

**BEYOND BORDERS: PERSPECTIVES FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING LATIN
AMERICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN ON THEIR INTEGRATION EXPERIENCES IN
KELOWNA AND THEIR TRANSNATIONAL TIES**

by

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Abstract

Immigrants continue to endure challenges when settling and integrating in mid-sized cities. In a city such as Kelowna with a homogeneous ‘white’ and ‘older’ population, settlement and integration for immigrants of ‘other’ ethnicities is a challenge. This study focuses on English-speaking immigrant women from Latin America: their integration experiences in Kelowna and their transnational relationships. In addition, coping mechanisms used by immigrant women to overcome integration challenges are examined.

Data for this exploratory case study were obtained from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were done with 10 key informants (government employees, settlement workers, lawyers, journalists, community leaders, and religious leaders) and a questionnaire was completed by 33 immigrant women from Latin America living in the city of Kelowna, all of whom were English speaking with Spanish as their first language. Of these immigrant women, six were randomly selected for in-depth interviews regarding the challenges they have faced in the process of integrating in Kelowna and in maintaining transnational ties with their countries of origin.

The results from this study revealed some of the challenges Latin American immigrant women face when settling and integrating in Kelowna. These challenges include accented language, transferring work experience, having academic credentials recognized, and finding affordable housing. While these women face integration challenges, they stressed the importance of transnational ties with their home countries. Recommendations were made to all levels of government to improve the few services offered to immigrants and/or to implement new services to better assist newly arrived immigrants to Kelowna.

Preface

This research was conducted with approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of British Columbia on May 29, 2012 (UBC BREB Number H12-00980).

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List of Abbreviations

MTV – Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver

CIC – Citizenship and Immigration Canada

NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Latin American immigrant women in the City of Kelowna.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Kelowna,¹ a mid-sized city situated in the Okanagan Valley, is one of the fastest growing cities in British Columbia (Teixeira, 2009). Kelowna's total population grew from 107,035 in 2006 to 117,312 in 2011, an increase of 9.6 percent (See Table 1.1). In comparison, between 2006 and 2011 the total population of the province of British Columbia grew by 7.0 percent from 4,113,487 to 4,400,057 (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Table 1.1 Population Growth in the City of Kelowna and British Columbia

Population	City of Kelowna	British Columbia
Population in 2011	117,312	4,400,057
Population in 2006	107,035	4,113,487
2006 to 2011 population change (%)	9.6	7.0

Source: Statistics Canada (2012)

These increases in population are driven by many factors such as birth rates and internal and external migration. Internal migration occurs both within the province of British Columbia as well as inter-provincially, whereas external migration occurs from other regions of the world.

Canada is known around the world as a major destination for international migrants. In 2011, Canada had an international migrant population of 7,202,340, comprising 21.3 percent of Canada's total population. The large number of immigrants Canada attracts has played a key role in shaping the cultural, social, economic, and political landscapes of the country in the modern "age of migration" (Teixeira, Li, & Kobayashi, 2012). These immense inflows have transformed major metropolitan areas in Canada. However, the Canadian literature reveals much less about the role and impact of immigrants in small- and mid-sized cities, including rural areas in Canada (Teixeira, 2011).

¹ Kelowna and the City of Kelowna are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

During the past century and a half, the rate of immigration to Canada has fluctuated. Canada received large numbers of immigrants just after the turn of the 20th century. Numbers peaked just before World War I, dropping to their lowest levels between the two wars before rising again after World War II. Accelerated economic globalization has quickened the pace of international migration to Canada in recent decades. Historically, Canada has traditionally favoured immigrants from the United States, Northern and Western Europe, and increasingly Eastern and Southern Europe, while immigrants from other continents have been restricted or even excluded when it came to permanent settlement and nation building (Kobayashi et al., 2012). Discriminatory immigration laws based on race, gender, or nationality often targeted non-White groups. Not until the mid-1960s were immigration admission policies changed in Canada to eliminate discrimination based on race or national origin (Murdie & Teixeira, 2006). Thus, since 1967 Canada has witnessed dramatic changes in immigrant source regions. The total number and proportion of immigrants from developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has increased rapidly. Veronis and Smith (2012) further claim that a recent surge, most notably in the early 2000s, of immigrants from Latin America contributed to Canada's population growth and diversity. Relatively little is known about immigrant women's integration experiences in small- and mid-sized Canadian cities. The main purpose of this study is to explore the challenges facing English-speaking Latin American immigrant women² and the coping strategies they use when settling and integrating in the city of Kelowna.

1.2 Problem Statement and Purpose

The influx of immigrants is one of the many factors that contribute to Canada and Kelowna's population growth. As previously noted, this increase of immigrants is the result of

² Latin American immigrant women and immigrant women are used interchangeably throughout this paper. These terms are used to refer to English-speaking immigrant women who were born in Latin America: Mexico, Central, and South Americas and, whose mother tongue is Spanish.

modifications made to Canadian immigration policy (Goldring, Berinstein, & Bernhard, 2009; Goldring, 2010) that have allowed individuals from all over the world to settle in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (Depner & Teixeira, 2012). However, immigrants today are not only choosing to settle in Canada's major urban cities, but also in smaller cities (Walton-Roberts, 2005; Proudfoot, 2008; Veronis & Smith, 2012) such as Kelowna. Moreover, a government report, *Profile of Immigrants in BC Communities 2006* shows the increase in immigrants to the City of Kelowna increased from 12,905 in 2001 to 15,840 in 2006, an increase from 13.4 percent to 14.8 percent respectively which is considerably lower than British Columbia's overall figure of 27.5 percent (BC Stats, 2006). Most immigrants in Kelowna came primarily from Europe (64.5 percent) and, to a lesser extent, from Asia and the Middle East (17 percent) and the United States (8.7 percent). Within this context, by the year 2006, out of Kelowna's immigrant population of 15,840, according to BC Stats (2006) 530 or approximately 3.34 percent were from Central and South America.

Kelowna is a predominantly "white" city. Visible minorities³ comprise only 6.2 percent of Kelowna's population compared to approximately 25 percent of the B.C. population as a whole (BC Stats, 2006; Teixeira, 2009). As noted in Teixeira's study dealing with new immigrant settlement in the region, "Kelowna has been portrayed by the local media as having a distinctive demographic profile—'Older, Caucasian, and English Speaking'—or as 'White-Bread Valley' which many immigrants to Canada avoid in favour of larger, more multicultural cities" (Teixeira, 2009, pp. 325–326).

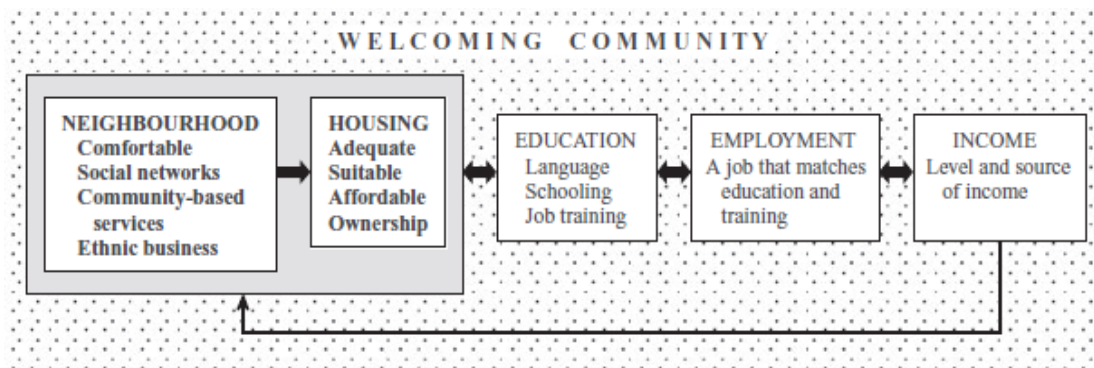
Despite the influx of immigrants in the last decade or so, Kelowna continues to keep its 'white' face. Aguiar, Tomic, and Trumper (2005) state that "Kelowna is systematically presented in terms of 'sameness' and 'familiarity' . . . to [bring] particular types of people and businesses

³ "Visible minority" is a Canadian term, first used in the Employment Equity Act of 1986, that refers to 'all persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour' (Teixeira, Li, & Kobayashi, 2012, p. 342).

into the community; people and businesses sharing a ‘white’ identity” (p. 124). In studies about Kelowna’s population, there is often little or no representation of immigrants, including visible minorities and First Nations people. The fact that immigrants from Latin America choose to migrate to Kelowna allows us to understand issues of integration⁴ as well as those of exclusion. In connection to this, we may be in a good position to understand the long-standing ties with countries of origin.

Kelowna is known as a homogeneous community where most inhabitants are of White European descent (Bahbahani, 2008). This thesis argues that immigrants who do not fulfil this profile may face more barriers, including language challenges, when settling and integrating into Kelowna’s society. For successful settlement and integration in Kelowna, Latin American immigrants must be able to understand and converse in English. In addition, immigrants who settle in Kelowna may need access to community services in their own language to help them to find employment and contribute to the community. In Figure 1.1, Teixeira (2009) outlines what the ideal type of welcoming community for the successful integration of immigrants.

Figure 1.1 The Importance of a Welcoming Community



Source: Teixeira, 2009, p. 325.

⁴ Integration “[is] the extent[s] to which immigrants are able to achieve their needs and fulfill their interests in the new country. Integration is a potentially complex process incorporating a variety of variables such as housing, language, education, employment, citizenship, and civic participation. It can also involve more subjective factors such as identification with the immigration and settlement process” (Teixeira et al., 2012, p.336).

In addition to having access to community services, transferability of work experience, and recognition of foreign academic credentials, successful integration into a new community also depends on finding affordable housing. The search for affordable housing can be a daunting experience for immigrants. For mid-sized cities such as Kelowna, the experience can be more stressful since urbanization has put more strain on an already fragile infrastructure. Teixeira (2009) notes that “urbanization is shaping not only the social, demographic, and economic aspects of Kelowna but also its complex real estate and housing markets” (p. 326). The literature on housing (for reviews see Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011; McEwan 2010; Oh, 2010), especially in mid-sized cities such as Kelowna, has shown that finding affordable, adequate, and suitable housing is a strenuous task for immigrants who are resettling.

Kelowna is known to have an expensive housing market: at present, it ranks within the first 50 out of 325 metropolitan areas in Canada, the U.S., Australia, Ireland, and the United Kingdom (Michaels, 2012). In addition, Kelowna is rated as one of the most severely unaffordable (Demographia, 2012) housing markets in British Columbia and Canada. This study also investigates whether Kelowna’s unaffordable housing market is an obstacle for some Latin American immigrant women to rent or buy into because their income may not allow them to fulfill their housing needs and preferences. It is important to recognize that without affordable, adequate, and suitable housing, new immigrants to Kelowna may have a more difficult task to successfully settle and integrate in the community. Additionally, race, ethnicity, and gender remain barriers to equal treatment in Canada’s housing market (Teixeira, 2009, 2012; Ray & Rose, 2012). Recent immigrant groups like Latin Americans may thus be at a disadvantage in both the rental and homeownership markets in Kelowna.

In addition to settlement and integration issues, transnational ties also seem to be important to immigrants’ survival in the new society. Many Latin American immigrants settle in larger and more diverse urban centres where there are ethnic enclaves and access to immigrant

services, but some choose to settle in mid-sized cities (Veronis & Smith, 2012). In smaller cities, immigrants seemingly still find the means to maintain their culture by developing and/or maintaining transnational ties with their home countries (Li & Teixeira, 2007).

Immigrants to Canada are allowed and encouraged to retain their cultural practices in Canada (Biles, Burstein, & Frideres, 2008). The retention of culture fuels immigrants' increased transnational ties with their home countries. In addition to retaining their cultures, immigrants also maintain transnational ties through family arrangements. Depending on their immigration status, immigrant women may have to immigrate and settle in Kelowna without their families. This disintegration of the family means that these women have to develop transnational family arrangements to take care of family members left behind in their home countries (Bernhard et al., 2009). Maintaining transnational ties also helps immigrants feel less alone by allowing them to easily connect with family and friends through a quick telephone call or the Internet.

The purpose of this case study is to explore the experiences of English-speaking Latin American immigrant women during their transitioning process when migrating to Canada. Specifically, it seeks to understand the challenges these immigrant women face and the coping mechanisms they use when settling and integrating in Kelowna. Further, this study inquires into the nature of these immigrant women's transnational ties with family members and/or friends in their countries of origin. Finally, this study will make recommendations as to how Kelowna's municipal and other levels of governments can implement or improve community services to better assist Latin American immigrant women with regard to settlement, integration, and general well-being in their communities while maintaining their transnational ties with their countries of origin. This study will focus on those women who came specifically from Spanish-speaking Latin America to the City of Kelowna.

1.3 Research Questions

Relatively little is known about Latin American immigrant women's integration experiences in small- and mid-sized cities in Canada (Veronis & Smith, 2012). Much less is known about the major challenges they may encounter when immigrating to and settling in Kelowna, a mid-sized city located in the interior of B.C. and traditionally known as a non-major "port of entry" for new immigrants arriving in the country. To fill the gaps in literature, this exploratory study addresses (a) the experiences and challenges immigrant women from Latin America may have endured in the process of settling and integrating in Kelowna, and (b) the formation, retention, and/or maintenance of transnational ties with their home countries. The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the immigration experiences of women transitioning from Spanish-speaking Latin America to Kelowna?
2. What are the challenges faced by Latin American immigrant women when settling in the city of Kelowna and how do they manage these challenges?
3. What role do transnational ties play for these women?
4. What policy recommendations can be made to better assist Latin American immigrant women in settling and integrating in Kelowna?

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, is followed by a general review and discussion of the literature pertaining to Latin American immigration to Canada, the settlement and integration experiences of immigrants in Canadian cities and the importance of transnational ties to these immigrants (Chapter 2). This chapter provides relevant information for subsequent chapters and conceptualizes the main issues of integration and transnationalism. Chapter 3 reviews the study's methodology and outlines the study area, study

population, sampling strategies, and data collection. Chapters 4 and 5 provide the research findings as per the research questions. Chapter 4 focuses on migration to Canada, settling and integrating in the city of Kelowna, and Chapter 5 addresses the nature of transnational ties. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the recommendations and policy implications of Latin American immigrant women's settlement and integration processes in Kelowna. This chapter further discusses the views of key informants⁵ and immigrant women. The last chapter (Chapter 7) concludes with a summary of the research findings, limitations of the study, and avenues for future research.

⁵ A key informant is an individual who has inside knowledge of the research topic and who can provide contextual information and answers to the research questions.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter pertains to Latin American migration to North America and particularly to Canada. Attention will be focused on immigrant women's settlement and integration experiences in Canadian cities, as well as their transnational ties with their home countries.

2.2 Background of Latin Americans' Migration to Canada

Latin American migration to Canada is a relatively new phenomenon. Latin Americans began coming to Canada in the mid-1950s (Riaño-Alcalá, Colorado, Díaz, & Osorio, 2008). Since then, they have contributed considerably to Canadian society. After immigrants became established in the new country, their contributions initially came by way of ownership of “newspapers and radio programs and social clubs” (Simmons, 1993, p. 283) in their native language as well as participation in local politics (Veronis, 2006; Landolt et al., 2011). While many Latin Americans who came to Canada choose to settle in Canada's three main gateway cities—namely Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (MTV)—their presence is known in smaller and mid-sized cities as well (Statistics Canada, 2009). The increase in Latin American immigration came about due to push factors in immigrants' countries of origins and changes made to Canadian immigration policies since the mid-1960s (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). The implementation of these policies, moreover, opened doors for Latin Americans to migrate to Canada in sizable numbers (Simmons, 1993; Teixeira et al., 2012; Hoerder & Walker, 2012). Following these immigration policy changes, Canada became, and continues to be, home to many Latin American immigrants. Immigrants from Latin America came in five different waves to Canada. These waves were due, in part, to push factors such as fleeing dictatorship, internal displacement, civil war, and political violence (Simmons, 1993; Palacios, 2006; Simalchik, 2006) to name but a few.

Latin American migration to Canada has been influenced by many factors. These include,

but are not limited to social, economic, and political considerations in the countries of origin, changes in Canadian immigration policy, and an increase in migrant social and kin networks in the host country. Evidence shows that the above factors represent the push-pull causes for Latin American immigration to Canada (Simmons, 1993). Further, agreements made between various levels of governments in Canada and Latin American countries, for example, NAFTA, have given rise to immigration to Canada. In turn, the Canadian labour market has been affected by these agreements. Due to these agreements and Latin Americans' increased presence in Canada, transnational ties between Canada and Latin America have become the vital link for maintaining relationships across the respective international borders. In 2006, according to Statistics Canada (2007), 244,400 Latin Americans (comprising approximately one percent of the total population) lived in Canada. Recent reports claim that there are considerably higher numbers of Latin American immigrants than was reported in the last national statistics (Schugurensky & Ginieniewicz, 2007). Veronis and Smith (2012) allege in the year 2006 the number of Latin American immigrants in Canada was 409,415. Equally important, Statistics Canada (2007) asserts that the Latin American community is one of the fastest growing ethnic populations in Canada since between the years 1996 and 2001, the number of people claiming to be of Latin American origin grew by 32 percent.

Latin Americans came to Canada in five main waves, namely: (1) lead wave; (2) andean wave; (3) coup wave; (4) Central American wave; and (5) new wave (Mata, 1985; Veronis, 2006; Riaño-Alcalá et al., 2008; Landolt et al., 2011) (see Table 2.1). The lead wave of Latin American immigrants came to Canada during the mid-1950s through to the mid-1960s (Mata, 1985; Simmons, 1993; Veronis, 2006; Riaño Alcalá et al., 2008). It consisted of immigrants from South American countries such as Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and possibly Brazil. The second or andean wave of immigrants to Canada came from Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru. This wave of immigrants came to Canada as visitors but took advantage of the country's 1973 immigration

amnesty (Riaño Alcalá et al., 2008). The third wave (coup Wave) took place in the 1970s, and was influenced by various military coups (Riaño Alcalá et al., 2008; Veronis, 2006). Riaño-Alcalá, Colorado, Díaz, and Osorio (2008) write, “[T]he initial mass exodus began after the takeover of Pinochet in 1973, when Chilean dissident intelligentsia was dismantled by the military (as quoted in Mata, 1985, 38)” (p. 23). The fourth or Central American wave brought immigrants from Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. These immigrants came in the 1980s as they fled various civil wars (Veronis, 2006; Riaño-Alcalá et al., 2008).

In addition to these waves, there is a new wave migrating to Canada consisting mainly of professionals and skilled workers. Veronis (2006) refers to this group as the “IT (information technologies) Wave” (p. 8). The table below outlines the different stages of Latin American immigration to Canada and the demographic characteristics of immigrants who came.

Table 2.1 Waves of Latin American Immigration to Canada

Waves of Immigration	Time period	Demographic Characteristics
“Lead” wave	1956–1965	- South Americans of European decent: urban intelligentsia from major Latin American cities.
	1965–1969	- Venezuelans, Argentines, and Peruvians: mostly blue-collar groups.
Andean wave	1973 –1975	- Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians (economic refugees) were admitted in higher proportions. - High estimates of ‘illegals’ from Peru and Guatemala. - Mostly blue-collar groups; skilled and unskilled labourers.
Coup wave	1973-74 to 1978-79	- Chileans, Argentines, and Uruguayans. - Chilean intelligentsia, professionals and skilled labourers. Some blue-collar workers among Argentineans and Uruguayans.
Central American wave	1983 – present	- Salvadorans and Guatemalans: mostly urban poor, rural middle classes and peasantry. - Lower average educational levels than the Lead or Coup waves, and perhaps a little less skill specialization than the Andean wave.
New wave of professional immigrants	1990s–present	- Professionals (“skilled-worker” and “business” class immigrants) from throughout Latin America.

