suicide, I didn't want to raise ... this way. I was on mother's allowance and sometimes I wish I didn't live anymore - I was waiting for the cheque. I didn't live like that before.

2. Frustrated with obstacles

a. They don't have to say this is Canadian, this is landed immigrant, Black, Chinese. They have to go inside, interview them, give them a chance for a job...But not judge them before to give them a chance...They need it, they need it for their life to work.

b. I think, I know how I can work but nobody give the opportunity to work because I have to talk. I think I would work as a volunteer to get to talk. Sometimes I feel frustrated. I know I can do that kind of work.

c. I looked for jobs but couldn't get anything...I asked or any job in the ... just to be close to my profession...I feel frustrated.

d. I have to restudy for 3 years, study again what you already know.

e. It is very difficult for me because I don't have the information about this. I try to ask many people about a job. But the answers are very different...We don't have the information to whom we must apply or who to ask. We don't understand the law of Canada...We ask relatives, 'Help us, help us', but they work during the day. We need information, information, and information. And I ask for help for this.

f. I have to help my family so I can clean, wash, dishes, but still not easy. You need somebody to recommend you. If you know somebody, and don't have English.

BEING WITH CANADIANS

A. Unwelcome

1. Sense of being resented and unwanted

a. They don't have an open mind. They look at you and know you are different, not Canadian. They look at you like an invader, came her to take jobs, money; go back home.

b. I hear them, 'Fucking immigrants, they're here to take money, jobs.'

c. One day, I saw from the building, a man yelling at the children. I went downstairs, he said, "You, take your fucking children home."

d. And you know people hate us immigrants, refugees, especially ... people...They say 'You're ..., you're a liar...I don't want to make contact with anyone.

e. [S]ometimes I feel that some people don't like to have immigrants around. I have heard a conversation between a bus driver and passengers. They were talking about immigrants, how they take their jobs, their money. I was very embarrassed while I was listening to their conversation.

f. I say it in their face, 'You are prejudiced.' One person I said it to, I didn't talk to him after. He said, 'What is our
government doing bringing ships of foreigners, giving them money, we’re paying taxes.’ I said, ‘I’m working, paying ore taxes
than you are.’ I was shaking all day long, didn’t talk to him.

2. Perceptions of being discriminated against and being unvalued

a. And you should go to social services and see how they treat them; very nasty. I have seen it many times, house people’s
attitudes toward immigrants and blacks…Sometimes I see Canadians kick the door with their feet and swear, they’re afraid
of them. But we, they talk to us like we’re nobody. That’s hard.

b. [M]ost thing we need, to be treated fairly, not because of our English. Try to understand and be more friendly.

c. [If you’re going to the dealership and you open the door, they look at you like ‘What are you doing here; you can’t buy a
car.’]

d. Sometimes when I go to an office, serve Canadians different from us black haired people, way they are to us not really nice.
Some of friends on welfare, when they go for their cheque, are treated different from Canadians to refugees…I feel upset but
couldn’t do anything about it.

e. [Never] felt racism in Canada except there a group of people who are not educated enough who look at you like you are
a stranger. Deep down even those very well educated who appear classy sometimes I feel it deep down, probably pretend that
they like us, there’s no racism, sometimes I feel. Those who give respect, talk of you highly, sometimes in a word, they say it,
it is deep down.

3. Varied emotional and behavioral reactions to perceived negative attitudes

a. I thought why am I here, better to be in my country. No one will say such things to me.

b. There are always some that I give no importance. In the moment I feel like punching them but I have sufficient control
but if I didn’t have it, oh wow!

c. I say it in their face, ‘You are prejudiced.’ One person I said it to, I didn’t talk to him after. He said, ‘What is our
government doing bringing ships of foreigners, giving them money, we’re paying taxes.’ I said, ‘I’m working, paying ore taxes
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Some of friends on welfare, when they go for their cheque, are treated different from Canadians to refugees…I feel upset but
couldn’t do anything about it.

B. Positive feelings

1. Preference for Canadian attributes

a. They’re good. I really respect them. Very gentle and soft…More loving heart without knowing you…Not [her own ethnic
group], don’t even look at you. I try to learn from them.

b. What I like about Canadian people, they are kind…Canadians are frank, nice. They have kind hearts. I feel I can be myself
with them. It doesn’t happen with people fro my country; you have to act…I can’t express myself with people from my country.

