

**RECOMPOSING THEIR LIVES:  
RESETTLEMENT AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEISURE**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The conceptual models that dominate occupational therapy typically take a pragmatic, uncritical view of leisure that encourages practitioners to focus primarily on individual factors. Increasingly occupational therapy clients are 'immigrant women' engaged in resettlement processes that are outside of the occupational therapist's experience. Little empirical research exists to illustrate how recursive features of the resettlement process shape women's leisure. A qualitative study was undertaken to answer the question: How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate in leisure activities?

The research sample comprised 14 well-educated women from nine countries all of whom are married and have children. In-depth interviews, conducted in English, were the main data collection method. Descriptions of women's everyday activities and critical theory concepts were used to explicate the social relations that shaped their lives.

Four themes arose related to leisure and resettlement. The themes *orchestrating the day* and *connected yet apart* highlight the time women spend in resettlement programs, and fulfilling child rearing and household responsibilities with diminished social support. The theme *compromised careers* reflects the downward occupational mobility women experience related to credentialing challenges. The theme *socializing is the key to leisure* captures how leisure participation is linked to language issues, family, and diminished time and money for leisure resulting from underemployment.

Bourdieu's (1991) concept of capital was used to analyze the themes which showed how linguistic, economic and cultural capital function together to influence leisure activities.

The ability to negotiate linguistic capital through the use of English was found to be most influential. Language skills, unemployment and family responsibilities intersected with policies that govern women's lives to create barriers to leisure participation. The intersection of time constraints, language abilities, diminished social support, career changes and gendered domestic activities contribute to how women understand and participate in leisure.

The research findings show that leisure definitions, meanings and women's participation are strongly influenced by aspects of the environment, which women must negotiate to reconstruct their lives. Occupational therapy conceptual models should incorporate critical theories to better understand how these intersecting environmental forces help shape leisure participation for 'immigrant women.'

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Leisure is central to occupational therapy and prominently named in the profession's conceptual models. Despite its importance to occupational therapy, leisure has been ill-defined and often described as a set of discrete activities. Leisure deserves to be treated as part of complex social relationships shaped by a person's social, cultural, economic and physical environment. This chapter offers a description of the problem that I address in this research and introduces my objective to advance occupational therapy's understanding of leisure and provide insights for its practitioners.

### **Leisure's Importance to Occupational Therapy**

Participation in leisure is seen to have positive health benefits and is an expected part of one's customary round of activities from an occupational therapy perspective (Knox, 1998). Practitioners are interested in leisure as a category of activities from which their clients may choose to engage, as a means to achieving rehabilitation goals (Primeau, 2003b). Participation in leisure activities is also a primary therapeutic goal for clients. In these instances, occupational therapists help clients identify leisure interests and obstacles to pursuing leisure activities that are usually related to disability or illness.

Recent theorizing in occupational therapy that is relevant to this research differentiates "occupation" from "activity" by the subjective and contextual features of occupation, which contribute to its meaning for each person. Pierce (2001) states that, "An occupation is a specific individual's personally constructed, non-repeatable experience. . . . in perceived temporal, spatial, and sociocultural conditions that are unique to that one-time event" (p. 139). This definition contrasts with activity, which "...is an idea held in the minds

of persons and in their shared cultural language. An activity is a culturally defined and general class of human actions” (p. 139). These definitions help occupational therapists to understand occupation as, among other things, encompassing the process of clients giving meaning to activities.

Occupational therapists believe that participation in leisure activities enhances health and well-being and provides balance to one’s life (Christiansen, 1996). Passmore (2003) draws on the belief that leisure promotes the achievement and maintenance of good health in her survey of Australian adolescents’ leisure participation and its relationship to their self-efficacy, competence and self-worth. Passmore found the strongest evidence that linked positive mental health to leisure participation was in the realm of competencies and achievements developed through leisure activities. She provides preliminary empirical support for leisure’s role in health promotion and, in particular, identifies the social aspects of leisure as key to understanding these relationships.

Occupational therapy’s inclusion of leisure as a necessary ingredient for a balanced life may be explained partly by class values and opportunities. The profession’s founders in the United States were positioned firmly in the upper-middle class (Frank, 1992). The three women founders held the kinds of positions open to them at the time: teacher, nurse and social worker whereas the three men worked in medicine and architecture. Supporting the upper-middle class orientation to this profession and its values was the fact that at least one occupational therapy school recruited its initial candidates from the society pages of newspapers in large, metropolitan areas (Litterst, 1992). Unlike the working class people that they treated, early proponents of occupational therapy had a social orientation to leisure and

the financial means to access it.

The view of leisure as a range of activities that promoted health and well-being emerged from the 19<sup>th</sup> century moral treatment philosophy and the later arts and crafts movement in England and North America (Schwartz, 1998). Early therapists encouraged the creation of quality hand-crafted items, which brought satisfaction to the creator, as a means of restoring both physical and mental health. In this sense, leisure activities were viewed within occupational therapy as one of many 'therapeutic occupations.' The use of arts and crafts for therapeutic leisure activities, however, shifted significantly between the two world wars. During that time, occupational therapy focused less on leisure as an occupation with 'curative' potential and personal meaning, and more on grading the difficulty of specific activities to fit the emerging biomechanical model within medicine.

Primeau (1996) offers a socio-historical perspective of leisure and work that shows how the idea of balance has evolved within occupational therapy. Balance is highly valued as a blend of work and leisure occupations unique to each individual that are mutually exclusive. In occupational therapy the discourse about a balance of work and leisure is seldom questioned. To critically examine this presumed balance, Primeau advocates that occupational therapy researchers use the definition of leisure that emphasizes its experiential or subjective qualities. This refers to individuals' descriptions of activities as leisure because they are experienced as relaxing and enjoyable, regardless of how these activities are perceived by other people. This subjective definition of leisure differs from previous approaches in occupational therapy and other disciplines, where prevailing definitions focus more on leisure as free time or as activities. Primeau argues that presenting work and leisure



as opposites has led to the simplistic assertion that the path to good health is through a balance of work and leisure. She argues against conducting research on this basis, citing Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre's (1989) contrary findings that more positive feelings occur when people are working versus doing leisure activities. The two categories are more permeable than they appear. Primeau advocates deconstructing occupational therapy's current views of work and leisure by studying "the range of affective experiences that occur during engagement in one's customary round of activities" (1996, p. 575). Occupational therapy's understanding of work and leisure is not well-served by their continued presentation as opposites.