Source: Veronis (2006, p. 8).

The New wave of Latin American professional immigrants that came to Canada over the last two decades is especially important to this study. Kelowna’s international immigrant population including immigrants from Latin America has increased significantly recently and its business sector has diversified. It is imperative to pay attention to the new wave of Latin Americans not only because of the increasing role they play in the demographics of the country but also in its economy. For example, a larger number of Colombians came and have continued

to come to Canada since the mid-1990s (Landolt et al., 2011). This wave of Colombians and other Latin American immigrants are of professional background and are sometimes referred to by Veronis (2006) as the “information technologies class.” Landolt, Goldring, and Bernhard (2011) believe the new wave of Latin American immigrants come in four modes of entry, namely:

1. Migrants from Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico who enter Canada as tourists or students but stay to work;
2. Migrants who seek asylum either at arrival at a Canadian border crossing or airport or who make a refugee claim after entering the country through another entrance status;
3. Mexican and Central Americans entering Canada via federal government-managed temporary foreign worker programs; and
4. Middle-class entrepreneurial and professionals largely from Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, and Argentina who apply to enter Canada as independent-class immigrants on the basis of the point system. (p. 1243)

Further, these new immigrants experience advantages under Canadian immigration policies that seek to attract people with high academic credentials and work experiences (Riaño Alcalá et al., 2008). Highly educated and skilled immigrants are necessary for the Canadian economy because they provide the human capital that will generate economic growth (Picot, 2004). For example, between the years 1990 and 2005, a large number (29, 236) of Colombians immigrated to Canada and obtained permanent residency (Riaño Alcalá et al., 2008). Furthermore, by December 1, 2004, there were 5,204 Colombians in Canada as temporary residents (CIC, 2004). These figures show that the increase in Colombian immigrants was important to the Canadian economy despite the global economic downturn. Moreover, Riaño-Alcalá, Colorado, Díaz, and Osorio (2008) argue that the number of Colombians who immigrated to Canada under the Economic Class increased because during this time, the Canadian government was seeking professionals and highly skilled workers.

Latin Americans in Canada reside mainly in just four provinces: 77.6 percent of Latin American immigrants live in Ontario and Quebec, while a further 16.8 percent is almost equally distributed between the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta (Veronis & Smith, 2012). The

remaining 5.6 percent is distributed throughout the other provinces and territories.

2.3 Immigration Influence on Urbanization in Mid-Sized Cities

The surge in immigrants to Canada over the last two decades influenced their resettlement over the Canadian landscape in large and, more recently, in small- to mid-sized cities where immigration influences urbanization. Many immigrants pass up MTV to settle in mid-sized cities where they search for job opportunities and/or to join members of their families already established there (chain migration) (Proudfoot, 2008; Oh, 2010; Veronis & Smith, 2012). Furthermore, Veronis and Smith (2012) write, “In 2001–6, mid- and small- sized cities in southwestern Ontario and southern Quebec experienced important growth rates . . . of their Latin American populations” (p. 281). Between 2001 and 2006 (as noted in Chapter 1), the city of Kelowna immigrant population increased by 1.4 percent. Despite recent increases in immigration, Kelowna remains a predominantly “White” community (Oh, 2010). On this issue, Bahbahani (2008) writes, “Kelowna’s ethnic relations uncover a long history of attempts to maintain this city and areas as Caucasian-dominated” (p. 5). In addition, community services for immigrants addressing issues such as labour, housing, language problems, and education are limited in Kelowna. As a result, integrating in Kelowna can become somewhat difficult for many newly arrived immigrants. Unsuccessful integration in communities like Kelowna can influence immigrants to move to other places where there is an availability of settlement services and/or established ethnic communities (e.g., Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary). In addition, the lack of culturally oriented immigrant settlement services in the host society can encourage immigrants to engage in stronger transnational ties with family and friends back in their respective home countries.

2.4 Integrating in Kelowna, a Mid-Sized City

Immigrants who choose Kelowna as a place to settle have to find ways to integrate successfully. Kelowna has been established as a community for “white settlers” —that is, people

mainly from Europe and the U.S. Thus, Kelowna is mostly white compared with the rest of British Columbia (Bahbahani, 2008). The fact that most immigrants to Kelowna are of white European descent (BC Stats, 2006) may make it more difficult for immigrants and visible minorities from other regions of the world—including Asia, Africa, and Latin America—to feel welcome and to attain a sense of belonging (Aguiar et al., 2005; Oh, 2010). An unwelcoming community can discourage immigrants from settling in, but having family and friends of the same ethnic background already present in the area makes settling less challenging (Walton-Roberts, 2005). Immigration to Kelowna from Asia, Africa and Latin America is on the rise thereby making challenges to integration a growing concern for immigrants (Teixeira, 2009, 2011). Physical access to and availability of community services and financial instability (unemployment or lower paid jobs) are two of the most pressing challenges immigrants to Kelowna face (Depner & Teixeira, 2012).

Further, in the last decade Kelowna's infrastructure has been put under strain because it was originally built to cater to a smaller, less diverse population. This is illustrated by the limited variety of housing types as well as the lack of job opportunities for immigrants from different socio-economic backgrounds. Racial and ethnic diversity parallels the increase of immigrants to the area and changes housing needs and preferences (Carter & Vitiello, 2012). Finding affordable housing is usually high on immigrants' priority lists and affordable housing is lacking in Kelowna (Oh, 2010; Teixeira, 2010, 2011).

2.4.1 Housing: A Vital Tool to Successful Integration

Immigrants to Kelowna encounter cost barriers when looking for affordable housing. Studies have shown that the most difficult task immigrants face when migrating to Kelowna is that of finding affordable, adequate, and suitable housing (Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011; Oh, 2010). Demands for affordable housing increase with population growth. Equally important, immigrants to Kelowna will usually rent first before owning due to low income as well as being

new to the area. Renting in Kelowna is already expensive. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2008), average rent in Kelowna in the year 2008 was \$878 compared to \$750 for British Columbia as a whole. A rental report rated Kelowna as one of the most “severely unaffordable” (Demographia, 2012, p. 13) housing markets in British Columbia and the world.

Like housing rentals, homeownership is expensive. In his study, Teixeira (2010) discusses the numerous barriers and challenges that immigrants face in rental and homeownership in Kelowna’s expensive housing market. Due to the high proportion of their income spent on housing, more and more recent immigrants are in “core” housing need and thus at risk of homelessness. Given the expensive real estate market in Kelowna, immigrants’ access to affordable rental housing and homeownership may take a longer time to be realized and their integration into the new society more difficult to achieve.

2.4.2 The Importance of Work Experience, Foreign Academic Credentials, and Language

Another component of immigrants’ successful integration in Kelowna is finding employment. Gates-Gasse (2010) claims that immigrants encounter barriers such as a lack of Canadian work experience, as well as not having their academic credentials recognized in Canada. These barriers force immigrants to become underemployed or unemployed which, in turn, makes them vulnerable to poverty. The need to make recognizing immigrants’ academic credentials a policy priority has been identified in recent government reports (Ferrer & Riddle, 2008). In order for new immigrants to integrate into their community, the need for employment is crucial. On the issue of the economic experiences of immigrants in Canada, Lo and Li (2012) write:

. . . not all able and highly skilled immigrants are equally successful in establishing themselves in their new countries . . . [W]hether immigrants are able to convert their human capital into economic resources depends greatly on the context of reception or the social climate towards immigrants. (p. 114)

Thus, immigrants arriving in a less welcoming community are more likely to face barriers to finding employment that matches their qualifications.

When immigrants arrive in Canada, and more specifically in Kelowna, they are not assisted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to access job training and resettle. They have to undergo these challenges with little or no assistance from family members and/or friends. In the occupation sphere for instance, when jobs do become available, they are more likely to be filled by males, who tend to have more access to English language training and economic opportunities (Koert, Borgen, & Amundson, 2011).

Immigrant women continue to face numerous barriers when immigrating and resettling in Canada. Many of these barriers begin in the domestic sphere (childrearing and household responsibilities). These women frequently put their own careers on hold while their husbands/partners retrain to find work. At the same time, immigrant women remain in the household and engage in childrearing and domestic tasks, resulting in lack of time to seek employment or even return to school to upgrade and further their education (Koert et al., 2011). Just as importantly, not only do these women have to remain in the home to take care of the family, some might lack confidence socializing due to their inability to fully comprehend and/or speak the English language comfortably.

Language plays a crucial role in immigration and resettlement in this society. In 2006, Citizenship and Immigration Canada enacted new laws regarding compulsory language requirements (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Immigrants, especially those who apply to come to Canada under the Federal Skilled Worker Class or the Canadian Experience Class, must have the ability to read, write, and speak in either one of the two official languages⁶. The inability to communicate in either official language and especially, in the case of Kelowna, in English, often makes it difficult for immigrant women to enter the workforce (Suto, 2009).

⁶ Official languages are English and French.

Further, those who speak English well but with an accent and/or whose skin colour is not white may face labour market discrimination (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Darden & Fong, 2012).

Although language is one of the many barriers that immigrant women face when immigrating and resettling in Canada, there are factors that allow these women to transition with ease. Some immigrant women are successful in transitioning and resettling in their new environments. According to Koert, Borgen, and Amundson (2011) “immigrants who are successful and have social support and second language training, display positive personality traits” (p. 159) all of which are crucial to their resettlement. As a result of their positive attitudes, some of these women are able to utilize their academic credentials and work experience in productive ways to gain employment.

2.4.3 Community and Immigrant Services

Though finding affordable housing, having foreign academic credentials recognized, and transferrable work experiences are important to immigrants’ successful integration, being welcomed into the community is just as crucial to them. Studies show that Kelowna’s “white” majority community is often not welcoming to new immigrants settling in the city, including visible minorities (Aguiar et al., 2005; Bahbahani, 2008; Teixeira, 2010; Oh, 2010). Several studies have shown that discrimination in the housing and the job markets is alive and well in Kelowna. For example, Teixeira (2009) found that discrimination by landlords based on the immigrant’s ethnic and racial background is common in Kelowna’s housing market. Thus, implementing and/or expanding community services in Kelowna is one way of attracting and assisting immigrants in the resettlement process. Kelowna, as one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in British Columbia, has to be able to provide proper and more culturally oriented services to suit newcomers’ needs.

The few immigrant services available in Kelowna include language classes and assistance to build résumés for job searches but more can be done to assist immigrants with their settlement

and integration. Teixeira (2009) states that language is crucial to successful integration; however, Kelowna is a mid-sized city that does not have many services in place to deal with the language problems immigrants may face. Language issues affect all other challenges immigrants face, like housing and employment. Kelowna's lack of language services may force immigrants to rely both on family members already living in the area and friends of the same ethnic background to assist them with navigating in the community, particularly in the search for housing and jobs (Teixeira, 2009). This dependence on family and friends already present in Kelowna also helps newly arrived immigrants to retain contact with family members back in their countries of origin.

2.4.4 Immigrant Women and Integration

The works of Bernhard, Landolt, and Goldring (2005, 2009) explain the challenges immigrant women encounter when migrating to Canada. It is well known that most immigrants to Canada enter through the country's gateway cities (MTV). According to Census 2006, about 70 percent of the immigrant population lives in MTV, while the remaining 30 percent is scattered in small- and mid-sized cities and other rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2006a).

In Kelowna's small immigrant population, just over half of the recent immigrants are women. According to a study by Statistics Canada (2007), recent immigrants to Kelowna in the year 2006 totaled 1,795 with 920 (51.25 percent) being women and 875 (48.7 percent) men. With the small number of immigrant women in Kelowna, difficulties such as access to social services, language barriers, and low income may arise in the integration processes. Immigrant women are more likely to face these challenges when integrating in their new communities because "most investigations have focused on the immigration process itself, and little attention has been paid to longer-term settlement issues" (Bernhard et al., 2005, p. 4). When these women decide to migrate to Canada, their expectations, as well as those of their family members in their countries of origin, are high. Some expectations include, but are not limited to, housing, jobs, and reuniting with family.

However, more often than not these expectations are not met or take a long time to be accomplished because of barriers faced during the integration process. Research has shown that integration in some small- and mid-sized cities is made more difficult because of the lack of established ethnic communities as well as the lack of culturally oriented community services, jobs, and affordable housing (Bahbahani, 2008; Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011; Oh, 2010). A mid-sized city such as Kelowna, where affordable, adequate, and suitable housing (Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011; Oh, 2010) as well as settlement services (Depner & Teixeira, 2012) are lacking, affect an immigrant's ability to successfully integrate into the community and thus may lead some immigrants to leave for another city/region in the country in search of a more established and welcoming community. On the other hand, the failure to settle and integrate successfully in Kelowna may contribute to an immigrant's increased engagement in transnationalism.

2.5 Transnationalism

Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc (1994), describe transnationalism as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (p. 7). Li and Teixeira (2007) see transnationalism as an important paradigm for today's migration. Many countries such as Canada have opened their immigration system to attract immigrants from different geographical regions and socio-economic backgrounds. Immigration policies have also changed to attract different types of immigrants, such as where “family class” has lost its significance against “business class” for example. Countries are also introducing policies for immigrants to retain and practice their original culture (Li & Teixeira, 2007). Immigrants engage in cross-border activities and maintain relationships with their original countries. Studies have shown how important transnationalism is to immigrants once they are settled in their destination countries (Ghosh & Wang, 2003; Preibisch, 2005; Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005). Thus, it is important that

studies address the new realities of immigration not only in Canada's major urban areas but also in smaller cities.

In mid-sized cities like Kelowna, immigrants may maintain transnational ties through various mediums such as mail, telephone, Internet access, and/or travelling back to their home countries for visits. These ties also allow immigrants to retain membership within their original societies (Basch et al., 1994). In fact, "first generation migrants maintain multiple ties with their countries of origin while they adapt to the host society" (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005, p. 895). In addition to maintaining relationships across international borders, immigrants can keep transnational ties within their destination country. Food in particular plays an important role in helping immigrants feel a sense of belonging in their current community. In Kelowna, accordingly, many major supermarkets are now catering to the needs of immigrants of various ethnicities by stocking their aisles with ethnic groceries and products.

2.5.1 Transnationalism and Immigrant Women

Since more women are a part of this "new age of migration" (Castles & Miller, 2009), some studies have focused on immigrant women and transnationalism (Preibisch, 2005; Bernhard et al., 2005, 2009) as well as the "feminization of migration" (Pajnik & Bajt, 2010). These studies show how immigrant women cope with familial arrangements across international borders. Of course, both men and women come to Canada as immigrants; however, some authors argue that migration is gendered in that men's and women's integration and transnational experiences are different (Koert et al., 2011). Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2005) conducted a study on Latin American immigrants in the U.S. and reported that men and women experience transnational ties and integration on different levels. Specifically, they state that, "men and women perceive and live their migration experiences differently and, as a result, there will be differences in their incorporation into . . . society as well as in their involvement in transnational practices" (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005, p. 896). Many immigrant women's

transnational experiences appear to be more visible maybe because they are more protected in their host society in comparison to their sending society (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005). On the other hand, Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2005) claim, “for men, migration implies . . . a loss of status and a threat to their gender identity” (p. 897).

According to Ray and Rose (2012), gender matters to immigration and settlement in Canadian cities. They note that:

[M]ost debates about immigration ignore the fact that immigrants are women and men whose roles and responsibilities are at least partially defined by gendered societal expectations and norms; at best, gender is used as a descriptive category without questioning how migration and settlement experiences are gendered. (pp. 138–9)

Furthermore, “[O]nce in . . . Canada, immigrant women and men begin to learn how their gender intersects with other institutions, public policies, and political priorities to affect further the social and spatial qualities of settlement and integration” (Ray & Rose, 2012, p. 145).

While that may be the case in the gendered migration processes, some studies show that immigrant women are more likely to be impacted negatively in the event they have to leave their family behind. Preibisch (2005) explains that mothers’ transnational relationships with their children and other family members were more negatively affected in that familial relationships in their home countries were eroding due to the mothers’ absence. Perhaps that is the reason why Bernhard, Landolt, and Goldring (2005) argue that mothers who choose to migrate to Canada in search of a better life and opportunities for their children, experience tremendous pressure from their children as well as from other family members. Ray and Rose (2012) further state that “[W]omen . . . because of traditional gender roles and ideologies, often have the added responsibility and stress of transnational caregiving for sick or elderly kin ‘back home’” (p. 143). However, the pressure does not stop at the familial level in the country of origin where these women’s children may have left behind, but in the host country as well (Ray & Rose, 2012). For instance, in the case of domestic employment dynamics in Taiwan (Cheng, 2010), immigrant

women also have to deal with transnationalism in the workplace on a different level meaning that these migrant women are caught in a situation where they may have experienced differences in cultures. While they have to struggle with maintaining cross-border relationships with family members “back home,” they also have to deal with familial issues in their employers’ homes in the host country. That is, as domestic workers in Taiwan, immigrant women may have to play a dual role and be careful not to impose their own culture while they are employed in Taiwan.

In addition to their dual transnational roles, immigrant women face other issues when it comes to in the host country such as the validity of work permits. Transnational mothers not only have to make sure that they are on the right side of their host country’s laws with respect to their immigration status and employment; they also have to make sure ties with their families are maintained. Such ties are maintained socially through regular telephone and Internet access, and economically by sending remittances for the care of children and other family members left behind. While transnational mothers try to maintain ties with their families back in their home countries, their own family members as well as community members often stigmatize them for moving to other countries and leaving their children and families behind (Bernhard et al., 2005). This stigma can hail from societal norms where motherhood is an assumed primary adult role.

Childless immigrant women experience transnationalism differently from mothers with children. First, childless immigrant women do not need to worry about their children’s well-being and their separation from them—which may be more difficult to deal with than separation from parents and siblings. Second, many single immigrant women come to Canada as students. Ghosh and Wang (2003) reveal transnationalism among female students who give personal insights into their transnational experiences in Canada and their home countries upon return visits; they describe their expectations as students in both Canada and their home countries. These authors see that “place plays a pivotal role in shaping transnational acts and identities”

(Ghosh & Wang, 2003, p. 281). In other words, they experienced culture shock upon returning to their home countries.

2.5.2 Transnational Ties and Remittances

Immigrants who maintain transnational ties with family and friends back home often send remittances. Orozco (2002) defines remittances “as the quantity of currency that migrants earn abroad and then send home to their families and communities” (p. 43). Remittances are sent either formally or informally. Informal ways include using friends and family members who are visiting their countries of origin to take money home. Money can also be sent formally using establishments like Western Union and Money Mart (Orozco, 2002). Immigrants can access these services through post offices, supermarkets, and convenient stores in Canada. Remittances are crucial to the well-being of immigrants’ family members who did not immigrate with them.

Remittances also play a vital part in immigrants’ home countries’ economies. Many countries of origin depend greatly on remittances sent back by immigrants who live/work abroad (Castles & Miller, 2009). Studies conducted in the U.S. showed, accordingly, that “remittances from the U.S. by Latino immigrants, as well as their transnational activities, are evolving and directly impacting development” (Orozco, Lowell, Bump, & Fedewa, 2005, p. 3). In fact, “remittances constitute one of the most common forms of transnational activity” (Goldring, Henders, & Vandergeest, 2003, p. 11). Members of immigrant families remaining in their home country, depend greatly on remittances to sustain livelihoods that are difficult to maintain without monetary assistance. In the U.S., Latin Americans send home approximately 15 percent of their income (Orozco et al., 2005); “[I]n 2004, the volume of southward-bound remittances hit an unprecedented US\$45 billion” (Orozco et al., 2005, p. 4).