2. Other positive attitudes

a. I think the people are very nice, sweet, and helpful.

b. In my opinion, Canada is very open to all nationalities, never felt racism in Canada.
FRIENDSHIPS WITH CANADIANS

A. Walls of fear of rejection/ of perceived rejection

1. Fear of hurt and rejection

a. If they want to talk, I talk a little bit. I'm afraid to get close. They would say, why bother to get to know somebody like that who speaks only few words.

b. If I know them, some, if I trust them but I never felt comfortable.

c. Don't really talk much. If I had a problem, I wouldn't talk to them, different culture, maybe they laugh at me.

2. Perception of rejection

a. They would treat you different by not being friends with you, don't get to know you personally, keep their distance. I just talk to them but never had any that would come over and sit with me.

B. Walls of dissimilar values and cultural lifestyles

1. Dissimilar values

a. We have some Canadian friends, together with them, we learn many things about Canada, USA but I find I can't say very much and sometimes we don't have the same values.

b. Last 3 months, I went to ___ with people from ___ — and I feel when we talk about some topics, we have different values...Canadians like to make jokes, they don't care if they say something about sex, but [people from her ethnic group] do.

c. To meet people close to me because I have one view on life, I just talk to them but never had any that would come over and sit with me.

d. Canadian friends, I don't have it; think different in the way they live. [Is there something you think you could get from being with Canadians?] I don't think so...My people, the money we make today, save for tomorrow. With Canadian people, borrow for tomorrow. If we try to live like them, it's never enough money we make.

2. Dissimilar cultural lifestyles

a. Don't really talk much...I got educated in ___, my friend in Canada, think differently.

b. I have to learn not to have the same expectations which I did from my culture. I expected that people would help me. Now I learned that I have to do it on my own.

c. Still looking for a close friend but don't know if I will find, people in Canada are too busy. In my country, we live close, her far. In my country, easy to have friends.

C. Bridges

1. Identified facilitative personal attitudes

a. Their way to be is different [but] I am a person who is adaptive so it's not a problem. I feel comfortable and we learn from each other.

b. I can adjust to any body. Friends tell me that I am a fast learner. I adapt, I take the good and leave the bad. Not that I like everything Canadian.

c. No problem for me...As long as good. If you see them not good, walk away.

2. Facilitative attributes and actions of Canadian friends

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a. They shared everything, when I cry, they feel to cry...If you have friends, even if you didn't have help from the government, everything you share, you feel good.

b. I have _, Canadian. She's like a sister...Wouldn't find another like her. When I have bad feelings, I go there and in five minutes, gone.

c. Right now I do, one is _, I call her my Canadian mom..._ is the person who I feel comfortable with.

LEAVING THEIR HOMELANDS

A. Safe but unsettled

1. Priority of personal safety

a. Our life was threatened, we didn't think.

b. At the time I left, it was war, I just wanted to go. After we settle in other country, I felt so homesick.

c. I miss them but I have to be here...It is dangerous if I go back.

d. The first for me and my family is the safe life.

2. Homesickness and helplessness and uncertainty regarding reunion with family

a. I was sad for my parents because I didn't know when I was going to see them again.

b. When I left for Canada, it was very difficult. Many of them, I never saw again. My home town closed, no one can go in or outside.

c. It wasn't so terrible when I left, now for sure I miss them but what can I do.

d. Now they write letters, they would like to see me but it's hard. We don't have money.

e. At first didn't feel anything. Later I was homesick; always thinking about home.

3. Difficulty feeling settled and at peace

a. Now we are in peace, still miss something, roots back there. Still worry about our family, so we don't have a stable life.

b. I feel guilty every time I have a good time because of happiness and they don't have anything to eat.

B. Separated but attached

1. Contrast between positives of past and implied negatives of present

a. Before the war, it was a very good country to live in...peaceful and easy to make a living.

b. Before the military it was nice...Before it was a rich country, it didn't need fertilizer.

c. Coming to a new world where you didn't know anything, it was scary.

d. I was so nervous, worry too much. when I lived with my parents, I didn't worry about anything. Here I had to do everything. I felt so lonely.

e. People cared back home. If I needed help, they would help; they had more time.
2. **Strong attachments to homeland**
   a. There is a saying in ___ about those they're going to stay strangers wherever they go.
   b. Now we are in peace, still miss something, roots back there. Still worry about our family, so we don't have a stable life.
   c. When I left, I was crying, they were crying...I have a nice, big family.
   d. It's hard to leave your country. I had one best friend, I missed her so much.