### **Leisure's Limited Definition**

Leisure is defined in a prominent Canadian occupational therapy textbook as "enjoying life" (Law, Polatajko, Baptiste & Townsend, 1997, p. 30). Law et al. do not elaborate on the qualities that constitute leisure but situate leisure as a domain of life in which occupational performance occurs. Occupational performance refers to "the ability to choose, organize, and satisfactorily perform meaningful occupations that are culturally defined and age appropriate for looking after oneself, enjoying life, and contributing to the social and economic fabric of a community" (Law et al., p. 30). Writing from an American occupational therapy perspective, Mosey defines leisure as "time when one is free from family and other social responsibilities, activities of daily living, and work. It is characterized by a feeling of comparative freedom and self-determination" (cited in Reed & Sanderson, 1999, p. 150). Primeau (2003a) proposed a definition of leisure recently that extended the concept beyond its usual tripartite features: leisure as time, as activities and as experience, to

include leisure as “context” (p. 354). This notion of context includes safety, availability of materials and people but also the freedom to have and express choices regarding leisure activities. It encompasses personal characteristics as well as features of the larger environment. A fuller explanation of “context” follows a discussion of “environment” as the latter concept is used in Canadian occupational therapy. The significance of Primeau adding “context” to the definition of leisure creates a space for critical analyses of gender, ‘race,’ class and other social relations that can provide practitioners and researchers with a broader perspective from which to understand leisure. However, prevailing leisure definitions do not provide practitioners with a nuanced understanding of leisure within the social sciences nor are they based on empirical research. At best, definitions such as Mosey’s suggest that leisure is less important than family, social and work activities. With the exception of Primeau’s most recent contribution to defining leisure from an American occupational therapy perspective, occupational therapy definitions of leisure imply that it is isolated from the social relationships in which it occurs.

### **Leisure’s Role in Complex Social Relationships**

The environment comprises physical, cultural, social, and institutional features and is theorized in Canadian occupational therapy as the context in which occupational performance occurs (Law et al., 1997). A non-linear, dynamic relationship between the three elements of occupational performance, productivity, leisure and self-care, and the environment, is thought to exist. Theorized in this way, the environment shapes the person and his or her occupation and is influenced by subsequent occupational performance. The *physical* environment is broadly defined to include the “natural and built surroundings” (Law et al., p. 46) that interact

with the person and occupation to create occupational performance. The *cultural* features of the environment are defined as “ethnic, racial, ceremonial and routine practices based on ethos and value systems of particular groups” (Law et al., p. 46). The *social* aspect of the environment ranges from interpersonal relationships to larger social groupings of people within communities. The *institutional* aspect of the environment includes legal, economic and political components. The Canadian Immigration and Refugee Protection Act legislation and the policies that are guided by it are examples of the institutional environment (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003a). Inability to access free language training in the early stages of resettlement, for whatever reasons, may indirectly shape leisure access or participation in subsequent years. Taken together, these features of the environment accommodate various approaches to understanding leisure participation in the literature.

Recent changes to American occupational therapy practice guidelines show that the concept of the environment has evolved and changed its name to “context,” although it shares many elements of the Canadian occupational therapy notion of environment (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2002). Although occupational therapy practice differs between Canada and the United States, there is considerable overlap in conceptual development, research and trends. The definition of context includes seven sub-concepts: cultural, physical, social, personal, spiritual, temporal and virtual. The important differences are *personal* context, which refers to “...age, gender, socioeconomic status and educational status” and *temporal* context, which refers to “...stages of life, time of day, time of year, duration” (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2002, p. 623). The *spiritual* context is conceptualized in American occupational therapy as the core or essence of the person,

whereas in Canadian occupational therapy, “Spirituality resides in persons, is shaped by environments and gives meaning to occupations” (Law et al., 1997, p. 33). The concept of a *temporal* context provides a useful anchor for my research because it reflects a particular point of time in the lives of the participants and their experiences of leisure. Despite the recent conceptual advances to environment (Canadian) and context (American) in relation to occupational performance, the scant theoretical development of leisure in occupational therapy allows practitioners to view leisure as a set of activities. When this perspective is taken, the broader influences that impede, enhance and give meaning to leisure participation are ignored.

One approach to learning how leisure fits into people’s lives is to focus research on the social relations that reveal how gender, ‘race,’ and class contribute to shaping those lives. This approach is seldom used in occupational therapy to understand leisure participation. Some discussion about gender differences and socioeconomic factors that affect leisure appears in texts such as the popular *Willard and Spackman’s Occupational Therapy* (Hasselkus, 1998; Sussenberger, 1998). For the first time, the ninth edition of this classic text offers a chapter on human diversity. In that chapter McGruder (1998) distinguishes ‘race’ from culture and ethnicity and offers a case study involving ‘race’ and poverty. These three textbook chapters present an overview of some theoretical concepts but do not offer research evidence to substantiate the ideas presented. The chapter on leisure itself focuses mainly on assessment and incorporates some empirical studies of leisure, notably from American researchers who are oriented to analysis at an individual level. Popular occupational therapy

texts (Neistadt & Crepeau, 1998; Trombly & Radomski, 2002) still emphasize the individual more than the constraints and opportunities that clients face in their social worlds.

Progress towards applying a social relations perspective to participation in leisure activities has been hampered by the implicit class, 'race,' and ethnicity discourse produced in professional journals. Cena, McGruder and Tomlin (2002) reviewed 23 years of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* to determine if 'race,' ethnicity and class were used equally as descriptors in research. Their findings showed an inconsistent use of these terms as research variables with limited, if any, definitions provided. Although Cena et al. problematized 'race' in relation to ethnicity, ironically their presentation reflected the use of these concepts in research as descriptors rather than as embedded in social relations that may change and be experienced differently over time and place. Their study, however, supports Roman's (1993) argument that 'race,' difference, and 'people of Colour' are used in ways that hide the unstated normative white perspective. This unexamined point of reference sometimes functions, along with the term 'people of Colour,' to reinforce the mistaken idea that white people "are *colorless* and hence without racial subjectivities, interests and privileges" (Roman, 1993, p. 71). The unproblematic use of gender, 'race,' and class can lead to a simplification of complex issues that influence, among other things, participation in leisure activities.