However, despite the fact that Canada is home to many immigrants, limited research has been done in the area of remittances (Houle & Schellenberg, 2008). Data from this study come from immigrants from various backgrounds and ethnicities and reveals that immigrants with

higher income remit more than those whose incomes are lower. Houle and Schellenberg (2008), for example, report that permanent resident families with incomes under \$10,000 remit about 10 percent of their income whereas those with income of \$70,000 or more remit approximately 36 percent of their income. Furthermore, remittances are sometimes not sent in the event immigrants may want to sponsor other family members to immigrate to Canada.

In another context, Sherrell and Hyndman (2004), whose study looked at Kosovar refugees, reported that immigrants feel obligated to assist family and friends back in their home countries. Not being able to send remittances on a regular basis put stress on these immigrants. Family is vital to immigrants from Spanish-speaking Latin America. According to Bernhard, Landolt, and Goldring (2009), family, for Latin Americans, “is defined as a primary social institution that plays a key role in securing livelihoods for individuals throughout the lifecycle, meeting individuals’ affective needs and serving as a primary arena of socialization, identity formation, and value transmission” (p. 6). “Family,” therefore, is composed not only of members of the household but also of those who provide the necessities for securing a livelihood.

2.6 Summary

Canada’s immigration policies have changed over the years. Due to these changes, immigrants from all over the world come to Canada under different migration classes. In addition, permanent and non-permanent immigration has increased and continues to rise resulting in population growth. A shift in immigration source countries as well as immigrant types has been accompanied by important changes in patterns of settlement. While many new immigrants still settle in Canada’s major metropolitan areas on their arrival in Canada, others are skipping the inner cities and moving directly to the suburbs of these cities. In the last decade, many small- and mid-sized Canadian cities have witnessed increases in the numbers of immigrants who choose to live and work in those cities. Settling in small- and mid- sized cities poses particular challenges to service providers and municipal authorities. This, in turn,

highlights the importance of tracking these new trends in order to promote and encourage the successful integration of immigrants (Murdie & Skop, 2012; Depner & Teixeira, 2012).

Immigration affects urbanization in large urban centers—Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver—as well as mid-sized cities and rural areas. According to the 2011 Census, Canada’s population increased by 5.9 percent between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). In British Columbia, the population grew from 4,113,487 in 2006 to 4,400,057 in 2011, an increase of 7.0 percent (Statistics Canada, 2012). This population increase is due, in part, to immigration. Further, British Columbia is home to one of Canada’s three gateway cities—Vancouver—where immigrants often remain in large numbers after landing. Additionally, some immigrants are moving to smaller cities such as Kelowna.

Immigrants are passing up larger cities for smaller ones for various reasons, including the search of economic opportunities/jobs or to join members of their families already established there (Proudfoot, 2008; Murdie & Skop 2012; Veronis & Smith, 2012). Kelowna is one of many Canadian mid-sized cities that is experiencing population growth through immigration. Census 2011 shows that the City of Kelowna grew from 107,035 in 2006 to 117,312 in 2011, an increase of 9.6 percent (Statistics Canada, 2012). Kelowna’s immigrant population has also increased in the last few years. A shift occurred from 12,905 immigrants in 2001 to 15,840 in 2006, an increase from 13.4 percent to 14.8 percent of the total population, respectively (BC Stats, 2006).

Due to the relatively small number of immigrants and the lack of established ethnic communities in the city of Kelowna, integrating in the city can be difficult for new immigrants in general and visible minorities in particular (Bahbahani, 2008; Teixeira, 2009). Kelowna cannot always assist in immigrant integration due to the lack of human and financial resources to support newcomers. Walton-Roberts (2005) underlines the importance of community assistance and resources that can help immigrants to successfully integrate, including finding affordable

housing, jobs, and social services as well as feeling accepted and welcomed by the receiving society.

Finding affordable housing in Kelowna is one of the many barriers immigrants face (Teixeira, 2009, 2010; Oh, 2010). Kelowna has one of the most expensive housing markets in North America. Teixeira (2009) says the lack of affordable housing, including high rental costs in Kelowna, puts many recent immigrants at risk of becoming homeless.

Housing is a vital aspect of settlement and integration but so are jobs. Successful settlement and integration requires being able to afford life's basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing. Problems can arise when immigrants are not able to transfer their work experiences to the Canadian labour market or have their academic credentials recognized. Some studies show that immigrants' attempts to transfer work experience and have their academic credentials recognized often have negative outcomes (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Suto, 2009; Gate-Gasse, 2010; Lo & Li, 2012; Darden & Fong, 2012). The Canadian government could save money if foreign academic credentials and work experiences were transferred to the country's labour market (Suto, 2009). In the cases where immigrants are able to transfer their credentials and expertise to become gainfully employed, men are more likely to fill vacancies than women (Koert et al., 2011). Some immigrant women are often forced to take domestic roles in the household while they put their own careers on hold to support their male partners' future (Koert et al., 2011). As a result, immigrant women remaining in the domestic sphere are often at a disadvantage when it comes to improving their English language skills, which in turn makes it more difficult for them to enter the labour market.

Equally important, living in a community with limited immigrant services can also have a negative impact on integration. Immigrants to a new community must feel a sense of belonging to integrate successfully. Without the assistance of these culturally oriented services, immigrants are often helpless and may decide to leave the area. If family and friends are already living in the

community, however, then newly arrived immigrants may be more at ease integrating. Having family members and an established ethnic community can help new arrivals feel more welcome.

While community welcome services, transferrable academic credentials, and work experiences as well as affordable housing are all key components of integration, retaining one's culture can also be important. Practicing and retaining their culture can assist immigrants in integrating into their new community while fostering cross-border (transnationalism) relationships. Transnational relationships are a significant part of the life of immigrants because of the family members left behind in their home countries. Immigrants' transnational relationships link the home and destination societies (Basch, et al., 1994). Transnational relationships are particularly significant for women, especially mothers, who migrate with or without their children. Bernhard, Landolt, and Goldring (2005) coined the term "transnational mother" to suggest that mothers have to act, or are responsible for cross-border matters, not only for their children but also for other family members.

Transnationalism spans a broad area that includes social, economic, and cultural aspects, to name a few. Immigrants in Canada practice their cultures through various means such as the preparation of foods consumed in their countries of origin, celebrating certain events, as well as visiting their home countries for occasions such as religious holidays. Immigrants also maintain transnational ties through regular telephone contact and Internet access with family and friends in their countries of origin. This form of transnationalism takes place on a social basis. In addition to immigrants practicing their culture and maintaining social relationships transnationally, sending money back to their home countries is important for the economic aspect of transnationalism.

Integration in mid-sized cities such as Kelowna should ideally provide immigrants with a sense of belonging and welcome in the community. If they are not welcomed, immigrants may face further challenges in finding affordable housing and entering into the job market. These

components of integration are crucial to immigrants' futures in their new communities and to maintaining and practicing transnational ties with their respective home countries.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Overview

As an exploratory case study, this research project uses a mixed methods approach. This section describes the methods used for the study and explains the research design including the procedures and instruments used in collecting the data. The primary objective of this case study is to understand the settling and integration challenges faced by English-speaking immigrant women from Latin America whose first language is Spanish in the city of Kelowna, British Columbia. The research further investigates the nature of these women's transnational ties with their countries of origin. To identify the challenges these women experienced, data were collected during the summer and fall of 2012 through interviews with 10 key informants (government employees, settlement workers, lawyers, journalists, community leaders, and religious leaders) and questionnaires completed by 33 immigrant women from Latin America who were living in Kelowna. Of these immigrant women, six were randomly selected for in-depth interviews regarding the challenges they have faced in the process of integrating in Kelowna and in maintaining transnational ties with their countries of origin. For the purpose of this study, English-speaking Latin American immigrant women are those who were born outside of Canada, in Mexico, Central or South America, and who identify Spanish as their first language.

3.2 Study Area

The study area was the city of Kelowna, located in the central Okanagan Valley (Appendix A, Map of the City of Kelowna). Kelowna was chosen because it is one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in the province of British Columbia (Teixeira, 2009). Accordingly, data from Statistics Canada (2012) shows that Kelowna grew from 107,035 in 2006 to 117,312 in

2011, an increase of 9.6 percent. Immigration, to some extent, was responsible for this population growth.

3.3 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Study Sample

The study sample consisted of 33 immigrant women from Mexico (39 percent), Central America (39 percent) and South America (21 percent) who were 19 years and older and living in the city of Kelowna. These women were all legal residents; of which 55 percent of them had Canadian citizenship and 42 percent were permanent residents of Canada. Furthermore, almost all were comfortable speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English. The main reason English was used as the language for this investigation is that it is an integral part of settling and integrating in Kelowna. Table 3.1 below outlines the proficiencies—self-described or self-assessed—of immigrant women’s English language skills when settling in Kelowna.

Table 3.1 English Language Skills of Study Sample

Language skills	TOTAL N=33	%
Fluent	10	30
Moderate	10	30
Good	9	27
Poor	2	6
Did not answer	2	6

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

Minors, as well as immigrant women and men who were not from Spanish-speaking Latin America (Mexico, Central, and South America) were not included in this study. Similarly, immigrant women whose main purpose in coming to Kelowna was to study were not part of the study sample. The rationale for excluding Latin American immigrant women, whose immigration status is under the “Study Class,” was that they might not have the financial means to support their studies in a foreign country and, subsequently, might depend on their family back home to support them. In addition, this research wanted to tackle the issue of remittances. “Remittance” is a term used to define the money immigrants send back to their countries of

origin on a regular basis. In addition to immigrants whose primary goal was to study, illegal immigrants were also excluded from this study.

The majority (73 percent) of immigrant women in this study arrived in Kelowna within the last 12 years (See Table 3.2). Of the total (33), the majority of women came with their spouse (36 percent) and/or children (45 percent) while only 24 percent came alone. These women came for various reasons such as to join family and friends (73 percent), better standard of living (57 percent), and employment (24 percent).

Table 3.2 Year of Arrival in Kelowna

Year arrived in Kelowna	TOTAL N=33	%
1988 – 2000	9	27
2001 – 2006	7	21
2007 – 2012	17	52

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

In addition, these women are highly educated. Their education levels before arriving in Kelowna ranged from university degree (48 percent), to high school diploma (24 percent) to some post-secondary education (12 percent). The remaining 12 percent did not finish high school. Seventy-two percent of the Latin American immigrant women studied held professional jobs before arriving in Kelowna (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Occupations Before Arriving in Kelowna

Occupations	TOTAL N=33	%
Administration/Managerial/Entrepreneur	24	72
Homemaker	4	12
Student	4	12
Christian Missionary	1	3

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Overview

The data for this study were gathered in three stages. The first stage of the data collection process involved conducting semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 10 key informants. In the second stage, questionnaires were distributed to 45 Latin American immigrant women. The third stage consisted of in-depth, follow-up, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with six immigrant women who participated in the second stage of the data collection process. These three stages were essential to get a better understanding of Latin American women's experiences of integration and transnationalism while living in Kelowna.

The first and second stages of the data collection processes were initiated by contact letters. These letters invited potential key informant and participants to participate in the study. The letters outlined the research project and the importance of their participation. The letters also informed the potential key informants that they would receive a follow-up call approximately seven days later. Most of the 10 key informants were individuals the researcher already knew and who worked with organizations serving immigrants and whose contact information were already known. For the purposes of this project, a "key informant" refers to a person who has associations with an organization that serves immigrants, who has inside knowledge of the research topic, and who can provide contextual information and answers to the research

questions (e.g. lawyers, settlement workers, social workers, religious leaders, government employees, etc.). Follow-up phone calls to key informants were made to determine whether they were available to participate in the study and to set up appointments to conduct the interviews.

In addition to interviews done with key informants, questionnaires were distributed to 45 Latin American immigrant women who fit the inclusion criteria. The questionnaires were the main instrument used to collect data for this study. Flowerdew and Martin (2005) note that, “questionnaires are the most widely used data collection tools in human geography” (p. 75). These questionnaires were left with eligible potential participants for a period of two weeks maximum. This allowed the immigrant women to contemplate their answers and to better understand the nature of the study. Following the completion of the questionnaires by these women, six were randomly selected to participate in semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The intention of the interviews was to explore immigrant women’s integration experiences in Kelowna, their transnational ties with families and friends in their countries of origin, and their recommendations on how the three levels of government could improve immigrants’ services in Kelowna.

Consent forms were attached to the letters of contact/invitation to be signed by potential key informants and participants of the questionnaires. Consent forms were also given to the six women who were part of the follow-up interviews. Informed consent forms are “participants’ agreement to participate in a research study, with explicit understanding of the risks involved” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 199). Consent forms are necessary to give to potential participants to make sure that the voluntary nature of the involvement in the study is explained directly and the details of the study have been made explicit to the participants (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The researcher explained the consent forms to key informants and immigrant women over the phone or in person. The key informants and participants were given a maximum of two weeks after receiving the consent form to decide whether or not to participate.

3.4.2 Sampling Strategies and Instruments Used

A snowball sampling technique was determined to be suitable for this type of study. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) define snowball sampling as “a well-known purposive sampling technique that involves using informants or participants to identify additional cases who may be included in the study” (p. 175). Similarly, Valentine (2005) explains the snowball technique in more simple terms as “using one contact to help you recruit another contact, who in turn can put you in touch with someone else” (p. 117). Some participants and key informants of the study were gathered using this sampling technique as well as through personal contact made by the researcher. Another advantage of using a snowball technique to recruit potential participants for a study is that, “it helps researchers to overcome one of the main obstacles to recruiting interviewees, gaining their trust. It also allows the researcher to seek out more easily interviewees with particular experiences or background [suitable for the study]” (Valentine, 2005, p. 117). Thus, the snowball technique was chosen as the primary recruitment tool for this research because the lists of Latin American immigrants living in Kelowna and their contact information were not available to the researcher. In addition, the relatively small number of Latin American immigrants living in Kelowna makes it a very difficult task to locate them within the boundaries of the City of Kelowna.

The researcher has many personal contacts in the city, making the snowball technique an effective recruitment tool for this study. Questionnaires were given to known potential participants, who in some cases requested additional questionnaires, to pass on to acquaintances who lived in the study area and who fit the inclusion criteria for the study sample. With respect to recruiting the key informants, the researcher contacted employees in organizations (Appendix H) that help the general public and in some cases, organizations specifically geared to helping immigrants. The researcher had known these individuals in a professional capacity making the contacts easier to locate. The rationale for using organizations that are specifically geared toward

assisting immigrants is that this study is concerned with how immigrants are assisted by the various levels of government with settlement and integration in Kelowna and the importance of their transnational ties with their home countries.

The instruments used to collect data for this study were semi-structured interviews with 10 key informants, questionnaires with 33 Latin American immigrant women and follow-up, semi-structured interviews with six immigrant women who participated in the questionnaires. The rationale for using these methods to gather data was that they generate more information (quantitative and qualitative) and different perceptions that can be vital to the success of the study. Equally important, the methods (semi-structured interviews) used to collect the data in this exploratory case study allowed respondents to express themselves more fully than they could by just filling out questionnaires.

3.4.2.1 Interviews with Key Informants

Interviews with key informants (See Appendix H for a complete list of organizations contacted) were face-to-face and conducted at locations chosen by the key informants. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to maintain control of the line of questioning while the interviewee provides historical information on the topic (Creswell, 2009). The interviews with key informants lasted for approximately 40–60 minutes and were guided by themes. These themes are listed in Appendix I and entailed more open-ended questions to get better insight into the research area drawing on the key informants' perceptions and knowledge of the subject. The interviews commenced with an “unstructured informal conversational approach, which can be used to build rapport and elicit spontaneous responses” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 230). The interviews also gave key informants the chance to suggest recommendations to different levels of government that should be implemented in order to ease the integration process of immigrants in Kelowna.

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. They were then coded and organized by theme to assist with analysis. Tape-recording interviews are preferable than trying to write down information during the interview. Information can easily get left out during the writing process, often necessitating follow-up interviews. Tape-recording an interview “produces a more accurate and detailed record of the conversation (including capturing all the nuances of sarcasm, humour and so on) than notes” (Valentine, 2005, p. 123). In addition, the researcher can replay the tape many times picking up on ideas that were missed the first time.

3.4.2.2 Questionnaires

English-speaking Latin American immigrant women were recruited through friendly referrals and/or the researcher’s personal contacts in the city of Kelowna. All the women who participated in this study fulfilled the inclusion criteria for the study. The study sample was acquired through the use of a snowball technique. By using this strategy, the questionnaires (Appendix B) were also able to reach potential participants in a timely manner.

Consent forms to be signed by participants accompanied all questionnaires. Participants were given a maximum of two weeks to complete and return the questionnaires, with signed consent, to the researcher. Questionnaires were distributed to 45 Latin American immigrant women and 36 were returned. The majority of questionnaires (24) were personally administered by the researcher, resulting in on-the-spot completion and a faster response rate. Palys (2003) notes that a “self-administered questionnaire, [is] where the researcher makes face-to-face contact with a single respondent who completes the questionnaire by . . . herself, and where the researcher may or may not continue to be present” (p. 149). The primary advantage of self-administered questionnaires is that the researcher’s presence gives the respondents “the chance to . . . clarify ambiguities or misunderstandings and monitor the conditions of completion” (Palys, 2003, p. 151). On the other hand, of the remaining questionnaires (9), six participants chose to

mail the survey directly back to the researcher and on three occasions the researcher was also telephoned and asked to come and pick up the completed questionnaires.

Out of the returned questionnaires (36), three were eliminated from the study for the following reasons: (a) one questionnaire came back without the consent form; (b) one did not have enough information to be included in the study; and (c) one respondent was located outside the boundaries of the study area. Questionnaires allow participants to use “self-report to express their attitudes, beliefs, and feeling toward a topic of interest” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2005, p. 232). The questionnaires included both open- and closed-ended questions about participants’ experiences when migrating to and integrating in Kelowna, as well as how they maintained transnational ties with their home countries. Parfitt (2005) asserts that open-ended questions give respondents the freedom to give answers in their own words. Another advantage of open-ended questions is they encourage more detailed answers, although Parfitt (2005) notes they are difficult to analyze. Closed-ended questions on the other hand, are easier to ask, answer, and analyze. However, closed-ended questions “can suffer from the bias of constraining responses to certain categories or ‘putting words into people’s mouths’ by introducing them to responses that might not have occurred to them” (Parfitt, 2005, p. 91). The participants took approximately 35 minutes to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were in English and consisted of five sections to be completed, namely:

1. Demographic
2. Transition to Kelowna
3. Arrival to and integrating in Kelowna
4. Transnational ties with home countries
5. Final demographic

3.4.2.3 Participants' Follow-Up Interviews

Upon completion of the questionnaires by 33 participants, six women were randomly selected to carry out follow-up interviews. The researcher contacted the randomly selected women by telephone using numbers obtained during the questionnaire process. The researcher explained the main goal of the follow-up interviews and asked for the women's participation. The interviews were face-to-face and in-depth and took place at a time and location convenient to the women. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes on average and were very informative. They followed three main themes, namely:

1. Integration in Kelowna
2. Transnational relationships with families
3. Recommendations for the City of Kelowna to help Latin American immigrants to settle and integrate in the community, to improve community services; to provide affordable housing, job availability and job training, and language classes.