3. **Factors of current environment that discourage attachment**
   a. I couldn't communicate, nobody from my family, homesick, couldn't sleep, scared.
   b. I thought why am I here, better to be in my country. Nobody will say such things to me.
   c. If I'm on the street, I just want to go home and stay there, not go anywhere.
   d. People cared back home. If I needed help, they would help; they had more time.

**HEALTH**

A. The impact of emotional distress on physical well-being

1. **The impact of worry and anxiety and a contrasting experience**
   a. Always worry about life in these 12 years. If we were back in our country, our health wouldn't be as bad because we worry about if we will lose our job.
   b. Our health is worse; we felt better. All the time I am nervous. My husband looks older. All the time we're thinking, so our eyes are heavy. We are not as free.
   c. Because I think too much about my family, I have gastro, acid stomach, vomit. I think "I have to help my family, have to go to school... I have to go out and get money, get what the children want."
   d. Now I'm better...Now I know I have to wait my day. I understand everything.

2. **The sense of deterioration**
   a. Now our health is getting worse...We don't know if we can hang on till 65.
   b. I lost some hair and my monthly period was not regular. Maybe because I changed place and maybe I feel some pressure.
   c. I was better before. Now there is pain everywhere, neck eyes. It wasn't like this, I feel like 80 years old...When I feel bad about something, I feel terrible pain in the eyes...With the war, everything gone, no house.

**DEALING/COPING WITH DISTRESS**

A. "Sharing my pain is an exercise in futility"

1. **Discouragement of disclosure**
   a. Sometimes we want to speak about that but they don't want to listen. They think we're lucky because they saved our lives,
we don't need anything... To express that I think that has to go out... [How did you feel when she said that?] Empty, angry, sad. Now I don't talk about what I feel because nobody listens and I feel worse when I talk about it.

b. If I tried even to talk about my feelings, not to ask for some help, people I am surrounded by are not willing to listen.

c. The people I talked to, the more I talk, worse; they make me worry, so I keep it to myself. Some people who live here long don't encourage, they just try to make you feel bad.

d. I tried to solve them myself. I tried to explain my problems to my relatives. They listened to me but I felt very sad because I understand it was my problem only. They have their problems. I began to feel more loneliness than before.

2. Philosophy of coping

a. [What would it be like if you told someone?] If you did, pain stays, feeling bad stays inside.

b. I felt it was no use to ask someone to give pity, I have to make myself strong.

c. I tried to solve them myself. I tried to explain my problems to my relatives. They listened to me but I felt very sad because I understand it was my problem only. They have their problems. I began to feel more loneliness than before.

d. I understand it is difficult to hold problems inside. Maybe for two months, every night I cried. After that, I said to myself, "Be strong, you need time."

B. Distance and connections

1. Isolation and escape

a. If they want to talk, I talk a little bit, I'm afraid to get close. They would say, 'Why bother to get to know somebody like that who speaks only a few words'.

b. I closed my eyes, closed my memories. We can only just wait, maybe it will be better economically. What can we do... I am so tired, I would like to live with our family quietly.

c. If I'm on the street, I just want to go home and stay there, not go anywhere.

d. I stayed home all by myself in winter, very bad. For days I didn't see anybody.

2. Loneliness and the need for connections similar those past

a. We had a lot of friends to share happy or sad feelings, which is not the situation now. If I tried even to talk about my feelings, not to ask for some help, people I am surrounded by are not willing to listen.

b. People in Canada are too busy. In my country we live close, here, we live far. Deep inside, I'm lonely.

c. I just wish I had a friend who is wonderful but everyone here is busy... I felt people care back home. If you needed help, they would help, they had more time.

d. They listened to me but I felt very sad because I understand it was my problem only. They have their problems. I began to feel more loneliness than before.

e. The first year wasn't easy, writing letters like crazy back home.

f. I wish for a personal relationship with Canadians who would open their wings and support me just to feel not alone.

SPOUSAL RELATIONSHIPS

A. Migration provides a potential for growth or deterioration
1. Drawn closer by hardship
   a. In __ we have many friends, I have many and he. We had different circles and we are busy working also very young and did 
      not understand each other very well. When we came here, we both face difficulties and I think that's why we became very 
      close.
   b. I think we became closer. Maybe before the war, we started to have too good a life and we made problems of little things. 
      Now we know what is important and we grew up and are closer now.
   c. When I came to Canada I heard that marriages break up because of other women about it hasn't happened. But our 
      marriage is closer and stronger.