The emphasis on biomedical and clinical sciences content in Canadian occupational therapy curricula and the location of most educational programs within medical faculties have fostered a decontextualized view of the individual, in keeping with biomedical models used in medicine. Past standards for accreditation of occupational therapy programs have required

that each university's occupational therapy curriculum "reflect specific courses in the basic and professional content areas" (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 1986, p. 22). These areas include the two entries under the behavioral sciences category, psychology and sociology, and 13 areas of basic content in the biomedical and clinical sciences such as anatomy, kinesiology, and neurology. Arguably, more emphasis on social and behavioral sciences in occupational therapy curricula could strengthen practitioners' understanding of key concepts, such as the environment, which in turn could contribute to a better understanding of participation in leisure activities.

Occupational therapy strives to create conditions that "empower" people and allow them to engage in "occupations" they find personally meaningful (Law et al., 1997). Clark et al. (1991) define occupation as "chunks of culturally and personally meaningful activity in which humans engage that can be named in the lexicon of the culture" (p. 301). In occupational therapy, "empowerment" is defined as "personal and social processes that transform visible and invisible relationships so that power is shared more equally" (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 1997, p. 180). Occupational therapists have applied personal empowerment to the process of individuals setting and attaining rehabilitation goals, to enable maximum independence in self-care, work and leisure. Occupational therapy as a profession has not explored the notion of empowerment from a larger social analysis. Only one occupational therapy scholar employs an overtly critical social theory perspective of empowerment but she has not turned her attention to leisure (Townsend, 1998).

Writing from within leisure studies, Hemingway (1999) argues that critical theory is the most appropriate paradigm for the continued conceptual development of leisure,

regardless of the content area. Hemingway contends that leisure is a social phenomenon with the ability to bridge “the private and the public spheres” (p. 501). Whether leisure activities are done alone or with others, the negotiation of time and opportunities relate to the social roles people play. By virtue of being social, leisure is situated historically in particular economic, cultural and societal institutions and their processes. Hemingway views leisure as political in a broad sense and potentially transgressive, therefore providing a means by which people may contest predominant ideas of power and equality that are reproduced through various environments and contexts. Leisure participation, Hemingway proposes, may offer a corrective for overly work-oriented societies. In doing so, leisure may allow people to develop competencies that become equally valued as those that are used for work “...and with this, the clearing of social space for the expansion of human capacities” (1999, p. 502).

### **The Intent of the Research**

Occupational therapy prides itself on client-centred practice. Its theoretical writings identify the environment as a central feature of occupational performance, something that influences how individuals function (Law et al., 1997). The aim of this research is to examine participation in leisure activities for women who are in the process of resettlement and experiencing changes to the environments in which they previously functioned. I analyze how their daily life is structured, where leisure fits, and what meaning it has. This analysis incorporates individual women’s stories and the larger social processes that affect resettlement and integration into Canadian society. My main research question is: *How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate*

*in leisure activities?* In the course of answering this research question, four questions guided my study. These are:

1. What activities make up the daily life of immigrant women?
2. How do their daily activities shape the meaning of leisure that women create?
3. How do women think that their leisure experiences affect their health?
4. What activities do they enjoy and describe as leisure?

By examining the social relations that shape women's everyday lives, I illustrate how leisure activities are embedded in environments of home, work and community life. Although models of occupational therapy that depict interactive relationships between people, their environments and occupational performance are well-established (Law, et al. 1997), the underlying concepts that may help explain these relationships require further development. The focus on social relations provides me with a means to track and better understand the social and economic forces that contribute to the creation of an 'immigrant woman.' This term refers to a discourse and also the real differences in opportunities that occur for many foreign-born women, compared to Canadian-born women.

A social relations approach allows me to examine how, for example, the designation of a woman as a 'dependent' at the time of immigration may function with her subsequent restricted access to regulated professions during resettlement. Each of these institutional processes alone - an official designation and difficulty accessing one's profession - might not have a direct negative impact on a woman's life. However, these often occur in conjunction with limited English skills (which many immigrant women have) and the need to fulfill the majority of home and child rearing responsibilities in a context that may lack the kinds of



social supports that once allowed women to manage paid and domestic work. One of my assumptions about the formation and maintenance of the concept (and reality) of 'immigrant women' in Canadian society is drawn from Jamal's (1998) writing about the need to view as inseparable, the public and private spheres of women's lives. The gender relations that position a woman as the parent who does the majority of child rearing and household activities influence the likelihood of her obtaining paid employment. Jamal argues that immigrant women's work and home activities are not only created by "economic and social processes" (p. 27) but are necessary to maintain particular labour markets. Integrating the work of scholars writing from Marxist perspectives, Jamal rejects the privileging of any one concept (class, 'race,' or gender) over the other and recognizes the contribution that gender, for example, makes to understanding the creation and maintenance of class relations. Thus, I agree with Jamal and others who advocate examining 'race,' class and gender together as the best means of understanding how each functions, and changes over time and under different circumstances.

My use of 'race' is a rejection of its taken-for-granted definition as an identification of individuals and groups. Instead I agree with Jamal, who explains that 'race' must be understood through the everyday "practices and representations" (p. 27) that contribute to the development and maintenance of differential opportunities for immigrant women. These practices and images constitute 'racialization,' which refers to the everyday social relations whereby certain people are categorized and identified by another group of people on the basis of actual or perceived phenotypical characteristics (Ahmad, 1993). Although unstated, the implied purpose of 'racializing' groups of people is to construct an ideology of biological

determinism and difference that justifies inequalities within social systems such as housing, education, and employment opportunities. Thus, the racialization of some immigrant women functions together with their designation as 'dependents' upon arrival in Canada, and contributes to a particular construction of 'immigrant women' that may limit their access to appropriate jobs (Jamal, 1998). If women's qualifications are not deemed equivalent to those required for similar jobs in Canada, then a pattern of underemployment and unemployment is likely to occur. Without an analysis of how 'race' (through racialization), gender and class intersect, there is little chance of identifying the genesis of inequalities and lost opportunities because they appear to fit the discourse of 'immigrant women.'