In conducting these interviews, the researcher was able to gain access to information that was not mentioned in the questionnaires. Responses from the interviews were more in-depth and descriptive because participants found it easier and more comfortable to express themselves verbally. Interviewees were comfortable speaking with the researcher because the researcher herself is an immigrant and the interviewees felt their situation would be better understood. The participants' frustrations were visible to the researcher and contributed to a better understanding of their integration experiences in Kelowna. These in-depth interviews with selected Latin American immigrant women had benefits that enriched the quality of the data. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

3.5 Limitations and Biases

The nature of this study is subject to limitations. A volunteer bias may have occurred due to differences between those immigrant women who agreed to participate and those who declined. The number of respondents may not truly represent the study sample; there may be more individuals who responded to the questionnaires from one country. A sampling bias may also have occurred because initial participants suggested additional participants with similar traits, characteristics, and experiences to themselves (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). The sample was not randomly selected and therefore not equally balanced or objectively presented (Creswell, 2009). For example, community organization staff serving immigrants helped the researcher identify possible participants for this study, thereby creating a sample bias towards clients of services as opposed to immigrant women who do not use such services. The study sample consists of only immigrant women from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America who are living in Kelowna and who are 19 years and older and speak English. Since the study sample is small and the study only focused on those individuals who have legal immigration statuses, those who were here in Kelowna illegally and on a temporary basis, could not express their concerns. Furthermore, because the language of communication was English, those immigrant women who had a poor knowledge of the English language were excluded from the study sample. Given the exploratory nature of this study as well as the small sample and the sampling strategies used, the results must be interpreted with some caution. However, the study will illuminate, through stories from Latin American women, their challenges faced when settling and integrating in Kelowna and their transnational ties.

3.7 Summary

This methodology section reviews and explains the techniques used in collecting data and the sampling strategies used in the sampling process. The study area, study sample, and the types of instruments used to collect the data are also discussed. The data collection was completed

during the summer and fall of 2012 using semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and questionnaires.

Semi-structured interviews were done with 10 key informants whose expertise provided background knowledge of immigrant women from Latin America with Spanish as their first language and who have migrated to Kelowna and are living here permanently. Key informants included, but were not limited to, lawyers, community leaders, settlement workers, and other immigrant services providers in Kelowna. Interviews with these individuals lasted roughly 40–60 minutes and were tape-recorded. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim, coded, organized by themes and analyzed.

Questionnaires were used as the main tool to gather data from Latin American immigrant women. This group consisted of 33 women who were eligible to participate in the study. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed by coding and then organized into themes. Following the completion of the questionnaires, six women were randomly chosen to carry out in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The follow-up interviews were conducted to get a deeper sense and understanding of these women's experiences when integrating in Kelowna whilst maintaining ties with their countries of origin. The follow-up interviews also allowed participants to convey their stories to the researcher. To analyze these interviews, the researcher used the same process as the interviews with the 10 key informants.

Chapter 4 Transitioning and Coping with Integration Challenges in Kelowna

4.1 Overview

The focus of this chapter is the transition and integration processes of English-speaking Latin American immigrant women in the city of Kelowna. It is divided into two sections. The first looks at the immigration process and how these women transition from their home countries to Kelowna while the second looks at their settlement and integration experiences in Kelowna. The settlement and integration section is further sub-divided into (a) the community's welcome, (b) challenges faced when searching for housing, (c) transferring of work experiences, and (d) transferring and recognizing academic credentials. These issues are of paramount importance to immigrants' successful integration into a new community. Language is another crucial component of integration and will be discussed further in this section of the chapter.

Latin American immigrant women have endured challenges and barriers when transitioning from their home countries and settling and integrating into new societies. Regardless of their reasons for moving to Kelowna, these women were determined to make the best of their new community by integrating. Their demographic profile is especially important in that the majority of Latin American immigrant women in the city of Kelowna are “family-oriented”⁷ and perceives Kelowna to be a better place to raise young children than a big metropolitan city. Table 4.1 below shows that 82 percent of the immigrant women responding to the study were married and either had a family or desired to build a family in Kelowna.

⁷ “Family-oriented” in this context refers to having or desiring to have a family consisting of children and a spouse.

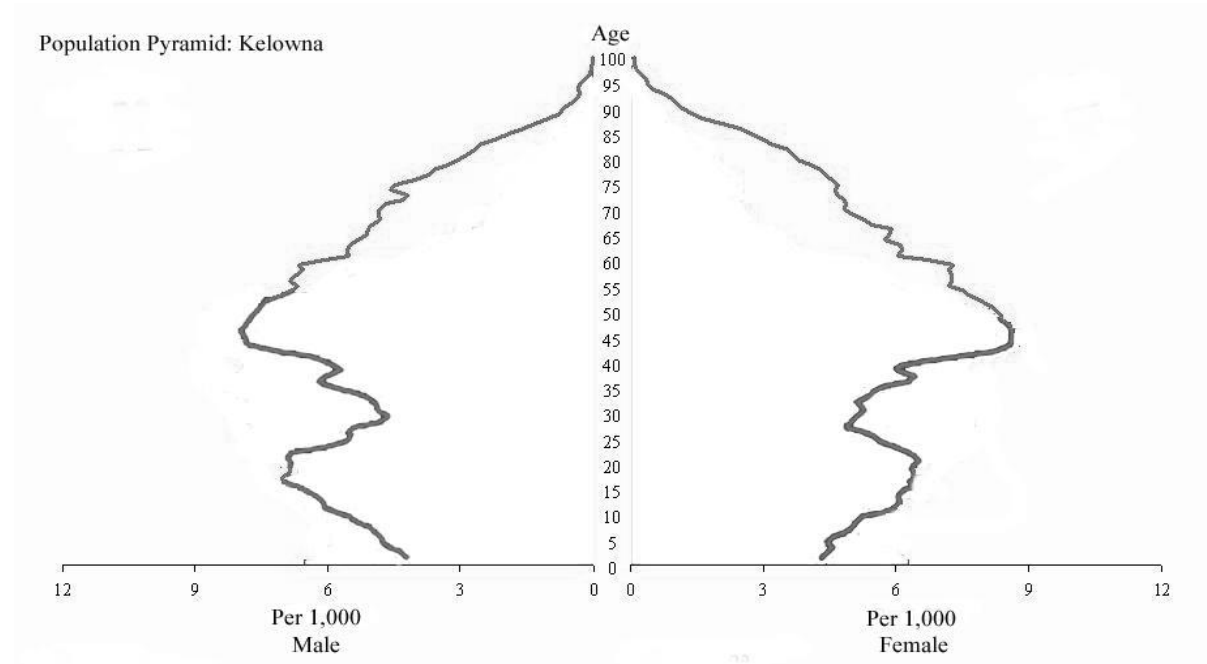
Table 4.1 Marital Statuses of Respondents

Marital Status	TOTAL N=33	%
Married	27	82
Divorced	3	9
Single	2	6
Widowed	1	3

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

Equally important, these women are of a younger demographic, which is vital to offsetting Kelowna's aging population. Data from Statistics Canada (2006) show that the average age in Kelowna for both males and females hovers around the 50-year mark (See Figure 4.1). Data from the questionnaires show that 54.5 percent of the study sample was born between 1971 and 1995 and falls between the ages of 21 and 42 years.

Figure 4.1 Population Pyramid of Kelowna



Source: Statistics Canada (2006).

4.2 Transitioning From The Home Country to Kelowna

When people migrate from one place to another, numerous transitioning steps have to be completed. Koert, Borgen, and Amundson (2011) contend that “transitioning has three stages: (a)

ending, losing, letting go; (b) the neutral zone; and (c) the new beginning” (p. 195). In other words, immigrants have to be able to leave behind what they are used to and accept what they have come to before starting anew. Some immigrants struggle and feel powerless in their new environment, which can take an emotional strain, whereas others thrive by being realistic and accepting of challenges. Immigrating to Canada can involve a variety of unexpected events. The immigration process, for instance, can be problematic and long. The applicant will have to follow the procedure appropriate to the type of immigration application pursued by obtaining the required documents to complete the application process. Processing times for immigration applications also vary depending on the category applied for, the immigrant’s country of origin, etc.

A question was asked about the difficulties immigrant women encountered with respect to obtaining documents to complete the immigration process. In total, 85 percent of respondents claimed they obtained all the required documents to complete their immigration application process on time. While the majority (72 percent) of respondents indicated they had “no difficulty at all” (36 percent) or “some difficulties” (36 percent) in getting the documents, others (12 percent) acquired the documents with some degree of difficulty (i.e. “very difficult” or “difficult”).

Depending on others to get documents to complete an immigration application is not always effective. As one woman puts it, “...there is also a lot of bureaucracy back home.” As a result, immigration application processes are often delayed. In fact, 55 percent of immigration applications took 1–5 years to be completed by the applicant while only 30 percent took less than one year (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Duration of Application Processes

Completion of immigration application process	TOTAL N=33	%
Less than 1 yr.	10	30
1–5 yrs.	18	55
6–10 yrs.	1	3
Did not answer	4	12

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

Despite the duration of the application processes, all Latin American immigrant women in the study were still able to acquire legal immigration status in Canada. As outlined in Table 4.3, a total of 17 immigrant women (52 percent) arrived in Kelowna as permanent residents of Canada while 11 arrived as visitors (33 percent). Application processing time varied according to the immigrants' arrival status in Canada.

Table 4.3 Immigration Status Upon Arrival in Canada

Immigration Status	TOTAL N=33	%
Permanent resident	17	52
Visitor	11	33
Refugee claimant	3	9
Federal skilled worker	1	3
Study permit	1	3

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

More than two-thirds of the immigrants in this study arrived in Kelowna after 2001 (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3) making them relatively recent migrants to the city. The interviews and questionnaires revealed they had many different reasons for migrating to Kelowna. The Latin American immigrant women studied were asked to give their three main reasons for coming to Kelowna. The most common reasons were (a) to have a better standard of living, including safety for them and their families (75 percent); (b) to be with family and friends (73 percent); and (c) for employment (24 percent). When asked about their expectations upon arrival in

Kelowna, 61 percent claimed they expected easy access to jobs, 30 percent expected to meet friendly people, and 17 percent expected a better standard of living. That being said, the expectations of these immigrants were similar to what other immigrant groups seek when choosing Kelowna as their final destination to live and work (see Teixeira, 2009).

4.3 Settling and Integrating in Kelowna

Settlement and integration are issues immigrants/newcomers face when moving from one country to another. The majority (86 percent) of immigrant women in the study felt that the most difficult challenge they faced when settling and integrating in Kelowna was their English language accents. Indeed, studies (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Teixeira, 2008) conducted in other Canadian cities show that language accents are the most difficult barrier for immigrants to overcome when settling in their new communities. Interestingly, van Tubergen (2006) asserts that successful settlement in a community requires “socio-cultural integration,” defined here as “the extent to which immigrants interact with the natives while cultural integration is the degree to which cultural values and patterns are shared among immigrants and natives” (van Tubergen, 2006, p. 7). The majority (24 or 73 percent) of Latin American immigrant women in this study believed they had integrated socio-culturally because they have built relationships and friendships with other Canadian-born residents whose language (English) they could speak. Despite this, Latin American immigrant women still felt their lives had been affected in ways that defined and shaped their experiences in Canada.

4.3.1 Being Welcomed into Kelowna’s Community

Latin American immigrant women’s experiences are shaped by whether the community welcomes them or whether they already had contacts in the area. There are a limited number of community organizations that offer services to immigrants in Kelowna (Teixeira, 2009; Depner & Teixeira, 2012). Equally important, information about these organizations is not easily accessible. During a key informant interview, a social worker stated:

. . . I don't know how we can let people know about the services that are there... I don't know how to get that out . . . putting them on paper; some people don't have the English to even get it; that's not going to help and I'm not sure . . . how can we get it known that we are here.

Similarly, in follow-up interviews with immigrant women, one woman explained:

I think these service centres . . . [are] good . . . but not a lot of immigrants or . . . new people coming here [Kelowna] know about these places so they [immigrants] think there should be more advertisement about them [immigrant services]

The fact that information about community organizations geared toward assisting immigrants is not easily accessible, or that immigrants are not familiar with their existence, forces immigrants to seek other methods of settling and integrating in Kelowna. The majority (78 percent) of women in the study were welcomed into Kelowna by family and friends already living in the area; only a few (6 percent) used the aid of Kelowna's immigrant community services (Table 4.4). This study corroborates Teixeira's (2009, 2010, 2011) studies on new immigrants' settlement and integration in mid-sized cities (Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton).

Table 4.4 Welcome into Kelowna

How were you welcomed?	TOTAL N=33*	%
By family & friends	26	78
By no one	6	18
By immigrant community services	2	6
By church	1	3

*The responses did not add up to 100% because respondents were able to answer more than one source when indicating how they were welcomed into Kelowna (Source: Questionnaires, 2012).

When immigrant women were asked which immigrant settlement services they used to help with their settlement and integration processes, 33 percent said they sought services from the Kelowna Immigrant Society, followed by the Multicultural Society (12 percent) and the Central Okanagan Immigrant and Employment Services (12 percent) (See Table 4.5). At the time of the interviews (summer/fall 2012) the Kelowna Immigrant Society did not have an office and its Website was under construction, so the only means to contact this organization was by

telephone. It is important to note that some of these organizations, such as the Central Okanagan Immigrant and Employment Services (COIES), are no longer in operation due to lack of funding.

Table 4.5 Immigrant Services in Kelowna Used by Respondents

Community Organization/Services	TOTAL N=33*	%
Kelowna Immigrant Society	11	33
Multicultural Society	4	12
Central Okanagan Immigrant and Employment Services	4	12
Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan	3	9
Kelowna Community Resources	2	6
The Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society	1	3
Did not answer	14	42

*The responses did not add up to 100% because respondents were able to provide more than one source when indicating immigrant services contacted for assistance (Source: Questionnaires, 2012).

With regard to the type of services these women sought, the majority chose language training (52 percent) and employment (24 percent) from immigrants' settlement services while only six percent wanted assistance in finding housing. Interestingly, 33 percent did not answer this particular question. Within this context, van Tubergen (2006) writes, "language is a crucial part of culture, and learning the language of the host country is therefore an important aspect of cultural integration" (p. 6). Their accented language could be a key reason why many immigrant women seek to improve their proficiency in language instead of other areas.

In addition, the limited number of organizations in Kelowna geared toward assisting immigrants to integrate has been affected by a lack of funding from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Kelowna's relatively small immigrant population, moreover, makes the lack available funding more challenging. In fact, in the last few years, many of the organizations that were assisting immigrants to integrate are no longer in operation while the few that have remained open, such as the Kelowna Community Resources and Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, have seen their resources stretched to capacity. A lack of funding is perhaps the primary reason

why these agencies are not finding effective ways to reach those immigrants who are gravely in need of assistance when integrating.

4.3.2 Housing Search Challenges

Finding affordable, adequate, and suitable housing in Kelowna is a daunting experience (Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011; McEwan, 2010; Oh, 2010). Both local residents and immigrants have to compete in Kelowna's expensive housing market for affordable, adequate, and suitable housing. Though some key informants suggested there was more housing availability in Kelowna within the last five to six years, there are not many accommodations that are affordable. A key informant (social worker) said:

. . . finding adequate housing—affordable housing—is a huge issue. . . it's been an ongoing issue here and the city is trying to accommodate that but it's a struggle . . . but in order to draw immigrants, I think housing is a huge thing and frankly housing is just unaffordable.

Accommodations might be available but renting or buying real estate in Kelowna is expensive (Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011). Even the recent downturn in the housing market has not made housing more affordable. For instance, one Latin American immigrant woman (a homeowner) who was interviewed said:

When you don't have money to live and you have to rent or also you have to accommodate to an apartment, it [is] very hard. . . How those young people can afford a \$1,000 and a \$1,500 place? I was lucky that [I] own my own place.

A church pastor whose congregation is made up of primarily of immigrants said:

For example, I met a lady from Mexico and I asked her if they are living in a . . . good accommodation, a good residence. She truthfully [said], "yes Father we're in a good house but we have to pay for it . . . a high, high price as well."

The search for affordable housing can be a long and difficult one. One-third (33 percent) of immigrant women in this study indicated that looking for housing was a major challenge for them. The interviewees used various means to navigate the housing barriers they encountered in Kelowna. With respect to the housing search process, the source most frequently used by Latin

American immigrant women (57.6 percent) was the assistance of family members and friends who already lived in Kelowna followed by newspapers (30.3 percent) and by Internet access (24.2 percent) (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Sources Used for Housing Search

Sources	TOTAL N=33*	%
Family & Friends	19	57.6
Newspapers	10	30.3
Internet access	8	24.2
Other: Realtor	2	6.1

* The responses did not add up to 100% because respondents were permitted to give more than one source when indicating the sources they used for their housing search (Source: Questionnaires, 2012).

Immigrant women described their experiences using family members and friends, the newspapers, and the Internet to search for housing as effortless. Asked about their housing, 22 out of 33 (67 percent) immigrant women claimed they had no difficulties at all when searching for housing. Getting support from family members and friends made searching for housing less challenging. The most frequently cited challenge these women reported with respect to their housing search was language. Some immigrant women stated that although they understood and spoke English relatively well, language related to “housing policy/regulations” (e.g., leases/contracts, renters vs. landlords’ rights and obligations) was difficult to understand. In addition, the women’s accents seem to have limited their housing choices and outcomes. During the interview process, one respondent expressed her frustration that, although she understood what the landlord was saying, he appeared to speak to her in a demeaning manner. Her response to this was as follows: “. . . not because I speak with an accent that means I think with an accent.” Despite their efforts in communicating well in English, immigrant women still endure accent-based language difficulties and categorizing by landlords when it comes to the real estate market in Kelowna. These findings are supported by studies conducted in other Canadian cities

where immigrant populations, especially those of colour, face challenges when searching for housing (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Teixeira, 2008).

In Kelowna's real estate market, the ratio of owning to renting among these women was almost equal. Data collected show that those immigrant women (11 out of 16 or 69 percent) who arrived in Kelowna before the year 2007 were more likely to own than those who arrived in 2007 and later (6 out of 17 or 35 percent). One of the reasons for this is that in order to get a loan from a banking institution to purchase real estate in Canada, one has to first establish a credit history, which can take some years. Even if an immigrant brings enough money to make a down payment to purchase real estate, s/he cannot do so if s/he lacks a Canadian "credit history."

Nonetheless, one key informant (a clergyman) pointed out that, "they [immigrants] come to Canada financially stable . . . they know basically that they have to have a house for sure." For many new immigrants, owning a house on Canadian soil means attaining the "Canadian dream" and once here, most immigrants will do everything they can to achieve it. Table 4.7 shows that the number of women owning their residences is slightly higher than those who rent.

Table 4.7 Occupying Residences

How are residences occupied?	TOTAL N=33	%
Own	17	52
Rental	16	48

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

Of the 16 renters surveyed, the majority (9 out of 16) occupied apartments while only three occupied houses. The other four renters were occupants of basement suites and townhouses. Respondents confirmed that finding rental accommodation was primarily achieved through family or friends who could refer them to the building manager of the apartment building they lived in. This suggests that apartment rental is easier for immigrant women than renting a house or townhouse.

Eleven out of the 15 renters (73.3 percent) who disclosed their monthly rental costs in this case study, reported that they pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income on rent, compared to four (26.7 percent) who pay less than 30 percent. This lack of affordability, furthermore, increases the possibility of an immigrant becoming homeless. Respondents who disclosed their monthly rent spent an average of \$500 a month on utilities, Internet, and cable combined.

With regard to homeowners, Table 4.8 shows that 8 out 17 property owners (47.5 percent) spent 30 percent or less of their monthly household income on their mortgage while seven (41.2 percent) spent more than 30 percent. These findings are congruent with those of other studies which show that in the Okanagan Valley immigrants (renters and homeowners) spent large sums of their income on housing (Teixeira, 2009; 2011).

Table 4.8 Homeowners - Percentage of Monthly Household Income Spent on Mortgage

Percentage of Total Monthly Household Income Spent on Mortgage	N=17	%
0 – 19	3	17.6
20 – 30	5	29.4
31 – 40	2	11.8
41 – 50	4	23.5
More than 50%	1	5.9
Did not answer	2	11.8

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

Despite their financial concerns when searching for affordable housing, homeowners as well as renters expressed that they were either “very satisfied” (42 percent), “satisfied” (27 percent) or “somewhat satisfied” (30.3 percent) with their current residence. The neighbourhoods in which the immigrant women lived also strongly affected their level of satisfaction of their current residence. In response to the question “how satisfied are you with your current neighbourhood,” a majority (29 or 88 percent) were either “very satisfied” (46 percent) or

“satisfied” (42 percent) with their current neighbourhood because of their proximity to amenities such as parks and shopping areas. Only a few women (10 percent) showed dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood or raised concerns about public transportation. Public transportation is a good example to analyze the specific needs of some populations such as seniors, youth, or immigrant women. For example, limited public transportation in certain areas interferes with some immigrants’ mobility. The schedule of these services is also problematic. Public transit in Kelowna operates on a different schedule on weekend and weekdays. For example, on Sundays, there is less service offered and buses are more infrequent.