2. Increased conflict and distance
   a. It's a very difficult time. We must decide many problems and we become very aggressive because we don't know how to 
      decide them.
   b. I feel very alone because I don't talk to my husband about his because he needs help. If he sees I cry, he will feel bad and 
      will feel like he doesn't have the force because I don't help him...The woman carries the family on her shoulder, the man needs 
      support to be told he is strong, lovely.
   c. He always complains, says I was better in __.
   d. I have to cook and clean. That makes me upset...I have to do everything. then I come to work, then I go home...He sits and 
      does nothing...I work and you don't.

B. My role as a woman: the potential for shifting perspectives

1. Traditional preferences
   a. When women and men are working, there is too much divorce. They don't care. Everyone has their own money so the 
      marriage doesn't stay long. 'You don't need me'.
   b. Still like being a housewife. Prefer to be a housewife.
   c. Now I want to stay home because son goes to school, I have to take care of the other one.

2. Perceived positive change
   a. It's the same, except that my husband helps more. If I say, 'I'm tired,' he says he already cooked and washed.
   b. Now 50 percent of personality changed because I have to live in Canada. I will do it if I can do it, if not too much 
      pressure...In __ I had thoughts people didn't like; I believe in freedom for women. In our country, so much pressure on 
      women, whether wife, sister, daughter...Now my mother is 62, she realizes it's wrong...My brothers are open minded, maybe 
      that helped.

3. Change and conflict
   a. After two months, my husband was abusive...He didn't let me work...I just had to cook, wash. In some part, I enjoyed it, 
      doing it for my husband and child. But when it became a duty, I hated it...He knew my position, knew my life. He never 
      mentioned what kind of life I would have. I had a dream coming to Canada - freedom, relaxing, enjoying life but it was 
      different.
   b. In __ the man controls, so if you want to go out, you have to ask the husband. If he says yes, then yes. When I came here, 
      I saw women, they don't have these things. So I started to do a little, not asking. He's upset, says 'You become a Canadian.' 
      I told him, 'Why she can do this and I can't do that?'
CHILDREN

A. Disconnection from native culture and family

1. Positive elements in homeland and the contrasting threat of the present environment

a. In ___ we let children go out, not like here, where they stay inside. Every house, open the door, children play outside, play with neighbours, don't need to worry about them. Sometimes don't even know who neighbour is.

b. The life in ___ is different from here. I think when my son is 18, I'm scared for the future, he will go and live alone, in ___ he can't. same for my daughter.

c. Sometimes I think it is better to raise ___ in that culture till she is a teenager.

d. How much I try my best, still kids not respectable as I want. Raised a different way. I like Canada but I wish I raised my kids in my country.

e. I brought my customs and expect the children to carry on but there is peer pressure...These things are normal for Canadian girls but not for us...I regret to come here because I don't need these problems. In my country I wouldn't have to think about it.

2. Fear of children being deprived

a. Around her always were many people. Now sometimes, she's very sad. She wants to get friends here but can't. There she had her family, lots of love, lots of patience. We were with our friends, family. Now, we are more alone at home. It's very important for children to be with other people.

b. She doesn't know her cousins, doesn't grow as part of the family. I have good memories playing at my grandmother. I worry about her. I wonder if Canadians are not intimate, are cold. I have such a warm feeling in my culture. I wonder if she goes back at 21, will she be able to talk with them.

c. If she doesn't adjust, she will miss something. Maybe she won't have an identity. I want to teach her about my religion - she's going to a Catholic school, learns about Jesus. Kids here don't want to talk our language.

3. Lack of support and concern for children's well-being and development

a. If I'm sick, who would take care of her?...Being single, you have all the responsibility which makes it harder.

b. My son the first day at school came home with a bad word...I want him to be a good boy, every mother wants her children to be good. I'm looking for a good future for the, to get good jobs, not for them to say bad words. I don't need it...because I'm alone it's not easy, big responsibility.