These concepts from the social sciences are necessary to provide a more nuanced analysis of environmental elements that are pertinent to occupational therapists' work with their clients. Knowledge development in this area provides practitioners with a conceptual toolbox, which allows them to address forces in the environment that affect clients' lives but arise outside of their proximal milieu (O'Brien, Dyck, Caron & Mortenson, 2002; Townsend, 1998).

### **Rationale for the Research**

The rationale for conducting this research with a group of immigrant women involves several features of the resettlement experience that differentiate these women from Canadian-born women and, in doing so, highlight issues affecting leisure participation. Resettlement experiences are not the same for all women who immigrate but they are known to put many women at greater risk for health problems than Canadian-born women, excluding aboriginal women (Elliott & Gillie, 1998). As well, research with immigrants who belong to minority

ethnic groups identifies numerous obstacles to obtaining health care related to “lack of cultural responsiveness, communication difficulties and systemic racism built into institutional practices” (Strategic Workshop on Immigrant Women Making Place in Canadian Cities, 2002). The experience of racism and discrimination, which many women of Colour face upon immigrating to Canada, often continues throughout their lives here (Brand, 1993). Although good health is a condition of entry for most non-refugee immigrants, the resettlement process involves a number of changes that may compromise women’s health (Meadows, Thurston & Melton, 2001). Living in a new environment and learning English present challenges to many women which, coupled with a loss of customary supports and a change in roles, may lead to health problems. For example, a married woman with children may be accustomed to having relatives nearby who can care for the children or she may have access to low-cost child care. Family members in close proximity may provide ready social interaction for women and play opportunities for their children. Leisure experiences often occur in the context of casual or formal social interaction with friends and family (Tirone & Shaw, 1997). Changes in social interactions available to newcomers in Canada that are perceived as negative may influence the access women have to leisure activities.

Resettlement often elicits changes in employment status for women which may take the form of being employed for the first time, based on economic necessity or preference (Meadows, Thurston & Melton, 2001). The non-linear process of resettlement may result in immigrant women being under-employed if they cannot meet Canadian employment criteria such as sufficient English language ability or qualifications equivalent to those required by Canadian employers. These are particular problems for well-educated women whose jobs are

regulated professions in Canada. If unable to meet Canadian criteria for specific settings, women may accept less desirable jobs that offer a means of obtaining Canadian work experience. Underemployment has been demonstrated repeatedly in research focusing on immigrant women and health (Hiebert et al., 1998; Meadows, Thurston & Melton, 2001). Although the financial situation of many immigrants improves over time, this takes 10-15 years to occur (Spigelman, 1998). Lastly, women may be unemployed for any number of months or years as they gain volunteer experience, learn English, and seek qualifications that will enable entry into the kinds of jobs that they already have experience in or have been educated to do. These employment scenarios have implications for how well women can fulfill their daily home responsibilities and engage in preferred activities, including those typically done in 'free time.' Seeking and maintaining employment may become more important than participating in leisure activities. Downward occupational mobility is accompanied by less money to either buy leisure time through others' services or spend it directly on leisure activities.

Some unemployed women experience their free time as stressful and frustrating which are conditions that have a negative impact on their physical and emotional well-being (Ruble & Shaw, 1991). This situation may arise when newcomers experience unexpected constraints on their physical and social mobility. These constraints are associated with limited English language skills and access to affordable daycare as well as changes to their customary means of socializing. For example, working class women from tropical climates may have casual social contact through more 'outdoor' living i.e., monitoring children's play and relaxing outside (Ruble & Shaw, 1991). The relatively cold climate and different social

interaction styles that many Canadians display may add to feelings of isolation and lack of community.

The thesis is organized in the following way. I begin here in Chapter One by introducing the problem, setting the research questions and defining concepts from occupational therapy that are relevant to the study. In Chapter Two I start the literature review by examining the foundations of leisure from a western perspective and end with a detailed critique of three studies of leisure and immigrant women. An introduction of the issues around constructing difference, as exemplified by the immigrant woman discourse, communicates my intent to avoid perpetuating these images in my writing. I end Chapter Two by defining resettlement and identifying some of the critical challenges faced by immigrant women during this process.

Chapter Three is concerned with critical theory methodology, which I explain in some detail to provide a foundation for the subsequent discussion of methods I chose to conduct the research. I describe the process of recruitment thoroughly and identify some of the issues around interviewing women who speak English as a second language. The purpose of Chapter Four is to situate each research participant through the presentation of descriptive profiles. The details within the profiles include the minutiae of daily life and illustrate sufficiently the context in which women live for the subsequent two findings chapters to make sense.

In Chapter Five I present the themes *orchestrating the day* and *connected yet apart* to describe the recursive features of the participants' lives and their attempts to maintain important connections with family and friends through various strategies. Chapter Six

continues with my thematic analysis, which examines employment changes, language issues and leisure participation through the themes, *compromised careers* and *socializing is the key to leisure*. In Chapter Seven I use Bourdieu's (1991) concept of capital to analyze three of the themes. The intent of this chapter is to move the thematic findings to a more abstract level that may contribute to theoretical development in occupational therapy. The thesis concludes with Chapter Eight where I briefly review the study purpose, methodology and key findings to frame a discussion about the implications of this research. A critique of the research design includes the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review affords me an opportunity to substantiate the research problem described in Chapter One. A description of ancient beliefs about leisure sets the stage for a discussion of more recent writing about leisure, which is all in the service of understanding current concepts of leisure. I review in detail three studies of leisure and immigrant women that are closest to my research to show where my research contributes to the literature. Towards the end of this chapter I approach issues of resettlement by critiquing relevant policy and its implications for women's integration in Canada.

### **Socio-Historical Perspectives of Leisure**

Interest in western concepts of leisure dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. and the writings of Aristotle (Balme, 1984; Sylvester, 1999). Aristotle proposed that work was necessary for survival but prevented citizens from having leisure time in which to pursue happiness. In the context of ancient Greek society and Aristotelian beliefs, work itself did not degrade or diminish a person. Rather what placed work in a subordinate position to leisure was the demand it made of a man's time and the negative effects it had on one's body and soul (Balme, 1984). The kind of work that farmers, craftsmen and other laborers did set these people apart from the aristocratic class to which Aristotle belonged. Without the luxury of time for intellectual and contemplative pursuits, these workers could not realize the notion of leisure as conceptualized by Aristotle.