4.3.3 Transferring Work Experiences in Kelowna

Integration into a community not only entails housing but also other factors such as employment. Finding employment is a form of economic integration (van Tubergen, 2006; Lo & Li, 2012) since without a job a person cannot meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. To integrate successfully into a community, immigrants thus need suitable employment in order to sustain their basic needs. Immigrants have to deal with adjusting to Kelowna’s volatile and changing employment environment and their lower economic earning potential compared with Canadian-born residents. Many of the women in this study left their countries of origin as professionals but found that their work experience was not readily transferable into Kelowna’s job market. The previous statement is in line with studies (Henin & Bennett, 2002; Gates-Gasse, 2010; Li & Lo, 2012) undertaken in other Canadian cities that argue immigrants’ work experience is not easily transferrable when they are trying to gain access to the Canadian labour market. As one immigrant woman put it:

I thought it was going to be much easier to get a job in my field [translator/interpreter] but I found out that there were some steps that I needed to do. Like, maybe get some certification. . . . So I really did not expect those kinds of limitations.

Eighty percent of the study sample claimed that their work experience from their home countries could not be transferred or was not easily transferred to the Kelowna job market.

Although 72 percent of women in this study were professionals back in their home countries (see Table 3.3 in Chapter 3), they could not gain employment in their field of expertise and resorted to lower paying jobs such as janitor, waitress, supermarket attendant, or stay-at-home mom. The jobs these women took gave them an annual income between the range of \$10,000 and \$20,000. The challenges immigrant women faced when seeking employment in Kelowna's job market varied. The majority of women (72 percent) in this study claimed that language, and more specifically, their accents were the biggest challenge they faced when looking for jobs. To deal with some of these challenges, some women (39.4 percent) upgraded their education and language proficiency whereas some (15.2 percent) did not try at all or focused on their family (12.1 percent). Table 4.9 shows the strategies immigrant women in the study used in order to deal with the challenges they faced when searching for jobs in Kelowna.

Table 4.9 Strategies Used When Searching for Jobs

Strategies Used	N=33	%
Networking/upgrading education/learning English/volunteering	13	39.4
Didn't try/remained at home	5	15.2
Focus on family	4	12.1
Being persistent	2	6.1
Taking what jobs are available	2	6.1
Starting own business	1	3.0
No answer	6	18.2

Source: Questionnaires, 2012.

As previously noted, some of the women in the study were forced to take low paying jobs in Kelowna, which put a strain on their emotions and self-esteem. The women whose self-esteem was affected by the challenges they faced during the job search in Kelowna felt depressed and no longer wanted to make an effort to seek employment more suited to their skills and experience. Some key informants stressed the importance of helping immigrant women regain their self-esteem. For example, a settlement worker stated:

Another thing that I have really seen or become aware of is that, women, I mean of course I didn't know them prior to coming to Canada, but I have seen that their self-esteem has really gone down, and so some of the programmes that I have been passionate about is really helping women to regain that self-esteem and regain that self-confidence.

On the other hand, those women who showed resilience and who were confident in their language proficiency were able to find fairly well-paid jobs, albeit not in their field of expertise. Koert, Borgen, and Amundson (2011) argue that those immigrant women who exhibit positive behaviours are more likely to succeed in settling and integrating in their new community. Furthermore, these same women can assist and, more often than not, do assist women who have more conservative traits.

4.3.4 Transferring and Recognizing Academic Credentials in Kelowna

Another barrier immigrant women face when integrating into Kelowna is recognition of their academic credentials. Kelowna, being a mid-sized city, does not have the same services/organizations for employers as bigger cities (e.g. Vancouver, Calgary). This probably has a negative impact on the acceptance of international academic credentials. Although it may be less expensive for these employers to recognize foreign academic credentials than to provide education or on-the-job training, a significant number of immigrants still have to upgrade to “Kelowna’s standard.” In interviews, Latin American immigrant women expressed their frustration with not having their academic credentials and years of schooling recognized in Kelowna. Studies show that the recognition of their academic credentials is one of the many hurdles immigrants have to overcome in order to gain access to the Canadian labour market (Picot & Sweetman, 2005; Ferrer & Riddle, 2008; Xue, 2010; Lo & Li, 2012).

The failure to recognize foreign academic credentials is a waste of human capital, because as van Tubergen (2006) argues, the “[E]ducational qualifications obtained from immigrants’ countries of origin are not easily transferable and equally valued in the host country” (p. 16). In all, 84 percent of the study sample claimed that their academic credentials

were not transferred or recognized in Kelowna. This poses a challenge for many immigrant women seeking to integrate economically.

On the other hand, those immigrant women who came to Kelowna prior to 2006 were more likely to have better integrated economically than those who came after. This experience reflects, “concerns [that] have been raised lately . . . about the economic well-being of the current generation of immigrants . . . who arrived after 1980 are not doing as well as their predecessors in terms of their labour market experiences” (Lo & Li, 2012, p. 112). According to van Tubergen (2006), immigrants who have spent a longer time in their host country do progress economically, although less rapidly, than Canadian-born citizens. Biles, Burnstein, and Frideres (2008) echo this sentiment in saying immigrants who came to Canada earlier experienced the economic success but a decline in earnings for recent immigrants is a barrier to economic well-being. This decline could be the result of immigrants’ foreign academic credentials not being recognized (Picot & Sweetman, 2005; Ferrer & Riddle, 2008; Xue, 2010; Lo & Li, 2012).

In sum, Kelowna is a mid-sized city that has only recently begun to experience an inflow of immigrants from all over the world. There is a need for Kelowna’s businesses to have access to the same organizations geared toward the recognition of foreign academic credentials that bigger cities such as, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (MTV) do. Suto (2009) claims that recognizing foreign academic credentials and work experience could save the Canadian government billions of dollars annually.

4.4 Summary

Like many Canadian cities, Kelowna is a community where immigrants continue to undergo the processes of transitioning and integration. In addition, it is one of the fastest growing, mid-sized cities in British Columbia and is becoming a diverse city consisting of immigrants from many countries. Immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America are transitioning from their home countries and integrating in Kelowna.

Transitioning from one place to another is an experience that is very difficult to describe to those who have not endured the process. As mentioned earlier, the immigration transition process has three stages (van Tubergen, 2006). The first stage is the letting go: that is, giving up what was normal in the migrant's country of origin. The second is the neutral stage, where immigrants are neither there nor here. The third stage involves starting anew: that is, where an immigrant becomes immersed into new and different societal norms.

When an immigrant makes the decision to move to Canada, applying under the immigration class appropriate to his or her circumstances is key to successful completion of the application. Immigrating to Canada under the family class is different from immigrating as a permanent resident. Those who apply to immigrate as permanent residents have to produce the necessary documentation and pay the appropriate fees in order to be granted access to the country, both of which can take some time to acquire. Accumulating these documents can be time-consuming and can delay the application process, resulting in frustration on the part of the applicant(s).

An immigrant's experience integrating in Kelowna can be daunting. Those immigrant women surveyed and interviewed for this study found settling and integrating in Kelowna problematic. Their dependence on family and/or friends already living in the area was strongly emphasized since accessibility to immigrant services organizations in Kelowna proved difficult. The few organizations that currently exist to assist new immigrants in their settlement and integration lack the human and financial resources to help in an effective way. These organizations are also not easily accessible because their advertising techniques tend not to reach those immigrants most in need. When immigrant women did contact these organizations, their primary focus was to learn English or improve their language proficiency.

As van Tubergen (2006) observes, language is a vital component of integration. Without strong language skills, immigrants are left in a vulnerable position, which may lead to

homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. Throughout the interview process and questionnaires, immigrant women (86 percent) stated that the most difficult challenge they faced when integrating in Kelowna was their accented language. Some participants spoke English fluently but with an accent and reported that they were discriminated against in both the real estate and job markets.

Kelowna has one of the most expensive real estate markets in North America, which made finding affordable, adequate, and suitable housing a difficult experience for one-third of the study's participants. In fact, all participants in this study claimed that housing in Kelowna is unaffordable. Despite these housing market challenges, more than half (52 percent) of the immigrant women surveyed for this study owned their homes. For most of these women, homeownership represented the attainment of the "Canadian dream" and was a sign of their integration into Kelowna's society. Finding affordable rental accommodation, on the other hand, was more challenging than homeownership since 73.3 percent of renters interviewed allotted more than 30 percent of their monthly income to rent alone. In contrast, only 41.2 percent of homeowners spent more than 30 percent of their monthly income on a mortgage.

Approximately 80 percent of the immigrant women surveyed for this study could not easily transfer work experience from their home countries. As a result, 32 percent were forced to take up menial jobs such as supermarket attendant, janitor, and waitress—to name a few—and were earning an annual income between \$10,000 and \$20,000. This study corroborates other studies on immigrants' transferring their work experience from their home countries (Suto, 2009; Gates-Gasse, 2010). Being employed is, of course, a good thing except when a person cannot depend on his or her wages to sustain his or her basic needs and is forced to take drastic measures to compensate (e.g. having more than one job, long commutes, etc.), that can push a vulnerable person into dependence on health care and social systems.

Equally important, the majority of Latin American immigrant women (84 percent) in Kelowna have not had their academic credentials recognized due to a lack of organizations to tackle the issue. The combination of not being able to transfer work experience from home and/or not having academic credentials recognized may force these women into poverty, or force them to start over again so that they can access better paying jobs in Kelowna.

The immigrant women interviewed for this study reported that accented language was their biggest challenge. Not being able to speak English “properly” or speaking with an accent impacted their prospects for settling and integrating successfully in Kelowna. The women commended their family members and friends for their tremendous assistance in helping them to integrate into the community.

Chapter 5 Latin American Immigrant Women in Kelowna Transnational Ties

5.1 Overview

Transnationalism is a term used frequently in discussions about international migration (Basch et al., 1994; Castles & Miller, 2009). The objective of this chapter is to illustrate the importance Latin American immigrant women place on retaining and maintaining relationships with their countries of origin. All Latin American immigrant women in the study who have migrated to Kelowna have transnational ties and use a variety of approaches to retain and maintain these ties. Transnational ties, moreover, aid this particular group of women to overcome challenges they face when integrating in Kelowna. This chapter will look at how the women in this study cope with the effects of transnationality. The chapter also examines how these women cope with their economic obligations to the family members they have left behind in their home countries.

5.2 The Importance of Transnationalism Amongst Latin American Immigrants

International cross-border ties are not a new phenomenon when it comes to international migration (Portes, 2001; Castles & Miller, 2009). For decades, people who moved from country to country have found ways to retain and maintain their culture, language, and other aspects of their lives through transnational activities. As a result, transnational ties have become vital to immigrants. Portes' (2001) study explains in great detail the significance of immigrants' transnationalism. Specifically, it emphasizes the importance of transnational activities amongst immigrants from Colombia, El Salvador, and Mexico living in the U.S.. Transnational activities are the foundation of immigrants' maintenance of relationships between their lives in their home countries and their host countries. Immigrant transnationalism requires special attention because of the magnitude of international migration today. Portes (2001) gives three reasons why immigrant transnationalism is important, namely: (a) the expectations of its growth in the future;

(b) the alteration of the process of integration in the host countries of both first generation immigrants and their offspring; and (c) its bearing on the development of the sending countries such as dual citizenship and voting in national elections.

It is important to note that although this case study of Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna only includes a small sample, immigrant women from this particular region do have important transnational ties and engage in activities with their home countries (Orozco, 2002; Orozco et al., 2005; Bernhard et al., 2005, 2009). The women's transnational activities included, but were not limited to, visiting, sending remittances, and social practices such as cooking their ethnic foods, celebrating their country's national holidays, etc. From the data collected, all women in the study cited the importance of keeping in contact with their home countries. Key informants were asked why Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna should retain and maintain transnational ties with their home countries. One government employee responded as follows:

Most definitely, I do think it's important for them and for their children to understand and know where they came from but I also think it's really important for them to make that transition and to integrate. It's fine to hold on to some things in your cultures, in your beliefs, in your values in your country, but also be willing to look at what this country has to offer as well.

In contrast, a local lawyer observed that not all immigrants see maintaining transnational ties with their home countries as important:

They [immigrants] are ones, who come permanently and they either didn't have much family [in their countries of origin]; there is no reason for those transnational ties. My assumption is that they don't maintain them [transnational ties] because they do not provide any purpose for them. . . . Especially if you come over and then sponsor your family you have nobody left there.

However, not maintaining ties with their countries of origin was not the case with immigrant women in this study, although their immigration statuses all fell into the category of either permanent resident or Canadian citizenship. Second, these women wanted to remain in Kelowna indefinitely but still wanted to keep in contact with their home countries for

various economic and social reasons or because of family ties. While most of the recently arrived immigrant women (24 out of 33 or 72.7 percent) wanted to stay in Kelowna—or Canada—in the long term, those who arrived in Canada/Kelowna before the year 2000 (i.e., the oldest immigrants (9 out of 33 or 27.3 percent)) expressed a desire to permanently move back home (to their country of origin) one day. Of those women who want to return permanently (9 or 27.3 percent) to their country of origin, five wanted to visit/retire there, two wanted to return because family was living back home and another two were “tired” (i.e., stressed) of the pace of life here in Kelowna/Canada. Of the women who wanted to return home, six planned to return in more than 10 years. In contrast, the more recently arrived immigrant women had no desire to return home on a permanent basis but only to visit family members and friends (24 or 72.7 percent). The women gave three reasons for staying in Kelowna: (a) their family live here/Canada is home (42 percent); (b) better standard of living/opportunities (24 percent); and (c) personal safety issues (6 percent).

Though a majority of the women studied (24 or 72.2 percent) wanted to remain here, all of the women stated the importance of maintaining transnational ties. In the follow-up interviews, one woman asked for the recorder to be turned off before she would explain why she thought maintaining relationships with family and/or friends back home was crucial. This particular woman spoke tearfully about her poor living conditions (borderline poverty) in Kelowna. At the same time, she did not want her family members back home to become aware of this because she feared it would worry them. She further explained that “. . . that’s the only way I can get through my problems, is when I call back home.”

Another immigrant woman expressed a similar sentiment saying she would call home frequently:

. . . because she [mother] tend to always remind me why I’m here and all the points, all the reasons now that I have a baby why it’s better to stay here. It’s a sacrifice every

day being alone with the baby and not having my mom or my family or my culture with me but then I call her and then I'm happy again.

Many immigrant women found calling home reassuring. The calls also motivated them and gave them a sense of well-being; that is, of not being alone and knowing that there was someone they could express their feelings to. These comments are testimony to the unwelcoming character of the host society.

Latin American immigrant women were asked what communication medium they used to stay connected with their home countries. Telephone (42.5 percent) and Internet access (42.5 percent) were the most used medium. Phone texting, Skype, Facebook, Facetime, emailing, MSN instant messaging, and calling were the most popular and fastest means of communication among this group of immigrants. It is important to note that half (52 percent) of the women surveyed, said that they either regularly visited or tried to visit home at least once a year.

A follow-up question was asked regarding how often the women used these communication media to connect with family members and/or friends back home. Of the 33 women, 14 (42.4 percent) were in weekly contact with friends and relatives in their countries of origin, 11 (33.3 percent) were in daily contact and five (15.2 percent) were in contact on a monthly basis. Table 5.1 outlines the frequencies of contact immigrant women have with their countries of origin.

Table 5.1 Frequency of Contact with Countries of Origin

Frequency	TOTAL N=33	%
Weekly	14	42.4
Daily	11	33.3
Monthly	5	15.2
Every few months	2	6.1
Other: Once in a while	1	3.0

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

The immigrant women who were in daily contact with family members and/or friends back home used the Internet—mostly Skype—to do so. This medium of communication gave them a sense of being involved in the day-to-day operation of the household back home. One immigrant woman said:

My family [is] in Mexico. . . . I want to still keep them part of my life and I want them to be aware of what is happening with me here because I know that at some point they are concerned. And keeping them informed and updated is really important, at least for me. It made the connection to still be stronger.

A settlement worker echoed this sentiment, “Skyping is huge. Yes. I know people [that] say from the time they get home; they just keep it [on] in the kitchen . . . like they are cooking dinner together.”

Family is a vital component of life for Latin Americans, and immigration often interferes with this familial bond. Once the decision is made to migrate, familial ties can be broken. These broken ties affect both the relatives who remain back home and the ones who move away, usually in ways that cannot be brought back to the initial state. Berger (2004) explores this issue extensively in his study of immigrant women from the Latin American region. He argues that some immigrant women feel that immigration splits their families in two ways (Berger, 2004). The fact that they are no longer part of a tightly knit, extended family puts a strain on these women. An immigrant woman in this study said:

I think the relationship with my family have come [on different] levels. Some aspects of our relationship have become stronger and others have become a little wider, a little loose . . . because this communication that I have with my parents, they know I’m already an independent woman and they know what I’m capable of doing on my own. So they trust me and they support me. . . . They have seen that I can accomplish things being here on my own. So unless it’s a major decision that the family has to make they will obviously include me but if they are minor decisions that’s won’t affect me radically, it’s not a big deal.

The importance of family in Latin American culture pushes Latin American immigrant women to maintain strong transnational ties with their home countries (Bernhard et al., 2005). Even though immigrant women in this study had to focus on their lives in Kelowna, all of them still

found the time and means to retain and maintain contact with family and friends in their home countries. Despite the fact that they are here, the hearts of these women are still in their respective home countries.

5.3 Our Economic Obligation to “Home”

Helping out family members and/or friends back in the home country is normal for immigrants in this study. For many Latin American immigrants, the struggles and lack of opportunities in their countries of origin was what urged them to migrate in the first place. Immigrants offer assistance to family and friends in their home countries in many ways. The immigrant women in this case study came to Kelowna for better opportunities and felt the need to offer social and economic assistance to those “back home.” For many, the easiest way to give financial assistance to their relatives and friends across international borders is by sending money or remittances. Orozco, Lowell, Bump, and Fedewa (2005) investigated the remittance phenomenon among Latin American immigrants in the United States. In their study, the authors found that remittances to Latin American countries helped boost the immigrants’ home economies. In addition, the authors’ comparison of various immigrant groups proved that Latin American immigrants were at the top of the pyramid when it came to sending remittances back home. In Latin America, families, friends, and governments depend greatly on remittances sent back by those living abroad (Orozco et al., 2005). Remittances sent by immigrants to their family members and/or friends back home are crucial to sustaining the latter’s livelihoods.

Even though sending remittances is significant among some immigrant groups, Table 5.2 illustrates that only around half (55.6 percent) of the Latin American immigrant women in this study sent back remittances to their home countries. One immigrant said, “. . . yes [I send money home], but not very often. Just whenever I [am] able to do it [send money], I would do [so] but it wouldn’t be something that I felt I have to do.”

The remaining immigrant women (42.4 percent) did not see sending remittances as an economic and/or moral obligation to their family members. In fact, during the follow-up interviews, when the question regarding remittances was asked, some women said that “their family members at home do not need the money” or that “their wages in Kelowna can barely provide them with the necessities they themselves need to survive here.” As one woman explained:

It wasn’t an economic obligation, it was mostly when I felt the need that I needed to support my family or whoever member of the family needed some financial help. I will do it [send money] but it was more like a gift [from] me. It wasn’t a necessity or an obligation that I have to do every month.