B. Concern about Canadian enculturation

1. Concern over Canadian influence and concomitant waning influence of indigenous culture

a. Now he forgot ___ and now everything is English when he comes home. He wants to talk English but I want him to talk ___.

b. We teach them ___ culture, they know Canadian culture. When we advise them don't do this, they still take Canadian culture.

c. I want to teach her about my religion - she's going to a Catholic school, learns about Jesus. Kids here don't want to talk our language. How many hours do I have with him?

d. Most problem every parent has this problem, because they are born here, do things the Canadian way, sometimes I see it's not good for them and try to stop them and they don't listen. Very upset before and don't know what to do, that's why we
always have arguing.

e. His friends have girlfriends, drink, they ask him, 'Why don’t you do that?' He says he can’t his culture, religion. They say, 'Forget it, you are in Canada, you can do it.' They talk about moving out...The government encourages it. They can tell police lies and they believe. A friend of my daughter told police that her parents were abusing her because she didn’t like the family ways. When my daughter saw that, I am more careful with my daughter because maybe she will leave one day. Back home, when you say, 'do this', they do it. You say 'no', it means no. When you say 'no' here, she might want to leave, so I say 'yes' but I'm afraid of what she will do.

f. I brought my customs and expect the children to carry on but there is peer pressure...These things are normal for Canadian girls but not for us...I regret to come here because I don’t need these problems. In my country I wouldn’t have to think about it.

2. Concern regarding conflict and separation

a. In Canada I see parents and children have another opinion and children don't listen to parents...Children here only care for their opinion. I try to bring up a child, he's free, it's good...but I want him to respect also.

b. I am worried that she is acting like a Canadian girl, some don’t care about their parents.

c. Most problem every parent has this problem, because they are born here, do things the Canadian way, sometimes I see it’s not good for them and try to stop them and they don’t listen. Very upset before and don’t know what to do, that’s why we always have arguing.

d. I try to explain things to my son. I try to make my son kind. He didn’t have friends, not good quality friends. I don’t like the life in Canada, they make children against the parents. They can leave the parents and live on their own. It is my right to say you can’t do this, he lives with me, he has to listen. I know many teenagers if the parents say you can’t do this, they can leave, the government will pay for the apartment. Every body says, if your parents hit you, you can call the police. They keep putting this in their head. I want to keep my son. If I hit my son if he does something wrong, it is my right.

3. Concern for moral development

a. Over here they say we cannot hit children, if you hit, we will call the police. to me, if they do something wrong, I have to hit them, I have to kill them if they do something wrong, even if I have to go to jail...I love them so I teach them.

b. How much I try my best, still kids not respectable as I want. Raised a different way.

c. I try to explain things to my son. I try to make my son kind. He didn’t have friends, not good quality friends. I don’t like the life in Canada, they make children against the parents. They can leave the parents and live on their own. It is my right to say you can’t do this, he lives with me, he has to listen. I know many teenagers if the parents say you can’t do this, they can leave, the government will pay for the apartment. Every body says, if your parents hit you, you can call the police. They keep putting this in their head. I want to keep my son. If I hit my son if he does something wrong, it is my right.

d. My son the first day at school came home with a bad word...I want him to be a good boy, every mother wants her children to be good. I’m looking for a good future for the, to get good jobs, not for them to say bad words. I don’t need it...because I’m alone it’s not easy, big responsibility.

ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL LIFE IN CANADA

A. Connecting with Canadian culture

1. Demonstrating worth to Canadians

a. Let Canadians be aware that we are not garbage. They can benefit from us. Maybe we have things they don’t know.

b. Get close to them, talk to them more, be more friendly...If they go deeper, maybe they can find something interesting.2. I hope we are going to have more Canadian friends which will help us to get used to Canadian style of life.
2. Seek connection, intimacy, communication

a. I want to know what they think of us too. At my daughter's daycare, they were friendly, they looked like they wanted to talk. Maybe they didn't because I didn't speak well and they didn't want to hurt my feelings. Maybe they don't want to hurt me; there's misunderstanding on both sides.

b. We all have the same needs to, all need to be loved, to be cared.

c. But we must meet many people.

d. Come closer to Canadians, be more familiar to Canadians.

3. Willingness to learn, make changes, expand horizons

a. Forget about staying in your community, start communicating with other nationalities. It's for your own good.

b. Come closer to Canadians, be more familiar to Canadians. Among my friends, they don't want Canadian friends, they think big gap, they can't understand us.

c. Learn not just to hold on to our customs...they keep themselves tight, don't try to accept the Canadian life.

d. We learn from each other. I like learning from others. I know there are ___ people who don't like to be with Canadians.