Aristotle was among the first to distinguish a 'leisure class' of citizens from those in society who were among the working class, the latter whose leisure was merely free time that did not offer leisure as a path to happiness. The writings of ancient Greeks like Aristotle have

influenced our current beliefs about leisure and work but Balme (1984), a classics scholar, proposes that Aristotle's ideas may not be representative of ancient Greek society. Balme argues that the working classes did engage in leisure activities and cites Pericles *Funeral Oration* as evidence of this: "We provide more recreation from toil for the mind than any other state, enjoying competitions and sacrifices throughout the year" (p. 151). According to Balme these activities "included drama, music, dancing, athletic games, processions, in which many citizens took part and which all could attend for nothing" (p. 151). Since it is those who are educated and in power who often write history, it is unknown if these activities fulfilled Aristotle's loftier notions of leisure or fulfilled more mundane needs of the working classes.

A review of changes in leisure ideas and practices across societies since Aristotle's time requires a socio-historical analysis of leisure that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I will focus briefly on how late-18th to mid-19th century industrialization affected leisure in England and the United States. Modern western definitions of leisure gained currency during this time period when factory jobs institutionalized a clear differentiation between paid work and leisure. Mechanization has often been identified as the catalyst to changes in people's work and leisure but historian Cross (1990) suggested that the centralization of work and the tyranny of the clock had a greater impact on working people's lives. Centralization required all workers to report to a factory that could be miles away from their homes. Cottage industries producing textiles could not compete with the large output of finished goods resulting from a large labor force, whose waged work was dictated by clocks and hastened by machines.



Cross (1990) identified several spheres of life affected by these changes including a disruption in village and community life necessitated by the movement of families to cities. The separation between work and leisure activities was accentuated and, increasingly, men's work was defined as waged work outside the home whereas women's work was unpaid and more likely to occur in the home. Leisure activities were specifically controlled when workers were housed in single-sex dormitories, where liquor was prohibited, and 12-14 hour days and six to seven day work weeks precluded much leisure time. The decrease in time available for leisure is one of the enduring legacies of the changes to work during this period.

In *Homo ludens* Huizinga (1950) proposed that play is intrinsically linked to culture and must be studied from a socio-historical perspective. Huizinga examined play for adults and children but only used the word leisure when referring to the writings of the ancient Greeks. Huizinga's description of the qualities of play contributed to current leisure concepts. These qualities derived from play and are now attributed to leisure: the freedom to choose leisure activities, leisure as relaxation and a normal part of life, the departure from the ordinary or mundane that leisure allows, and the time-bounded nature of leisure. Huizinga contends that play (read: leisure) has functions beyond the moment that one engages in it and this is relevant to my research. Huizinga's objective was to understand play from the perspective of the meaning it has to the 'player.'

The increasingly contested definition of leisure has contributed to its conceptual ambiguity within occupational therapy and leisure studies. With the publication of de Grazia's (1962) treatise *Of time, work and leisure*, the definition of leisure as free time filled with recreation was displaced by a more classical concept of leisure that incorporated ideas

from the ancient Greeks. De Grazia's notion of leisure centred on experience and motivation rather than the parameters of activity and time, used by theorists in the early 1960's. De Grazia proposed that, far from leisure being an antidote to the pressures of work, "...leisure is freedom from the necessity of being occupied" (1962, p. 14). The fine distinction de Grazia made is that true leisure is done for its own sake, not to achieve something or to simply amuse oneself. De Grazia's concept of leisure contradicts the common sense understanding of leisure as advertised and promoted in the media today. Instead de Grazia implies that only a certain class of people may have opportunities for 'true leisure.' Occupational therapists are not likely to use this rather elitist notion of leisure in their practice. However, de Grazia's concept of leisure as subjective underpins a body of research in leisure studies and other disciplines, and is gaining acceptance within occupational therapy practice. The tools available to assess leisure, however, remain skewed towards understanding leisure as activities or free time (Suto, 1998).

Two books mark Huizinga's and de Grazia's legacy and they signify a shift away from positivist research approaches and toward interpretivist methodologies suitable for studying the meaning of leisure. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) developed the concept of 'flow,' which was defined as the subjective experience of an optimal match between one's skills and the challenges of an activity. His findings prompted researchers to design studies that explored the nature and meaning of leisure experiences for participants. Based in sociology, Kelly's (1983) dissatisfaction with positivist leisure research led him to call for the application of symbolic interaction theory to leisure studies. This theory would enable researchers to focus on how personal and social features of life contribute to the experience

of leisure. Kelly was interested in how leisure meanings are constructed within the context of people's lives. His research influenced much of the subsequent feminist and interpretive leisure research in North America.

### **Approaches to Leisure, Health and Immigrant Women**

The use of the term 'immigrant women' is problematic because it is used to signify, in a negative way, difference from the unnamed majority of 'white' Canadian-born women. The term immigrant women is applicable to any non-Canadian born women but its common-sense usage identifies women who are socially constructed as 'other,' most often women of Colour from countries designated as third world (Bannerji, 1993; Mohanty, 1991; Ng, 1992). An alternative to perpetuating the meaning of 'immigrant women' is to use 'women of Colour' but this is not relevant to all women who are immigrants.<sup>1</sup> Carty (1991) advocated this form of conscious self-naming to communicate similar political struggles among racialized women in Canada. She proposed retaining one's identity, for example Chinese, because it identifies differences among women and resists the flattening of histories that comes with the state-initiated term 'visible minorities.' Far from being an exercise in semantics, differences in names reflect complex and sometimes conflicting meanings (Bannerji, 1993). Both 'visible minorities' and 'immigrant women' are ways of naming differences from white or Euro-Canadians, who by virtue of being the majority and in power, remain unnamed and thus constitute an invisibility against which others are compared.