Another immigrant woman said:

I know people that do that [send money] but I personally [don’t], . . . I know my family are not in need of that [money] and they have stable jobs, stable income so they don’t really need me to [send money for them].

Table 5.2 Sending Remittances Back Home

Send remittances?	TOTAL N=33	%
Yes	18	55.6
No	14	42.4
Did not answer	1	3.0

Source: Questionnaires, 2012.

At the same time, a social worker claimed that “some immigrant women in Kelowna work two or three jobs here in order to send remittances back to their home countries.”

The women who sent remittances back home did so periodically. In fact, of the 18 (55.6 percent) women who sent remittances, five (27.8 percent) send them regularly (“every two weeks” or “every month”) while the majority (72.2 percent) did so only on special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries or in case of emergencies like medical expenses (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Frequency of Sending Remittances Back Home

Frequency of Remitting	TOTAL N=18	%
Every two weeks	3	16.7
Every month	2	11.1
Only for special occasions	9	50
Only for emergencies	4	22.2

Source: Questionnaires (2012).

The immigrant women who sent remittances back to their countries of origin stated they were not worried what the remittances were used for. The women said remittances are sent to deal with household situations as they arise. Being able to assist in this way gives immigrant women in Kelowna a sense of engagement in day-to-day transnational activities within the households of their families/friends in their countries of origin.

While some women (7 out of 33 or 21.2 percent) were given the opportunity to participated in the ‘life’ of their household in their countries of origin, others were more engaged in the local community (3 out of 33) or on a national level (1 out of 33). In response to a question regarding to what degree Latin American immigrant women engage in transnational activities, those who answered (3) said they did so in the local community by owning businesses and on a national level (1) by exercising their voting rights from abroad or travelling back home to cast their ballots. In the follow-up interview one woman said, “. . . I know for this past election [it was] just a few months ago, we wanted to vote but there was some weird stuff going on.”

On the other hand, those immigrant women (3 or 9 percent) who were involved transnationally in their local communities back home did so in different ways. These include: (a) participating in business activities; (b) coming together with other immigrants from the same destination country to improve conditions in their home communities; (c) building their retirement home; and (d) engaging in banking. These forms of engagement, especially at the community level, helped the women establish relationships in both their destination countries as

well as their home countries. Latin American immigrant women in this study extended their familial ties to those from their country of origin that lived in the same community in the destination country.

5.4 Summary

The data presented in this chapter clearly shows the significance of transnational ties between Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna and their countries and communities of origin. Latin American immigrant women are used to strong/close familial ties, and maintaining relationships across international borders is paramount to their well-being in a new environment. The various means these women used to maintain and retain transnational ties—particularly the telephone, Internet access, or visits—were important to them while they resided in Kelowna. Various technologies helped these women continue to feel a sense of belonging in their native households. Seventy-three percent of women who migrated to Kelowna between the year 2001 and later (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3) were more likely to have robust transnational ties with their home countries. It can be argued that advanced technology (cheaper telephone costs and Internet access) plays a major role in the frequency of these communications. Equally important, some of these women are still summoned to participate in the day-to-day household decision-making in their original countries even though they are permanently residing in Kelowna.

In addition to maintaining contact through various technologies, Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna also give economic assistance to their family and/or friends in their countries of origin. Even though some women sent remittances to their home countries, these same women claimed that family members were not in great need of frequent financial assistance. In some cases, the women's financial situation in Kelowna did not allow them to help others. Those immigrant women able to afford to help family members back in their home countries sometimes lived in a dual-income household in Kelowna. Because the purpose of the study was to look solely at the retention and maintenance of transnational ties among immigrant

women from Latin America, the latter were not asked what percentage of their income was sent back home in the form of remittances.

Chapter 6 Recommendations for Settlement and Integration Services for Immigrants in Kelowna

6.1 Overview

Kelowna, a mid-sized city, continues to grow in terms of population. Historically, the city has been a popular destination for retirees, with a predominantly aging and white population; however, Kelowna is now experiencing an inflow of other international immigrants. Visible minority immigrants are also increasingly calling Kelowna home. Kelowna's Latin American immigrant population is growing. Two reasons for this are the educational and job opportunities the city and region offers. The last decade has seen more than ever before Latin Americans move to Kelowna either temporarily or permanently.

This chapter focuses on policy recommendations and how the implementation of those policies could better assist immigrants' integration in Kelowna. Immigrant women and key informants in this study made numerous recommendations for how the three levels of government could improve immigrant services in the community. Interview participants expressed their opinions on topics such as immigrant services and/or whether Kelowna was a welcoming community, Kelowna's housing market, jobs and job training, transferring of work experience, recognition of foreign academic credentials, and language training—all of which are fundamental to immigrants' successful settlement and integration in Kelowna.

6.2 Welcome “Home”?

Key informants and Latin American immigrant women gave their insights on how welcome they felt in Kelowna. A majority of the responses came from immigrant women who participated in the follow-up in-depth interviews. Many were concerned with the inadequacy of immigrant services and felt that all levels of government needed to find better ways to help immigrants settle and integrate. Immigrant women were asked their opinion on how the city of Kelowna could improve the few existing services and/or ways to implement new services to

welcome and assist immigrants. Some women stated that they would like to have someone from their native country or region employed at immigrant services to assist those who are not fluent in the English language. As one woman said:

I don't know really but what I would like is [for] every community or group [to] have somebody from the same country. For example, . . . I remember they will have an Asian one, for Asian people. . . . so I would like . . . maybe a Latin one being part of that group and inviting people [Latin American immigrants] because that person already speaks Spanish and English. Then that person will invite more people in their language. . . . I think it would be warmer when you see somebody [in the community/group] . . . speaking in your language.

A key informant—a religious leader who is an immigrant from a different cultural background from the women in this study—echoed the previous response:

In terms of providing services for these people [immigrants], is to have people as well who are speaking the languages of these people. If we have people who speak the languages of these people, who understand from what particular culture they come from, then I think it will be [easier] to facilitate their process of integration, their process of stability.

Another key informant—a journalist—had the same reaction and added that immigrants who have been in Kelowna for a while could act as liaisons to connect newer immigrants to the community. She said, “I think what they [Kelowna] need to do is take people who have settled successfully here, [and] that person or someone who can [connect] the community with their [immigrant] community.”

The same journalist noted:

I think you need people who have settled successfully to give back and share what their experience was with their extended community because I think when a Canadian or an . . . English speaking person approaches a new Canadian or an immigrant, there is a lot that's lost in translation, and isn't connected. So I think, it's one thing to have a translator to translate but I think there needs to be sort of an ongoing relationship with the community and [to] make sure, let's say the South Asian community has someone who's really engaged within their own community and is making sure people know what is available.

Connecting with other immigrants and with members of their community of origin is vital to immigrants' successful settlement and integration in Kelowna. However, it is important to note

that most of the immigrant women in this study found going to community services for assistance to be a challenge. This was often attributed to these organizations not having staff who really understood their plight and could help them in effective ways.

A key informant who was a social worker with an organization aimed at assisting women said that there were other ways to assist immigrant women to settle and integrate successfully in Kelowna. In an interview, this key informant expressed her frustration with the municipal government as well as with the citizens of Kelowna. She believed that both groups were not “doing enough” to attract Latin American immigrants to the community in comparison to immigrants from other ethnicities, races, and regions of the world. She argued that there needed to be ‘more visibility of other cultures’ in the community because of Kelowna’s efforts to promote multiculturalism. She cited the media as an example:

. . . We [Kelowna] don’t have a radio station to promote an hour of different music from other cultures. [And] I think that would be a good thing because that’s our revenue...I mean you hear different music on CBC you get connected with the other cultures; you get to know them and there is a chance that you gonna get the revenue from them. . . . I mean that’s what [multiculturalism] is about anyway. Canada is formed by [multiculturalism].

Kelowna lacks the necessary tools to direct immigrant women to culturally oriented services that might benefit them. As a result, those immigrant women who are gravely in need of assistance have difficulties accessing the few community services available including finding affordable, adequate, and suitable accommodations on bus routes for people who don’t drive (or own a car).

6.3 Real Estate – The Housing Milieu

With regard to housing, particularly affordable, adequate, and suitable housing, immigrant women recommended that there be a greater supply of affordable housing in safer areas/neighbourhoods. In addition, they asked for more government-assisted housing for immigrants, especially for single-parent households. An immigrant woman said:

Well, the thing is that I know that the government has built some buildings for women [but] I don't know if [the houses are] especially for Canadian people [or] mostly Canadian people but it must be Canadian people because I know of some buildings that are built for single mothers to rent cheaper and they are sponsored by the government.

Another immigrant woman countered this argument, stating that:

. . . I don't think there should be a difference between providing affordable housing for immigrants and not for Canadians. . . . [A] lot of people want affordable housing but Kelowna is not a cheap city to live in and so you cannot expect that some people will pay way less than others just because [they] are . . . immigrant[s].

One key informant further stressed the importance of finding affordable housing not only for immigrants but native-born Canadians as well. This key informant believed that:

finding adequate and affordable housing is a huge issue. It's been an ongoing issue here [Kelowna] and the city [municipal government] is trying to accommodate that but it's a struggle. I think housing is a huge thing and frankly housing is just unaffordable.

The women in this study did not make many recommendations with regard to the role of governments in the provision of affordable, adequate, and suitable housing in Kelowna. One possible explanation for this is that Latin American immigrant women in this study seemed to have strong social networks and thus depended mostly on family members and friends already positioned in the city when searching for housing in Kelowna. Even though Kelowna's housing market remains expensive, these immigrant women used their ethnic networks to overcome the challenges they faced in this area of settlement and integration. However, their challenges proved to be greater in the area of jobs and job training in Kelowna.

6.4 Jobs and Job Training

Key informants and immigrant women also had policy suggestions regarding the issue of jobs and job training. Data from this study show that well-paid jobs are lacking in Kelowna and that immigrant women often have to take low-paid jobs like janitor or waitress in order to meet their basic needs. An immigrant woman said "I used to work as a graphic design[er] back home

. . . but now I work as a server [in a restaurant].” In order to meet their basic needs these women often had to take whatever job was available or work two or three jobs. As one government employee stated, “one of the things that has always amazed me working with new immigrants, with newcomers, some of them work three and four jobs” to make ends meet.

With job training being costly, many employers seek out potential employees who already have the experience required to fill job vacancies. Further, potential employees have to prove they have experience in the required areas and the number of years worked in the specific position.

6.5 Don’t Bring Your Work Experience and Academic Credentials Here?

The fact that many immigrant women cannot access jobs in Kelowna is due to a combination of limited jobs and job training and difficulty getting their work experiences and academic credentials from their country of origin transferred and recognized. It has been argued that the federal government should be responsible for providing funding for services that tackle recognition of foreign academic credentials. In Kelowna, however, one key informant faulted the federal government for cutting funding for the service that deals with the recognition of foreign academic credentials.

Some immigrant women claimed that they were not hired for jobs for which they had experience because they lacked “Canadian work experiences.” For example, one immigrant woman said, “it does not matter what experience you have, if it is not ‘Kelowna’ experience, then you are not good enough.” In other words, it appears that employers in Kelowna prefer to hire potential employees who are versed in Kelowna’s job market/economy. In short, both key informants and Latin American immigrant women supported the need for services to help immigrants with jobs and job training. Further, all participants in this study agreed that a specific organization or branch of a federal office geared toward recognizing foreign academic credentials is much needed in Kelowna.

6.6 “Colourful” English

To access the job market, it is crucial that immigrants are able to speak one of Canada’s official languages. Without the knowledge and understanding of an official language, immigrants are forced into a position of uncertainty. In Kelowna, English is the most widely used language. Immigrant women in this study cited language, or their accent, as their biggest challenge when settling and integrating in Kelowna and said that such barriers often contributed to feelings of low self-esteem.

Key informants and immigrant women who participated in the interview process stressed the significance of language in successful settlement and integration. Some women used their language skills, whether limited or fluent, to cope with the challenges they faced. They discussed the need for better availability of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. There are only two known immigrant services organizations in Kelowna that offer ESL classes. And while the classes currently available are free to newcomers, at least one immigrant woman noted that:

. . . language is a major issue. I think some ESL classes need to be available for them [immigrants]. However at some point I don’t totally agree that they need to be free classes. But definitely there needs to be some support, some availability of resources for them to learn the language.

A key informant—an immigration consultant—raised the issue of whether a person of the students’ background is better equipped to teach them the local language. She argued:

. . . if it [English] is taught by someone who is Latin or Latina, they [women] will feel more comfortable. Because there is already, I hate to say it; there is already a lot of prejudice out there.

Shyness about their English language accent was one reason many Latin American immigrant women failed to access ESL classes. The same key informant said, “English for ‘hispanohablantes’, Spanish-speaking immigrants is... very, very difficult if nobody ever shows them how the puzzle works... or if there are puzzle pieces.”

Apart from accessing ESL classes, whether low-cost or free, another issue facing Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna is finding affordable childcare services. Even in the cases where ESL classes were available, some women could not attend due to a lack of affordable childcare (bigger cities such as Vancouver often make childcare available to single mothers who wish to attend ESL classes). Immigrant women in this study thus recommended that the municipal government fund ESL classes that provide childcare as well.

6.7 Policy Implications

To provide services to Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna, there must be some government policies in place. Providing services for immigrant women such as low-cost childcare, ESL programs, and job programs and training must be the responsibility of the municipal government, which is accountable to its community and its residents, whether native-born or immigrant. If Kelowna's municipal government wants to attract and retain more immigrants to the city, it may have to provide more services, which, in the end, will benefit all who reside here.

Carrying out these initiatives will also require the assistance of other levels of government. Participants in this study argued that the provincial government should support Kelowna's local government by assisting with the funding of public transportation. In other words, governments on different levels have to work together to improve public transit services for residents.

In addition to more assistance from the provincial government for public transit, increased funding from the federal government is also vital. The federal government continues to cut funding for immigrant services in Canada. Reductions in federal services to help newly arrived immigrants settle and integrate in their new country have forced provincial and local governments to take up the burden. Limited federal resources are stretched so thin that other levels of government often allocate their sparse resources to more pressing issues. However,

immigrants to Canada are important since the Canadian economy depends on their services (Ferrer & Riddle, 2008).

6.8 Summary

Key informants and immigrant women in this study provided recommendations and insights into how to improve immigrants' settlement and integration in Kelowna. The issues raised in this thesis illustrate the need for more and better services for immigrants. The participants in this study came to Canada, and more specifically to Kelowna, as professionals hoping to better their lives. However, most found that settling and integrating in Kelowna was not as easy as they expected. The women in the study voiced their concerns about Kelowna's lack of immigrant services/community welcome, limited affordable housing, lack of jobs and job training, transferring of work experience and recognition of foreign academic credentials, and the need for more language programs. Negotiating these issues is fundamental to an immigrant's successful settlement and integration in a new country.

Different levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) have to be more involved in supporting initiatives to deal with the needs of immigrants, especially those who have recently arrived. After all, Canada was built on immigration and continues to depend on immigration for the health of its economy and population. That said, the lack of funding for immigrant services in provinces and municipalities in this country—and particularly in Kelowna—can drive immigrants into dire straits. The municipal, provincial, and federal governments need to do more to facilitate the needs of immigrants by funding services geared toward their successful settlement and integration into their new communities.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Overview

This chapter presents the main findings of this exploratory study of English-speaking Latin American immigrant women's integration and transnational experiences in Kelowna. Further, it underlines the study's limitations and suggests avenues for further research in the area of Latin American immigrant women in small- to mid-sized Canadian cities.

Canada is a country defined by immigration. For many years Canada has depended on immigration to increase its population. Originally, immigrants were sought from Western Europe and the United States to Canada but that is changing. Canada now leads other countries in the diversity of immigrants it accepts whilst promoting multiculturalism. Today, immigrants from different racial/ethnic backgrounds are calling Canada home. These backgrounds and ethnicities include, but are not limited to, Africans, the Middle Easterners, Latin Americans, Asians, and the Caribbean. Diversity is no longer visible only in Canada's three largest metropolitan cities: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (MTV). Immigrants are increasingly moving to and settling in small- to mid-sized cities such as Kelowna, British Columbia.

Kelowna has historically been home to a homogeneous white population, with most immigrants coming from European backgrounds. But with an increasingly aging population, a youth "exodus" to other Canadian cities (Vancouver, Calgary), and an economy increasingly in need of specialized and non-specialized workers (e.g. service sector, agriculture, high tech industry), Kelowna has been forced to open its doors to immigrants from different regions of the world, (Teixeira 2009; Kakaota & Magnusson, 2011) including from Latin America.

Over the last decade, Kelowna's population has grown significantly. In the 2011 population census, Kelowna's population increased by 9.6 percent in comparison to the provincial population of 7.0 percent (Statistics Canada, 2011). Immigration was, in part, responsible for this growth. Kelowna's immigrant population grew from 12,905 (13.4 percent) in

2001 to 15,840 (14.8 percent) in 2006 (BC Stats, 2006). The immigrant population in Kelowna is projected to further increase by the year 2013. Given this situation, there are several areas where Kelowna can improve services to help new immigrants settle and integrate successfully into their new society. In addition, assistance from the various levels of government is required in order to ease immigrants' adjustment into Kelowna's society.

There are a few studies about immigration and immigrants in Kelowna; however, none focus on this particular study population. Spanish-speaking Latin American immigrant women were singled out because their population has grown steadily over the last decade in Kelowna. Studies of Latin American immigrants in Canada (Bernhard et al., 2005, 2009; Veronis, 2006, 2007, 2010; Veronis & Smith, 2012), specifically in Toronto, have shown that this population is becoming important to the Canadian demographic as a whole in many ways. For example, in 2006 about two percent of Canada's population is of Latin American origin and considered Spanish to be their native tongue (Veronis, 2006). Latin Americans are also one of the fastest growing ethnicities in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2007).

7.2 Research Findings

In analyzing the data gathered through 33 questionnaires with English-speaking Latin American immigrant women and 16 semi-structured face-to-face interviews (10 with key informants and six with immigrant women who participated in the questionnaires), problems and issues with regard to their settlement and integration in Kelowna were identified. The areas covered in the questionnaire as well as in the semi-structured interviews answered the key research questions that guided this study:

1. What are the immigration experiences of women transitioning from Spanish-speaking Latin America to Kelowna?
2. What are the challenges faced by Latin American immigrant women when settling in the city of Kelowna and how do they manage these challenges?

3. What role do transnational ties play for these women?
4. What policy recommendations can be made to better assist Latin American immigrant women in settling and integrating in Kelowna?

In response to the first research question about the decision to immigrate, Latin American immigrant women in this study were generally very satisfied with their and/or their family's decision to move to Kelowna. Many of the women cited a better standard of living, reunion with family/friends, and better employment opportunities as their main reasons for moving to Kelowna. Even though some of the women encountered some difficulties obtaining the required documentation to complete their immigration applications on time, in general they were happy and prepared to make the transition from their home countries to Canada and, more specifically, Kelowna. Latin American immigrant women used words such as "sacrifice" to justify their reasons for coming to Kelowna and start their lives over in a new country. Despite numerous difficulties encountered in their immigration processes, the women expressed satisfaction with their decision to come and live here.

The second research question addressed the challenges Latin American immigrant women face when settling and integrating in Kelowna. The main challenges identified by participants included language accent acquisition, recognition of academic credentials, transferring work experience, and finding affordable housing.

Language is an essential tool for successful settlement and integration into a new community (Creese & Kambere, 2003; van Tubergen, 2006). Without knowledge of the local language, the process of settling and integrating is more difficult. Immigrant women in this study used the few immigrant services offered in Kelowna to learn English or upgrade their language proficiency. Participants identified two ways that language acquisition could be improved. One was offering free or low-cost ESL classes to immigrant women. The second was to have someone from a Latin American background who is knowledgeable in English teach them.