B. Persisting to effect change

1. Sense of having to persist and endure the battle of pursuing one's goals

a. Most of us came here to work hard.

b. To be positive and to be able to fight for a while. To learn the language and try to do their best to get their dreams.

c. First they have to learn the language, they have to go to school. After, look for a job. Ask information about jobs, and try hard, harder.

d. They need some help I think but they have to do their best themselves.

e. I must be very strong and solve my problem myself. But it must be step by step. I must be very patient

f. If someone wants to live better, can do it. But people, they are lazy, sit down on their ass and smoke. How will they make a good life. Some people are good, work hard for money.

g. Get a good education, try to get off welfare, try to be active, there are lots of things to do beside watching TV.

h. I was willing and able to do any job. I did lots of volunteer work. I didn't sit at home one day...I think those who want to work can find a job, want it bad enough that you can get job. You have to work on it, not easy, don't keep saying, no jobs, bad economy.

2. Belief in individual responsibility and ability and a contrasting sense of helplessness

a. I must be very strong and solve my problem myself. But it must be step by step. I must be very patient

b. If someone wants to live better, can do it. But people, they are lazy, sit down on their ass and smoke. How will they make a good life. Some people are good, work hard for money.

c. I was willing and able to do any job. I did lots of volunteer work. I didn't sit at home one day...I think those who want to work can find a job, want it bad enough that you can get job. You have to work on it, not easy, don't keep saying, no jobs, bad economy.
bad economy.

d. I don't know, I have no idea.

HELP FROM CANADIANS

A. See me with different eyes

1. Appeal for an empathic attitude

a. Just understand us. Know that it's hard to learn a new language, culture, customs.

b. Try to understand us and be more friendly.

c. [W]e don't need anything from them but understanding and good advice at the right time.

d. I felt when they hired me and other people from other countries, I felt they understood me, they dealt with others from another country.

e. We all have the same needs, all need to be loved, to be cared.

f. Have more feelings for others. God made us all, maybe we are different colours but we are all one family.

2. Appeal to be seen as having value

a. Canadians should never forget that their population is made from the nationalities all around the world. Not just government institutions but also ordinary people can help immigrants to feel just like at home.

b. Every country has something good and if you encourage people to bring it, you can imagine what Canada will be like...I have many good things to bring.

c. Get close to them, talk to them more, be more friendly...If they go deeper, maybe they can find something interesting.

d. Immigrants bring their culture, education, sometimes money. This is best, an international community, you can get benefits, values of all different nations, instead of being closed, tight culture, 'We don't want anything new.' Why? If new is for good, why not take it.

Teach me

1. Appeal for teaching with kindness and patience

a. [W]e don't need anything from them but understanding and good advice at the right time.

b. Good advice and patience, instead of poor answers and sending from office to office, could make our life much easier.

c. They have to be friendly, give information.

2. Appeal for recognizing their need for basic/mundane information

a. Because there are many new things different between Canada and immigrants' country and people need to learn about it...Because many people have no idea to do things and many people worry about the language barrier, are scared to go there to ask people...In Canadians' eyes, we are foolish but in our eyes, it's complicated.

b. When we come to Canada we need many information but we don't know how to get it. We are deaf and blind, we are as
newborn baby. We need information, information, information and I ask for help for this...Help us by advice, how to behave ourselves in different situations? To whom must we apply?

C. Give me a fair chance

1. Appeal to be unprejudiced
   a. Most thing we need, to be treated fairly, not because of our English.
   b. Not judge them before you give them a chance.
   c. I think give a fair chance for immigrants to get a job. Sometimes I think maybe some people have ideas, a little bit like discrimination.
   d. [W]hen they see a person, when they see they’re different, say, ‘Let’s get closer.’ Don’t do something different from what they would do with Canadians.
   e. Think openly about accepting foreigners without looking at them as foreigners.

2. Appeal to not obstruct
   a. I felt when they hired me and other people from other countries, I felt they understood me, they dealt with others from another country.
   b. It would be good to create a law that can recognize the skills you have, and give you the chance to develop your knowledge even if you don’t get a certificate. But until you get a certificate, don’t block.
   c. Open doors to black people instead of closing, make it hard for us.
VITA AUCTORIS

Jacqueline Antonio was born in Trinidad and migrated to Canada at age 19. On completing her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Winnipeg in 1989, she embarked on graduate training at the University of Winnipeg in the area of clinical psychology. In 1991, she obtained her Master of Arts degree after which she proceeded to complete requirements for a Doctorate degree in clinical psychology at the University of Windsor.