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<sup>1</sup> My agreement with these arguments may seem at odds with my choice to use the term immigrant women in this thesis. Rather than judging who I will identify as a woman of Colour, I have chosen to use the term immigrant women in the way that authors of the literature I review use it, that is, to question its common sense meaning. Although customarily this is indicated by single quotes, I will rely instead on the way I write the research participants' accounts to communicate my position.

Despite a small cadre of researchers using interpretive approaches, many studies of women and leisure have contributed to a 'constraints' literature that identifies how home and work responsibilities create barriers to leisure participation (Henderson, 1991; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). It is questionable whether concepts and findings from North American leisure constraints research are applicable to women who immigrate to Canada. Some immigrant women describe leisure constraints related to resettlement but their situations are complex because they also report new opportunities for leisure activities (Tirone & Shaw, 1997). Most leisure studies that address difference treat ethnicity and 'race' as independent variables and often employ marginality and ethnicity theories (Gramann & Allison, 1999). Only a few health studies analyze gender, class, ethnicity and racialization as social relations rather than static markers of identity (Anderson, Blue & Lau, 1991; Scraton & Watson, 1998). Later in this chapter, I examine charges that the racializing and gendering characteristics of the Canadian immigration process produce a particular inscription of women's identities, especially relevant to women of Colour. The process of racialization, defined below, is relevant to immigrant women's health care and, I believe, leisure experiences. The studies I briefly describe next demonstrate how using the concept of racialization can identify social and economic influences on women's health.

The concept of racialization advanced by Ahmad (1993) provides a means to trace how health is influenced by the social relations arising from imposed identities. Racialization refers to the process by which groups of people "are identified by direct or indirect reference to their real or imagined phenotypical characteristics" for the unstated purpose of reducing their subjectivity to the level of biological determinants (Cashmore, 1988 quoted in Ahmad,

1993, p. 18). Racialization is an ideological process that contributes to the reification of 'race' and thus furthers the belief that individuals within defined groups have racially determined behavioural characteristics. While racialization is not specific to immigrants who are women of Colour, they are more likely to feel its influence through inequitable structural differences that affect their health, and potentially, their participation in leisure.

Relatively few studies examine the link between social and material positions of immigrant women of Colour and the meanings that health and illness have for them (Anderson, Blue & Lau, 1991; Anderson, Blue, Holbrook & Ng, 1993; Dyck, 1992). Anderson et al. (1991) critiqued cultural explanations for different experiences in health care between immigrant and Canadian-born women. An analysis of two case studies revealed how material differences other than 'culture' influenced the management of chronic diabetes. Findings from this research identified the impact of differences in employment, income, language ability, and familiarity with the ideology of Western medicine on the health outcomes of two women, one Chinese-Canadian and the other Euro-Canadian. By using the concept of racialization, the researchers offered a sharper lens through which to situate issues of culture and ethnicity, and identify the impact they had on how women manage their illnesses (Anderson et al., 1991). Discussion of the findings directed health care professionals to acknowledge and investigate the broad context of women's lives. This contextual approach is applicable to my leisure research because I am interested in the social and structural factors that are likely to shape participation in leisure for immigrant women.

The vulnerability that racialized women experience affects mental health disorders as well as physical illnesses. Walters (1993) indicated that depression was more frequent for

women in Canada whose first language was not English, who held low-paying jobs, and had limited formal education. Although Walters did not use racialization as an explicit analytic tool, her findings resonate with the experiences of some women who resettle in Canada. In particular, Walters' research suggested that the women described above are at risk for disorders such as major depression. Work is an important issue for immigrants and because paid work can be quantified, it has received more attention than leisure. These studies have shown how social and economic pressures can contribute to health status. It is possible that similar social and economic analyses that problematize 'race' and examine racialization may illuminate how leisure meanings impact on, and are influenced by, the health of women of Colour who are immigrants.

British researchers Scraton and Watson (1998) propose that research about women and leisure should start with an exploration of their lived experiences. Such research should not presume shared experiences based on identities reflected by gender, 'race,' class or ethnicity. Instead their approach is compatible with Ng (1998) who suggests that these concepts should be used "...for discovering how they are relations that organize our productive and reproductive activities, which are located in time and space" (p. 22). This refers to describing what women do and analyzing how their actions are constrained or enabled by various circumstances. For example, the tasks of child rearing and home making that an immigrant woman does in Canada may be more difficult than they were in her country of origin. This may result from differences in available social support and accessibility of community resources that in turn, expand the hours necessary to fulfill these responsibilities. Increased time spent in homemaking and child rearing is likely to limit opportunities to

access suitable employment. Thus, a woman who managed to earn middle-class wages and raise her children before coming to Canada may experience a decline in income and receive the implicit message that her work skills are not valued. Scraton and Watson (1998) advocate using the concept of power relations to describe the sometime conflicting ways that class, gender, and 'race' function in different contexts.

In-depth qualitative interviews are a well-established and effective method to learn about the experience of leisure as it is situated in women's lives. Bialeski and Michener (1994) used this approach in their study about how leisure and mothering shifted across a woman's life span and at different stages of her family's development. The use of open-ended questions in Bialeski and Michener's research with mothers past the 'active mothering' stage revealed how marriage, motherhood, and family life experiences influenced women's beliefs about leisure and their participation in leisure activities. The exploratory nature of Parry and Shaw's (1999) research on the role of leisure in the lives of menopausal women supports the use of interviews as a primary data collection method. In this study, participants were asked to talk about the broad experience of menopause in their lives and how leisure influenced that stage of life.

### **Definitions of Leisure**

Across disciplines and within occupational therapy, leisure has been understood as free time, as an observable activity, and as a subjective experience. Kelly (1992) criticized sociology's approach to leisure that defined it as "a measurable residue of time, clearly distinguished by an absence of constraint and an abundance of something called discretion" (p. 248). The problem with viewing leisure as discretionary time has been highlighted in

cross-cultural surveys that employed time-budget methods (Samuel, 1996). In Samuel's research, leisure was defined specifically in opposition to work. This perspective of leisure has contributed to an erroneous understanding that free time, that is, non-work time, is always perceived by people as leisure time (Shaw, 1986). The conceptual misunderstanding that free time equals leisure becomes clear in situations where unemployment or other financial hardship exists. These circumstances, coupled with limited access to leisure settings and concerns over personal safety, have led to diminished engagement in some leisure activities regardless of free time (Scruton & Watson, 1998).