Another integration challenge faced by these women was having their academic credentials recognized and work experience transferred to Kelowna's job market. Those who had gained work experience in their home countries reported difficulties transferring their experience to suitable employment in Kelowna. Some women reported that, despite having work experience in their country of origin, as well as Canadian work experience, they lacked "Kelowna" experience. They felt this lack of local experience or connection, coupled with language accent challenges, were the main barriers to the job market. To overcome these barriers, some women learned or upgraded their English skills and education, while others just remained at home and focused on family. However, remaining in the home tends to limit immigrant women's opportunities to learn English, which can result in isolation and decreasing self-esteem.

With respect to finding affordable, adequate, and suitable housing, some immigrant women faced barriers in Kelowna's expensive, local housing market (Teixeira, 2009, 2010, 2011). The fact that the majority of immigrant women in this study received assistance from family members and/or friends in Kelowna eased their housing search, however. The women interviewed also highlighted the importance of language skills in this area. Some spoke, for example, about how their lack of English skills increased their vulnerability by preventing them from understanding housing policies, leasing agreements, and other housing-specific issues in today's complex and expensive housing market. Speaking English with an accent was also considered a barrier when looking for housing in Kelowna. Some women also expressed a wish for more government control over the supply of affordable housing. They believed there are available accommodations in Kelowna but found affordability to be problematic. The women's inability to afford housing in Kelowna was, in part, a reflection of the challenge of transferring work experience from back home resulting in limited employment opportunities.

Within this context, key informants were especially concerned with the role played by the local community, which suggests there is a need for more local services to help immigrants settle

and integrate successfully into the community. Some key informants faulted the municipal government for not doing enough for immigrants in general and for those of a Latin American origin in particular. One of the reasons for this, according to key informants, is that local authorities perceive immigrants, specifically those from Latin America, to have a minor role/impact on the local economy and thus argue that allocating resources to immigrant services is not feasible.

The third research question addressed the role transnational ties play in the lives of local Latin American immigrant women. Despite the challenges immigrant women face in settling and integrating, all participants in this study found that moving from their home countries to Kelowna was the right thing to do. These women believed that they were leading better lives than their family members back home. The majority of women stated that their being in Kelowna was beneficial to family members left behind because of the better standard of living offered in Canada. Furthermore, the women felt they were in a better position to assist family members in their home countries.

Despite their decision to immigrate, the challenges Latin American immigrant women faced in Kelowna gave them enough reasons to retain and maintain transnational ties with their countries of origin. Transnational ties allow Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna to feel a sense of belonging—here (Kelowna) and there (back home). Furthermore, the women believed that without such connections with their home countries, they would not be able to cope with their settlement and integration challenges. Transnationalism, in this sense, provides immigrant women with the security they lack in their new environment. The permanency of transnational ties among these immigrant women was essential to their existence in Kelowna.

The final research question asked participants to make policy recommendations and suggestions to improve the settlement and integration of Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna. Policy recommendations made by key informants and Latin American immigrant

women were varied. Their suggestions included more community services to better assist newly arrived immigrants. This might include having Spanish-speaking workers from Latin America at settlement services to allow for more culturally oriented services in their own language.

Although many women revealed that they had strong support from family in their search for housing, other participants said they would like access to more affordable housing. Both key informants and study participants also identified language accents issues as important. In addition to offering more language classes, participants felt it would be helpful to have ESL classes taught by individuals of Spanish-speaking background who would understand the specific challenges faced by Latin American immigrants. In terms of improving Latin American women's access to suitable employment, the participants identified the need to have their foreign academic credentials recognized and previous work experiences transferred (Ferrer & Riddle, 2008; Suto, 2009; Lo & Li, 2012; Darden & Fong, 2012).

7.3 Limitations of the Study

Due to time and financial constraints, this study was limited to a small sample size of 33 English-speaking Latin American immigrant women, including six immigrant women that participated in a follow-up interview and 10 key informants. This exploratory study provides a broad view of immigrant women's integration into Kelowna and their transnational ties. Because this exploratory case study used a non-probability sample, its findings are not generalizable. However, the findings illustrate the barriers faced by this particular group of immigrant women living in a mid-sized city—Kelowna—in the interior of British Columbia. What this study does provide is insight into the settlement and integration experiences of a particular immigrant group in a mid-sized city with the characteristics of Kelowna, and the influence of transnational ties with the immigrants' countries of origin.

Further limitations to this study include a potential sampling bias and a volunteer bias. Because initial participants referred additional participants whom they knew and with whom they

may have shared similar traits and characteristics, a sample bias may have occurred (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). The study sample consisted only of women from Spanish-speaking Latin America who were permanent residents in Kelowna and could speak, read, and write English. Women from that region who were not permanent residents were excluded from the study, resulting in a sampling bias. Equally important, the number of respondents might not truly represent the study population since one country might be overrepresented or vice versa. A sampling bias may also have occurred because of the nature of the convenience sample and the snowball recruiting technique. Because participants who participated in this study may differ in unknown ways from eligible women who choose not to participate, a volunteer bias may have also occurred (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). In addition, characteristics given in the socio-demographic profile of the respondents (e.g., country/region of origin, year of arrival in Canada, age, education, language skills, occupation) may have had an effect on the responses given and the integration process. In sum, given the exploratory nature of this study as well as the small sample and the sampling strategies used, the results must be interpreted with some caution.

7.4 Avenues for Further Research

The importance of immigrants' integration into a new society and transnationalism are growing phenomena in today's migration processes. Integration and transnationalism are becoming a paradigm in the investigation of immigrants' social networks in both the destination countries as well as the sending countries. This exploratory study points to some of the most important issues Latin American immigrant women face in Kelowna, a fast-growing mid-sized city in the interior of British Columbia. However, more research is needed on immigrant women's settlement experiences and integration within small- and mid-sized cities, including rural areas in Canada.

Some avenues for further research include:

1. A larger study population, which would allow the researcher to generalize the findings to other groups.
2. A bilingual study would better allow the researcher to capture the nuances and sentiments of the participants when discussing their settlement and integration challenges.
3. A study comparing the experiences of Latin American immigrant women and men and how they cope with the challenges of settling and integrating in Kelowna while maintaining transnational ties with their respective home countries.
4. An investigation that compares and contrasts the experiences of Latin American immigrant women with immigrant women from another region of the world; specifically, how they cope with settlement and integration in Kelowna.
5. Research into the lack of the community and municipal government's role in immigrant services in Kelowna. In other words, what tools are needed to better assist immigrants in settling and integrating in a mid-sized city?
6. A comparative analysis of how other mid-sized cities facilitate the integration of immigrant populations.

These suggested research topics/avenues for further research are critical to gaining further understanding of the complex issues surrounding immigrants' settlement and integration processes in small- to mid-sized Canadian cities. Since immigrants are opting out of settling in big metropolitan cities, small municipalities have to take on the task of providing services to assist them in settling and integrating successfully.

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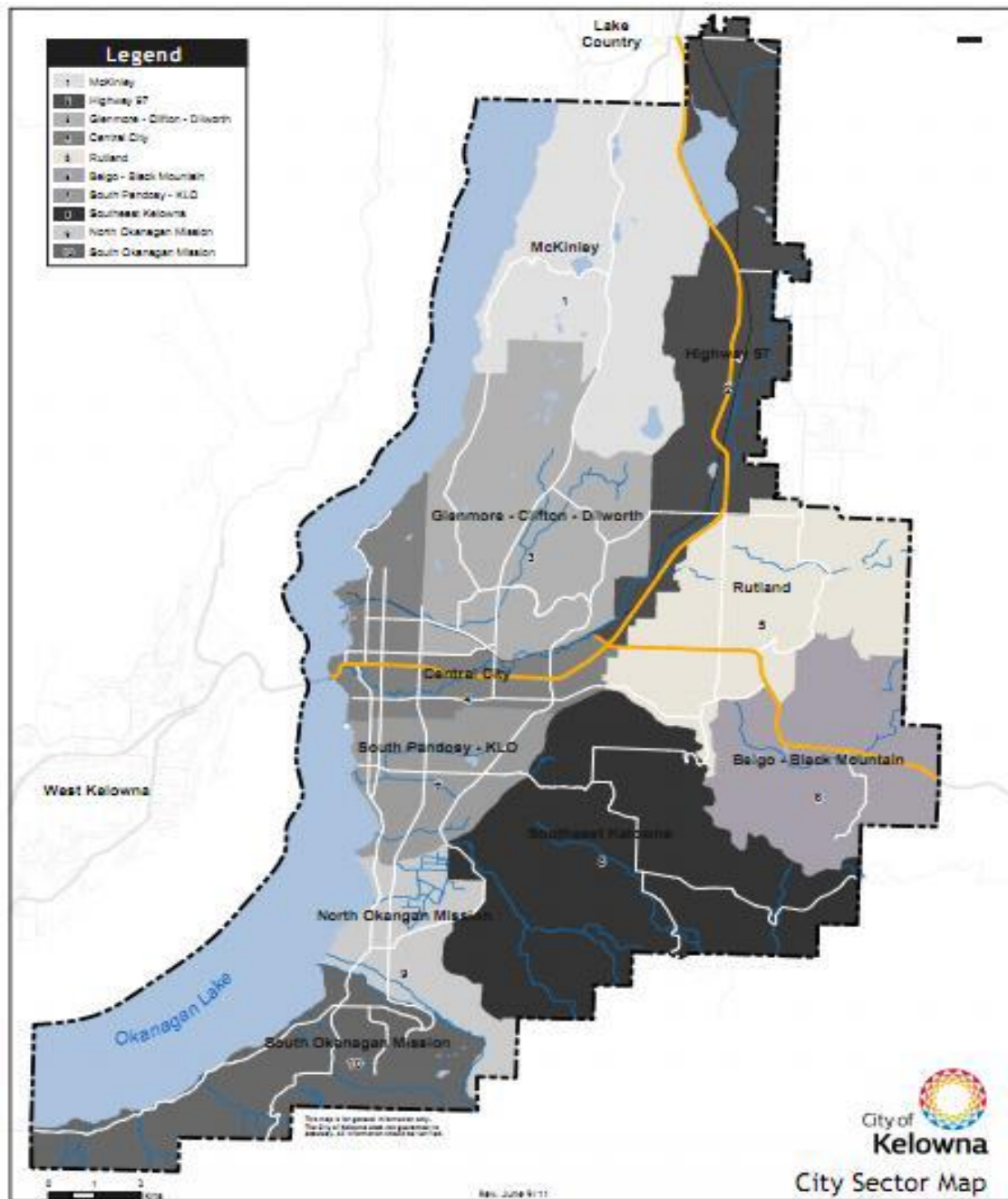
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Appendices

Appendix A: Map of the City of Kelowna



Kelowna City Sector Map



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

QUESTIONNAIRE OUTLINE

- 1. Demographic Information About Respondents**
- 2. Transition from your country to Kelowna**
- 3. Arriving and integrating in Kelowna**
- 4. Cross-border ties with home country**
- 5. Final Demographic Information About Respondents**

1. Demographic Information About Respondents

Before you begin to answer any of these questions, I want to thank you for your time to participate in this study. Your input is greatly appreciated.

1. What is your country of origin? _____
2. What year did you arrive in Canada? _____
3. What year did you arrive in Kelowna? _____
4. Please indicate where you currently live by naming the closest major intersection **only**.

2. Transition from your country to Canada

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences before arriving in Canada

5. Did you come alone or with others? Specify please.

a) Alone

- 5.1. **With someone:** Who came with you?

b) Spouse

c) Parents

d) Children

e) Brothers and/or sisters

f) Other relatives

g) Friends

h) Others (specify) _____

6. Why did you choose to come to Canada? Please explain.

7. What would you say was your level of education before arrival in Canada/Kelowna?

- a) Did not finish high school
- b) High school diploma
- c) Some post-secondary
- d) University degree
- e) Don't know (specify please) _____

8. How would you rate your English language (spoken, reading, written, understanding) skill?

- a) Fluent
- b) Good
- c) Moderate
- d) Poor

9. What was your occupation before coming to Kelowna? Please specify.

10. Did you work for pay?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. What was your immigration status upon arrival in Canada?

- a) Refugee claimant
- b) Landed immigrant
- c) Federal skilled worker
- d) Canadian Experience
- e) Temporary visa holder

11.1. If temporary visa holder, was it a

- a) Study
- b) Work
- c) Visitor

12. How long did it take for your immigration application process to be completed? Please specify.

13. What documents were required for you to complete your application process successfully?
List all please.

13.1. Were you able to get all the required documents to complete your immigration application on time?

- a) Yes **[if YES, go to next question]**
- b) No **[if NO, go to 13.3.]**

13.2. How difficult was it for you to acquire the documents?

- a) Very Difficult
- b) Difficult
- c) Somewhat difficult
- d) Not difficult at all

13.3. Why were you **NOT** able to get the required documents on time? Please explain.

3. Arriving and integrating in Kelowna...

Next, I would like to ask you about your experiences and your expectations when arriving in Kelowna.

14. Thinking back, what would you say were your **TOP THREE** reasons for coming to Kelowna? Please rank them in order of importance.

15. What were your expectations upon arrival in Kelowna? Please be as specific as possible.

16. What connections did you have with Kelowna?

- a) Family
- b) Friends
- c) Employment
- d) College/University
- e) Other (specify) _____

17. Did you face any challenges when integrating in Kelowna?

- a) Yes [**if YES, go to next question**]
- b) No [**if NO, go to 18**]

17.1. What kinds of challenges did you face? Circle a number rank to indicate the level according to the situation from **none at all (1)** to **very much (5)**.

Situation/Challenge level	None at all	A little	Moderate amount	Quite a bit	Very much
Immigration status	1	2	3	4	5
Racism	1	2	3	4	5
Language	1	2	3	4	5
Gender	1	2	3	4	5
Religion	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5
Work	1	2	3	4	5
Other (specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5

18. Can you tell me how you dealt with the challenges you faced when integrating in Kelowna?

Your welcome into Kelowna

As part of your integration process, tell me about your experiences in being welcomed into the community...

19. How were you welcomed into Kelowna?

- a) by family members already here
- b) by friends already here
- c) by immigrant community services
- d) other (please specify) _____

20. Did you go to any community services in Kelowna for assistance?

- a) Yes **[if YES, go to next question]**
- b) No **[if NO, go to 25]**

21. Were community services easy to find?
- a) Yes [if YES, go to next question]
 - b) No [if NO, go to 22.1.]
22. Which community service did you go to for assistance?
- a) Kelowna Immigrant Society
 - b) Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan
 - c) Central Okanagan Immigrant and Employment Services
 - d) The Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society
 - e) Dirk Law Office Immigration Services
 - f) Other (please specify) _____
- 22.1. How did you search for community services?
- a) Family
 - b) Friend
 - c) Newspapers
 - d) Internet access
 - e) Driving around
 - f) Walking
 - g) Other (please specify) _____
23. What types of assistance were offered by community services?
- a) Language
 - b) Employment
 - c) Housing
 - d) Other (please specify) _____
24. How satisfied were you with respect to assistance offered by community service?
- a) Very Satisfied
 - b) Satisfied
 - c) Somewhat satisfied
 - d) Not satisfied at all

Now to housing as a form of integration...

Housing is an important aspect to integrating and settling in a new community. Please answer these questions with respect to your housing search.

25. How difficult was your housing search?
- a) Very Difficult
 - b) Difficult
 - c) Somewhat difficult
 - d) Not difficult at all

26. How did you search for housing?

- a) Family
- b) Friend
- c) Newspapers
- d) Internet access
- e) Signs/For Rent
- f) Driving around
- g) Walking
- h) Other (specify) _____

27. Overall, how did you find the search for your current residence?

- a) Very Difficult
- b) Difficult
- c) Somewhat difficult
- d) Not difficult at all

28. Do you

- a) Rent [**go to next question**]
- b) Own [**go to 30**]

28.1. What type of dwelling do you rent?

- a) Apartment
- b) Condo
- c) Townhouse
- d) House
- e) Rooming house
- f) Shared accommodation
- g) Other (please specify) _____

29. Amount you currently pay monthly for:

- a) \$_____ Rent
- b) \$_____ Others (please specify) _____

30. If you own your dwelling, what percentage of your **TOTAL** household monthly income is spent on housing?

_____percent

31. How satisfied are you with your **CURRENT** residence?

- a) Very Satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Somewhat satisfied
- d) Not satisfied at all

32. How satisfied are you with your neighbourhood?

- a) Very Satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Somewhat satisfied
- d) Not satisfied at all

Transferring your academic credentials and work experiences

Having your credentials and work experience is as important as housing to successfully integrate and settle successful into Kelowna. Please answer the following questions.

33. Was your work experience from back home easily transferrable in Kelowna?

- a) Yes **[if YES, go to next question]**
- b) No **[if NO, go to 34]**

33.1. Were you able to gain employment in Kelowna in your field of expertise?

- a) Yes
- b) No

34. Were your academic credentials from back home easily transferrable in Kelowna?

- a) Yes
- b) No

35. Did you face any challenges when looking for employment? Circle a number rank to indicate the level according to the situation from **none at all (1)** to **very much (5)**.

Situation/Challenge level	None at all	A little	Moderate amount	Quite a bit	Very much
Immigration status	1	2	3	4	5
Racism	1	2	3	4	5
Language	1	2	3	4	5
Gender	1	2	3	4	5
Religion	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5
Other (specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5

36. Can you tell me how you dealt with the challenges you faced when looking for employment in Kelowna?

37. How satisfied are you with your current job?

- a) Very Satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Somewhat satisfied
- d) Not satisfied at all

4. Cross-border ties with home country...

Immigrants in new communities often encounter some difficulties in integrating and resettling; therefore they rely on family/friends in home countries for comfort and help while they are in a different place. Please answer these questions so that I can get a better understanding of your transnational ties.

38. How long have you lived in Kelowna? _____

39. Do you feel comfortable living in Kelowna?

- a) Yes
- b) No

40. Are you planning on returning to your home country one day?

- a) Yes **[if YES, go to next question]**
- b) No **[if NO, go to 41.2]**

40.1. Why do you want to return? Please explain.

(a) And when do you plan on returning?

- i. in 1-5 years
- ii. in 6-10 years
- iii. in more than 10 years

40.2. Why do you **NOT** want to return? Please explain.

41. Do you maintain contact with your family/friends in your home country?

- a) Yes [**if YES, go to next question**]
- b) No [**if NO, go to 43**]

41.1. How do you maintain contact with your family/friends in your home country?

- a) Postal
- b) Telephone
- c) Internet access
- d) Visiting
- e) Other (please specify) _____

41.2. How often are you in contact with family/friends in your home country?

- a) Daily
- b) Weekly
- c) Monthly
- d) Every few months
- e) Other (please specify) _____

42. Why do you **NOT** maintain contact with your family/friends back home? Please describe in detail.

43. Do you send remittances back to your family/friends in your home country?

- a) Yes [**if YES, go to next question**]
- b) No

43.1. How often do you send remittances?

- a) Every two weeks
- b) Every month
- c) Every three months
- d) Only for special occasions
- e) Only for emergencies
- f) Other (please specify) _____

44. How are remittances used or spent?

- a) Food
- b) Clothing
- c) Education
- d) Housing
- e) Business
- f) Savings
- g) Medicine
- h) Auto loan
- i) Basic services
- j) Mortgage
- k) Other (please specify) _____

45. Do you engage in activities in your home country?

- a) Yes **[if YES, go to next question]**
- b) No **[if No, go to 47]**

45.1. At what level do you engage in these activities?

- a) Household
- b) Local/community
- c) National
- d) Other (please specify) _____

46. How do you engage in these activities? Please explain, for example, banking, property, business, insurance etc.

5. Final Demographic

Now, just a few more questions about yourself; these answers will allow me to understand your previous responses better.