Ingham (1986) criticized leisure studies' inadequate definition of leisure activities which implied that they were "activities that an individual engages in after subsistence and maintenance needs have been dealt with" (p. 258). This definition of leisure as observable activity was ingrained in leisure studies by default from survey research that differentiated work and leisure. The drive in North America to develop leisure policies and delivery models for public recreation needs also contributed to the notion of leisure as discernible activities that people did during their non-work or discretionary time.

The understanding of leisure as primarily observable activities has failed to account for several contextual questions. If leisure is a universal concept, then how are leisure activities defined and by whom? Khan's (1997) study of very low income farm families in Bangladesh concluded that women incorporate elements of 'leisure' into their everyday work. For example, making handcrafted items such as embroidery brought in needed income but also created a time and place for socializing, laughing, and teaching younger women handicraft skills. American researchers, particularly those writing from feminist perspectives,



have identified the inadequacy of methodological approaches that define leisure in opposition to work because this definition does not account for the kinds of expressive and relational activities that many women experience within families (Bella, 1989; Henderson & Allen, 1991; Shaw, 1992). Bella (1989) criticized leisure studies for its emphasis on instrumental and easily discernible activities that are more likely to be experienced by men during their non-work time. As well, Bella and others (Kelly & Kelly, 1994) have identified the family as a social context that shapes leisure experiences and the different meanings they create for each participant. For example, parental interaction with children through play may be described by mothers and fathers as leisure, work or sometimes as both. Overall, the view of leisure as activity has not considered the subjective experience or the meaning the participants attach to their actions.

The notion of leisure as a state of mind means that leisure itself is defined by the individual's experience of it. Whether an activity or period of time appears as leisure to an observer is less important than how the individual interprets his or her own actions. Studying leisure as a state of mind or subjective experience has several advantages. Use of this perspective has addressed the problems of defining leisure solely as free time and allowed individual, contextual definitions of leisure. It stresses the importance of affective states and their impact on the meaning of an experience as 'leisure' as Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989) have shown. In a study with Indo-Canadian women, Tirone and Shaw (1997) asked research participants to describe activities that were enjoyable, relaxing and satisfying, which are qualities associated with western notions of leisure. The researchers compared their participants' descriptions to prevailing North American leisure concepts such as perceived

freedom, self-expression and intrinsic motivation. Instead of trying to impose existing definitions of leisure on their participants' experiences, Tirone and Shaw developed a 'lifestyle circle' that describes the meanings that participants ascribed to family activities, work, and community involvement.

The social context and subjective experience of leisure were the focus of Shaw and Dawson's (2001) study of leisure meanings within heterosexual nuclear families. The assumptions underlying their research reject psychologically-derived definitions of leisure as being insufficient to understand leisure participation, attitudes and experiences for different family members. This position is consistent with Shaw's (1997) distinction between two prevailing paradigms, social-psychological and sociological-feminist, that underpin most studies of family leisure. Shaw and Dawson contend that freedom of choice and intrinsic motivation may be absent in family leisure rather than constitute its defining features. This is in sharp contrast to Iso-Ahola's (1999) position that "There is no need to explain motives separately for participants in each activity" (p. 35) and his assertion that freedom and autonomy are determinants of leisure. Findings from Shaw and Dawson's study identified the intentional or goal-directed nature of family leisure. Parents in this study encouraged participation in certain leisure activities to model healthy lifestyles and to foster the sense of being a family. Fulfillment of these goals sometimes resulted in considerable effort and limited enjoyment on the parents' part. These findings offer useful insights into how social context, in this case the immediate family, contributes to the experiential aspect of leisure.

The dual focus on meaning and context situates Shaw and Dawson's Canadian study of family leisure conceptually in between much of the British and American leisure research

in the past 25 years. The notion that individuals have freedom to choose leisure contributes to a theoretical approach that many American researchers use and fits into Shaw's (1997) definition of a social-psychological paradigm (see for example, Iso-Ahola, 1984; Neulinger, 1974). Analyses of leisure participation solely from an individual perspective fail to problematize contextual and sometimes contradictory influences arising from the social world where leisure occurs and meaning is created (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1989; Kelly, 1999; Shaw, 1997). A move to integrate contextual and individual perspectives is reflected in Kelly's (1999) statement that "Leisure is not separate and secondary, but embedded in the institutional structures, social times, and power allocations in society" (p. 56).

In contrast to the American emphasis on factors such as motivation and freedom of choice, much of the leisure studies research from Britain since the 1980's used sociological analyses, with Marxist and feminist critiques being prevalent (Deem, 1986; Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1990; Scraton & Watson, 1998). Together, North American and British leisure studies have informed my research and increased my understanding of issues relevant to women. Few studies that I reviewed, however, have positioned immigrant women and their experiences of leisure as the focus of the research. While I acknowledge that British, Canadian and American leisure literature has guided my research, three North American studies of leisure and resettlement are more relevant. These studies use qualitative interviews to explore leisure meanings and participation in the contexts where leisure experiences occur. The studies I selected support my research plan and its central question: *How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate in leisure activities?*

I recognize that during interviews with my research participants it may be helpful to draw upon leisure qualities identified in the literature to help them talk about leisure. To this end I use Reid's (1995) definition to define leisure provisionally and yet encourage individual descriptions of this phenomenon.

Leisure will be defined as those activities which produce intrinsic rewards and provide the participant with life-enhancing meaning and a sense of pleasure. It should be understood that many such activities can often appear to be work-like in form and may occur in one's vocation. What often separates work from leisure is the attitude with which it is undertaken and the reward which is gained from the experience. With work, the reward is often only monetary; leisure usually involves intrinsic value. Leisure, then, is as much an attitude or state of mind as it is a type activity (Reid, 1995, p. 14).

### **Key Empirical Studies of Leisure and Immigrant Women**

#### *South American Immigrants in Pennsylvania*

Juniu's (2000) research with South American immigrants in Philadelphia explores the link between immigration experiences and "...leisure behavior, recreation participation, and social interaction" (p. 364). Her research aims to address policy issues around public recreation opportunities. Juniu reviews and rejects prevailing marginality and ethnicity theories that underlie studies of ethnic and racial constraints to leisure. The marginality theory proposes that low income and experiences of discrimination explain variations in the use of public recreational facilities. In contrast, the ethnicity theory proposes that cultural variations between minority ethnic groups and the 'white' population within the United States are responsible for different levels, and types, of leisure and recreation participation.