47. In what year were you born? _____

48. What is your marital status? (Check only one)

- a) Single
- b) Common-law
- c) Married
- d) Divorced
- e) Widow
- f) Other (please specify) _____

49. What is your **CURRENT** immigration status?

- a) Refugee claimant
- b) Landed immigrant
- c) Canadian citizen
- d) Temporary visa

49.1. If temporary visa, what kind? Check one please

- a) Work
- b) Study
- c) Visitor

50. What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- a) Did not finish high school
- b) High school diploma
- c) Some post-secondary including college diploma, apprenticeship, some university
- d) University degree
- e) Don't know

51. What is your **CURRENT** occupation?

52. How many people live in your household?

- a) 1 – 3
- b) 4 – 6
- c) 7 – 10
- d) 10+

53. What was your **TOTAL** household income for the past year?

- a) Less than \$10,000
- b) \$10,001 - \$20,000
- c) \$20,001 - \$30,000
- d) \$30,001 - \$40,000
- e) \$40,001 - \$50,000
- f) \$50,001 - \$75,000
- g) \$75,001 - \$100,000
- h) More than \$100,000
- i) Don't know

54. Do you feel a sense of belonging in Kelowna?

a) Yes

b) No

55. How would you describe your ethnic background? Please specify.

56. Is there anything else you would like to tell me with respect to you coming to Kelowna and how you are dealing with your relationships back home? Please use the space below to explain.

57. Do you have any comments or questions about the survey?

THANK YOU!

Appendix C: Contact Letter to Key Informant



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

June 1, 2012

Contact Letter to ‘Key’ Informants

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Shani Bishop. Presently I am a Master’s student at the University of British Columbia – Okanagan working under the supervision of Dr. Carlos Teixeira who can be reached at 250-807-9313 or via email carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca. The research project I am carrying out intends to find out how Latin American immigrant women integrate in Kelowna while maintaining transnational ties with their home countries.

Kelowna is one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in British Columbia. This growth is fuelled by immigration, both internally and externally. In fact, immigrants from all over the world are now choosing to settle in smaller and mid-sized cities in Canada. With respect to Kelowna, more immigrants are coming and settling in the community. However, immigrants to Kelowna are now faced with challenges and barriers with respect to integrating and settling and at the same time, maintaining their relationships with family/friends in their home countries. My intention for this research project is to investigate immigrant women’s experiences when immigrating to and settling in Kelowna and the maintenance of their transnational ties with their respective home countries.

The reason for writing this letter is to ask for your participation and help in this study, which will allow for a greater understanding of this issue. Your help will be greatly appreciated. The results of this study will be used to support initiatives aimed at increasing immigrant services available in Kelowna, in addition to helping immigrant women to maintain transnational ties with their home countries. Further, results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. It is also the intent of the researcher to share the results of this study with the local community. No information will ever be released or printed that would disclose your personal identity without your consent, unless required by law.

If you choose to participate, I will invite you to take part in a semi-structured interview and share with me your experiences when serving immigrant women in Kelowna. The semi-structured interview will last approximately 40–60 minutes and will be tape-recorded with your consent.

Please be assured that all the information that you will provide is highly confidential. The data will be recorded, analyzed and reported in ways that will guarantee anonymity. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time without any consequences.

That being said, in one week or so, I will call you and ask for your participation in this study. At that time, more information will be provided about the main objectives of the study and the consent process.

Thank you for considering this request for your participation. I may be reached by telephone 250-212-2092 or email at sebishop@hotmail.com should you have questions about this study.

Sincerely,

Shani Bishop
Master's student

Appendix D: Consent Form for Key Informant



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

June 1, 2012

Semi-structured Interview Consent Form

Research Project:

Latin American immigrant women's integration in Kelowna and their transnational ties with home countries

Principal Investigator: **Carlos Teixeira**, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC, V1V 1V7 (carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca).

Co-Investigator: **Shani Bishop**, MA Candidate, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7 (sebishop@hotmail.com).

Kelowna is one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in British Columbia. This growth is fuelled by immigration. In fact, immigrants from all over the world are now choosing to settle in smaller and mid-sized cities in Canada. With respect to Kelowna, more immigrants are coming and settling in the community. However, immigrants to Kelowna are now faced with challenges and barriers with respect to integrating and settling and at the same time, maintaining their relationships with family/friends in their home countries. My intention for this research project is to investigate immigrant women's experiences when immigrating to and settling in Kelowna and the maintenance of their transnational ties with their respective home countries. Your help will be greatly appreciated to me in order to better understand immigrant women's challenges and coping mechanisms in Kelowna, as well as the maintenance of cross-border relationships with home countries.

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. It is also the intent of the researcher to share the results of this study with the local community. No information will ever be released or printed that would disclose your personal identity without your consent, unless required by law.

I understand that Shani Bishop (UBC-Okanagan) is conducting research in order to better our understanding of the experiences of Latin American immigrant women endure in Kelowna and how they maintain their transnational ties with their respective home countries.

I know that I am participating in a semi-structured face-to-face interview that will last from 40 to 60 minutes. I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and that I can withdraw from the interview at any time without explanation. I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded and that I can ask that the tape recorder be turned off for a period if time while I make a point that I do not want recorded. I understand that the tape recording of the interview is for note-taking use only by Shani Bishop and her supervisor (Dr. Carlos Teixeira). There will be no further use of tapes in any fashion. No one except Dr. Carlos Teixeira based at the University of British Columbia Okanagan and Shani Bishop will ever listen to the tapes.

Any questions that I have about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that all benefits of participating in the study – that is, from my responses to questions – will help inform our understanding of Latin American immigrants women and their challenges and coping mechanisms when integrating in Kelowna as well as maintaining transnational ties. These research findings are intended to help improve services geared toward helping immigrant women when integrating and settling in Kelowna and retaining transnational ties with home countries. I understand that I may ask, now or in the future, any questions that I have about this study. I have been assured that no information will ever be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity. That is, all recordings will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

I understand that my participation in the study is completely voluntary and that my decision to participate or not to participate will have no effect on my organization nor myself. I further understand that I may withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

I understand that if I have any questions about this research project, I may contact Shani Bishop at any time – telephone number/cell: 250-212-2092 or via email: sebishop@hotmail.com.

I understand that if I have any questions or concerns regarding my rights as a research participant and/my experiences while participating in this study, I may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 1-250-807-8832.

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

My signature indicates that I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Print Name

Date

*If you wish to receive an executive summary of the completed research, please complete the following contact information and a copy will be sent to you by mail.

Address: _____

Appendix E: Contact Letter to Participants



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

June 1, 2012

Contact Letter to Immigrant Women

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Shani Bishop. Presently I am a Master's student at the University of British Columbia – Okanagan working under the supervision of Dr. Carlos Teixeira who can be reached at 250-807-9313 or via email carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca. The research project I am carrying out intends to find out how Latin American immigrant women integrate in Kelowna while maintaining transnational ties with their home countries.

Kelowna is one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in British Columbia. This growth is fuelled by immigration, both internally and externally. In fact, immigrants from all over the world are now choosing to settle in smaller and mid-sized cities in Canada. With respect to Kelowna, more immigrants are coming and settling in the community. However, immigrants to Kelowna are now faced with challenges and barriers with respect to integrating and settling and at the same time, maintaining their relationships with family/friends in their home countries. My intention for this research project is to investigate immigrant women's experiences when immigrating to and settling in Kelowna and the maintenance of their transnational ties with their respective home countries.

The reason for writing this letter is to ask for your participation and help in this study, which will allow for a greater understanding of this issue. Your help will be greatly appreciated. The results of this study will be used to support initiatives aimed at increasing immigrant services available in Kelowna, in addition to helping immigrant women to maintain transnational ties with their home countries. Further, results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. It is also the intent of the researcher to share the results of this study with the local community. No information will ever be released or printed that would disclose your personal identity without your consent, unless required by law.

If you choose to participate, I will invite you to participate in a questionnaire survey and share with me your experiences when integrating in Kelowna and how you maintain relationships with

your countries of origin. I am interested in knowing more about your integrating experiences as well as the importance of transnational ties with family/friends in your home countries. The questionnaire survey will take approximately 40 minutes to fill out. Please be assured that all the information that you will provide are highly confidential. The data will be recorded, analyzed and reported in ways that will guarantee anonymity. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time without any consequences.

That being said, in one week or so I will call you for your participation in this study. At that time, more information will be provided about the main objectives of the study and the consent process.

Thank you for considering this request for your participation. I may be reached by telephone 250-212-2092 or email at sebishop@hotmail.com should you have questions about the study.

Sincerely,

Shani Bishop
Master's student

Appendix F: Consent Form for Participant (Questionnaire Survey)



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

June 1, 2012

Questionnaire Survey Consent Form

Research Project:

Latin American immigrant women's integration in Kelowna and their transnational ties with home countries

Principal Investigator: **Carlos Teixeira**, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC, V1V 1V7 (carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca).

Co-Investigator: **Shani Bishop**, MA Candidate, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7 (sebishop@hotmail.com).

Kelowna is one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in British Columbia. This growth is fuelled by immigration. In fact, immigrants from all over the world are now choosing to settle in smaller and mid-sized cities in Canada. With respect to Kelowna, more immigrants are coming and settling in the community. However, immigrants to Kelowna are now faced with challenges and barriers with respect to integrating and settling and at the same time, maintaining their relationships with family/friends in their home countries. My intention for this research project is to investigate immigrant women's experiences when immigrating to and settling in Kelowna and the maintenance of their transnational ties with their respective home countries. Your help will be greatly appreciated to me in order to better understand their challenges and coping mechanisms in Kelowna, as well as the maintenance of cross border relationships with home countries.

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. It is also the intent of the researcher to share the results of this study with the local community. No information will ever be released or printed that would disclose your personal identity without your consent, unless required by law.

I understand that Shani Bishop (UBC-Okanagan) is conducting research in order to better our understanding of the experiences Latin American immigrant women endure in Kelowna and how they maintain their transnational ties with their respective home countries.

I know that I am participating in a questionnaire survey that will last for approximately 40 minutes. I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and that I can withdraw from the survey at any time without explanation. Only Dr. Carlos Teixeira based at the University of British Columbia Okanagan and Shani Bishop will have access to the data.

Any questions that I have about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that all benefits of participating in the study – that is, from my responses to questions – will help inform our understanding of Latin American immigrant women and their challenges and coping mechanisms when integrating in Kelowna as well as maintaining transnational ties. These research findings are intended to help improve services geared toward helping immigrant women when integrating and settling in Kelowna and retaining transnational ties with home countries. I understand that I may ask, now or in the future, any questions that I have about this study. I have been assured that no information will ever be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity. That is, all documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

I understand that my participation in the study is completely voluntary and that my decision to participate or not to participate will have no effect on me. I further understand that I may withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

I understand that by completing and returning the questionnaire and signed consent form, it is assumed that consent to use the data has been given.

I understand that if I have any questions about this research project, I may contact Shani Bishop at any time – telephone number/cell: 250-212-2092 or via email: sebishop@hotmail.com.

I understand that if I have any questions or concerns regarding my rights as a research participant and/my experiences while participating in this study, I may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 1-250-807-8832.

My signature indicates that I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Print Name

Date

*If you wish to receive an executive summary of the completed research, please complete the following contact information and a copy will be sent to you by mail.

Address: _____

Appendix G: Consent Form for Participant (Follow-up Interview)



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

October 1, 2012

Semi-structured In-depth Interview Consent Form

Research Project:

Latin American immigrant women's integration in Kelowna and their transnational ties with home countries

Principal Investigator: **Carlos Teixeira**, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC, V1V 1V7 (carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca).

Co-Investigator: **Shani Bishop**, MA Candidate, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7 (sebishop@hotmail.com).

I understand that Shani Bishop (UBC-Okanagan) is conducting research in order to better her understanding of the experiences of Latin American immigrant women when integrating in Kelowna and how they maintain their transnational ties with their respective home countries.

I know that I am participating in a semi-structured, face-to-face, in-depth interview that will last from 40 to 60 minutes. I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and that I can withdraw from the interview at any time without explanation. I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded and that I can ask that the tape recorder be turned off for a period of time while I make a point that I do not want recorded. I understand that the tape recording of the interview is for note-taking use only by Shani Bishop and her supervisor (Dr. Carlos Teixeira). There will be no further use of tapes in any fashion. No one except Dr. Carlos Teixeira based at the University of British Columbia Okanagan and Shani Bishop will ever listen to the tapes.

Any questions that I have about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that all benefits of participating in the study – that is, from my responses to questions – will help inform our understanding of Latin American immigrant women and their challenges and coping mechanisms when integrating in Kelowna as well as maintaining transnational ties. These research findings are intended to help improve services geared toward helping immigrant women when integrating and settling in Kelowna and retaining transnational ties with home countries. I

understand that I may ask, now or in the future, any questions that I have about this study. I have been assured that no information will ever be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity. That is, all recordings will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

I understand that my participation in the study is completely voluntary and that my decision to participate or not to participate will have no effect on myself. I further understand that I may withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

I understand that if I have any questions about this research project, I may contact Shani Bishop at any time – telephone number/cell: 250-212-2092 or via email: sebishop@hotmail.com.

I understand that if I have any questions or concerns regarding my rights as a research participant and/my experiences while participating in this study, I may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Offices at 250-807-8832.

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

My signature indicates that I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Print Name

Date

*If you wish to receive an executive summary of the completed research, please complete the following contact information and a copy will be sent to you by e-mail.

Email: _____

Appendix H: List of Key Informants Contacted

List of Key Informants' Organizations in Kelowna

<i>Name of Organization</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Telephone/fax</i>
Kelowna Community Resources	#120 – 1735 Dolphin Avenue Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 8A6	Tel: 250-763-8008 Fax: 250-763-7608
WorkBC	Pandosy Street, Kelowna BC	
Dirk Law Office Immigration Services	205-347 Leon Avenue, Kelowna BC V1Y 8C7	Tel: 250-979-0422
Doak Shirreff Lawyers	200-537 Leon Ave, Kelowna BC V1Y 2A9	Tel: 250-763-4323 Fax: 250-763-4780
Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society	Leon Ave, Kelowna BC	
Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society	104-347 Leon Ave, Kelowna BC V1Y 8C7	Tel: 250-763-4613
Immaculata Conception Church	839 Sutherland Avenue, Kelowna BC	Tel: 250-762-0420
CBC Radio	Lawrence Ave, Kelowna BC	
St. Pius X Roman Catholic	1077 Fuller Ave, Kelowna	Tel: 250-762-0260
Kelowna General Hospital	Pandosy Street, Kelowna BC	
Mediterranean Market	Gordon Ave, Kelowna BC	

Appendix I: Interview Guide for Key Informants

A list of key interview questions for key informants

a) Socio-demographic profile of key informants

Where do you work and what is your occupation in the organization? How long have you been working in this organization? What types of services does your organization provide to immigrants? How effective are these services? What are the major challenges your organization face in accommodating the needs of immigrants with respect to housing, settling, jobs, language, etc.?

b) Integration and settlement in Kelowna

Do you know what coping mechanisms immigrants use in order to integrate and settle in Kelowna? How does your organization currently assist immigrants when integrating and settling in Kelowna? What would you say is the most important for immigrants to feel a sense of belonging in Kelowna? Do you think community members are responsible for newly arrived immigrants' well-being? What role do you think your organization should assume in welcoming immigrants to Kelowna?

c) Immigrant women's transnational ties

As a member of an organization/association that assist new immigrants, do you think that immigrants should retain and maintain transnational ties with their countries of origin? Why do you think/not think it is important? Does your organization assist with immigrants' maintenance of transnational ties with their home countries? If so, how? Is there a link between your organization and organizations/people in other countries? Are you aware of any organization/association in Kelowna that is geared toward helping immigrants with their transnational links?

d) Recommendation

What recommendations would you give as to improve or implement services that serve immigrant women?

e) Your personal experience when serving immigrant women

Would you like to share any experiences you may have encountered when helping immigrant women in Kelowna?

Appendix J: Interview Guide for Participants

Interview guide for immigrant women

Settlement and Integrating

1. Who/what influenced your decision to come and live in Kelowna?
2. What were your expectations upon arrival in Kelowna?
3. What challenges did you face when integrating in Kelowna?
4. Did you face any discrimination when integrating in Kelowna? If yes, what type of discrimination(s), and how did you deal with them?
5. Did you go to any community services for assistance when integrating in Kelowna?
6. Which community services did you go to for assistance?
7. How did you learn about these community services?
8. What types of services were offered by these community services? Were they helpful for you?
9. Are you satisfied with the services offered by the community? Justify your answer.
10. Do you think that the City of Kelowna or the community should be responsible for helping you to integrate in the community? Please explain.
11. Do you depend on other people from your country who are already living in Kelowna for help to integrate into Kelowna society (e.g. housing, jobs, community services, etc.)?
12. How difficult was your housing search? Did you face any challenges? Please explain.
13. How did you search for housing?
14. Do you own or rent your current residence?
15. Are you employed? Were you able to transfer your work experience(s) from back home to Kelowna?
16. Are you able to work in your field of expertise?
17. Were your academic credentials from back home easily transferrable in Kelowna?
18. Did you face any challenge(s) when looking for employment in Kelowna? How did you deal with the challenge(s)? Are you satisfied with your current job?
19. Any other comments and/or suggestions about your integration into Kelowna society?

Transnational ties

1. Which country did you come from?
2. Why did you immigrate to Kelowna?
3. How long have you lived in Kelowna?
4. Are you in contact with your family members and/or friends in your home country? Why or why not?
5. Is staying in touch with family/friends back home helps you to deal with challenges you faced when integrating in Kelowna society? Explain please?
6. How often are you in contact with family/friends back in your home country?
7. What means do you use to stay in contact?
8. Do you send remittances back to you home country?
9. Do you know what the remittances are used for?
10. Other than remittances, are you involved in activity(ies) in your home country? If yes, what types of activities are you involved in? How often do you participate in these activities?

11. At what level are you involved in the activity(ies)?
12. Does the relationship with your home country affect your decision to live in Kelowna?
13. Do you want to return to your home country one day? Justify your answer.
14. If you want to return to your home country, when would you like to return?

Recommendation(s)

1. Do you have any recommendations for the City, local community and/or community services in helping immigrants, especially Latin American immigrant women, to integrate in Kelowna society?
2. Any further suggestions/recommendations on how to improve community services, supply of affordable housing, job availability and job training, language classes and other services to Latin American immigrant women in Kelowna?

Appendix K: Certificate of Approval



The University of British Columbia Okanagan
Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7 Phone: 250-807-8832
Fax: 250-807-8438

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jose (Carlos) Teixeira	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC/UBCO IKE Barber School of Arts & Sc/UBCO Admin Unit 1 Arts & Sci	UBC BREB NUMBER: H12-00980
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:		
Institution UBC		Site Okanagan
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Shani Eulandi Bishop		
SPONSORING AGENCIES: N/A		
PROJECT TITLE: Beyond Borders: Latin American immigrant women's integration in Kelowna and their transnational ties with home countries		

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: May 29, 2013

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:		DATE APPROVED:	
		May 29, 2012	
Document Name	Version	Date	
<u>Consent Forms:</u>			
Revised Consent.participant.1	3	May 24, 2012	
Revised Consent.key informant.1	3	May 24, 2012	
<u>Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:</u>			
Revised Questionnaire Survey	2	May 17, 2012	
Interview Schedule	1	April 17, 2012	
<u>Letter of Initial Contact:</u>			
Revised Letter of Contact - participant	2	May 17, 2012	
Revised Letter of Contact - 'key' informant	2	May 17, 2012	
<u>Other Documents:</u>			
List of Organizations	1	April 17, 2012	

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board Okanagan and signed electronically by:

Dr. Carolyn Szostak, Chair