Juniu (2000) criticizes research that underpins marginality and ethnicity theories because these studies conflate 'race' and ethnicity, as well as ethnicity and culture. Juniu agrees with Taylor's (1992) point that 'race' is ascribed to people on the basis of perceived

physical characteristics. Juniu then writes that 'race' is unlikely to change through acculturation but ethnicity may change because it is more of a process. She notes that ethnicity has been defined as "membership in a micro-cultural group on the basis of country of origin, language, cultural traditions, or religion different from the dominant society" (p. 361). In her statement that ethnicity has the potential to change "through assimilation and acculturation" (p. 361) it is unclear whether this is Juniu's opinion or if she is still critiquing ethnicity theory. The extent to which an individual identifies with his or her ethnicity may change over time and under different circumstances but that person may still be identified, in terms of ethnicity, by others through features described above, such as religion and language. Although Juniu acknowledges the social construction of 'race,' her statement about acculturation suggests that her own view of 'race' is as an identifying feature. What is missing in Juniu's research is an examination of racialization as a process through which the social relations of 'race' may be understood.

Acculturation is the acquisition of key cultural features of the hegemonic group such as language coupled with a decrease in traits associated with one's heritage. Juniu proposes that ethnicity is more of a process than 'race' and thus ethnicity is subject to the effects of acculturation. An examination of the acculturation process and other within-group cultural differences may help explain leisure participation choices in ethnic groups portrayed as homogeneous, such as Hispanic people in the United States. Juniu believes that the acculturation process influences perceptions of, and constraints to, leisure participation and she focuses particularly on social class in the study reviewed here.

Juniu's research sample comprised 10 women and eight men from seven countries.

Their average age was 44 years and their time in the United States ranged between seven and 24 years, with 10 years being the average. Ten participants were married and had children; others were widowed, divorced or single. The lowest educational attainment in Juniu's research sample was primary school (two people) and the highest was post-graduate education (eight people). Juniu used educational attainment and current occupation to operationalize social class. 'Middle class' was defined as participants' completion of college and post-graduate degrees plus current or past professional or managerial employment. Juniu defined participants as 'working class' if they had a high school education or less and now worked at home or had blue-collar jobs.

Juniu took a symbolic interaction approach and used grounded theory to identify barriers to leisure and understand how social class and ethnicity affect leisure participation. In-depth interviews with participants, of between 90-120 minutes, served as the primary data collection strategy. After transcribing these audio-taped interviews, Juniu telephoned participants to follow-up on issues and questions that arose. Most participants requested that their interviews be conducted in Spanish, which was easily accommodated because of Juniu's bilingualism.

Juniu's research findings showed that all participants in her study felt isolated and experienced a loss of social networks since immigration but that a differential process of assimilation affected leisure participation and meanings. The English-speaking, middle class participants had an appreciation of leisure as relaxation and free time, developed before immigration, that is similar to many definitions of leisure used in North America. These participants socialized with English-speaking acquaintances and attended many cultural

activities outside of the home such as theater and concerts. An interpretation of Juniu's findings is that the middle class portion of her sample developed connections with non-immigrants, thus enhancing their integration. In contrast, Juniu's working class participants perceived leisure as being unproductive and wasting time. They spent more free time with family and other Spanish-speaking people than the middle class participants did. For the working class participants, Spanish remained the language of choice not only for social activities but for television, radio and newspapers. Fewer English language skills, different kinds of employment and a predisposition to view leisure negatively by the working class participants led to their maintaining social ties primarily to Spanish-speaking people.

Juniu's study shows how social class affects definitions of leisure, participation in leisure activities, and thereby processes of acculturation. Juniu's focus on the resettlement experience to explore leisure participation and her choice of research participants who have lived in the United States for at least seven years make her study similar to mine and useful in shaping my research. However, Juniu's definition of social class as fixed does not address changes in the type of jobs and income that an individual may experience subsequent to immigration. Juniu's use of social class contrasts with how I will use it in my research. Occupation and educational attainment influence opportunities for leisure activities prior to arrival in a new country. These factors do not, however, provide a complete account of how immigration and the task of reconstructing life in a new country shape social class relations. Work experience and credentials in one's country of origin do not ensure a job that represents either asset in Canada, which suggests that social class cannot be easily transported from one country to another (Preston & Man, 1999).

*Latin American Refugee Women in Nova Scotia*

Rublee and Shaw's (1991) Canadian study of adult refugee women from four Latin American countries also used a grounded theory approach. They designed their study to identify and explore the factors that influenced integration into Canadian society. Rublee and Shaw speculated that work, leisure, family, and community life all had the potential to help with the integration process. Their sample consisted of 13 women who had lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia between six months and two years. The participants' ages ranged from 21-40 years. All of the women were married and most had children living with them. Details about their employment status were not included in the article.

There were several differences between Juniu's (2000) sample and the women in Rublee and Shaw's (1991) study. Juniu's sample included men and women between 27-78 years old who came to the United States an average of 10 years prior to the study. They arrived as voluntary immigrants from seven South American countries. Half of the 18 people in this study had a college degree or higher and all but one was employed. The people who fit Juniu's definition of middle class, and defined themselves that way, were more likely to speak and read English than those individuals whose work, education and self-definition defined them as working class. In contrast, Rublee and Shaw's sample were all married women, who had arrived in Canada as refugees from Chile and three Latin American countries, the latter known as places of considerable violence in the preceding years. These women were between 21-40 years old, had been in Canada between six months and two years prior to the study, and had limited English language skills. Only three of the 13 women were employed. There was no discussion of class in Rublee and Shaw's study. They reported that



two women were employed as secretaries and one woman worked as a chambermaid but Rublee and Shaw did not include information about the study participants' education level or employment history. The participants' limited English language skills were cited as barriers to employment, community integration and leisure activities. This finding was similar to what the working class participants in Juniu's study experienced. With Juniu's working class group, limited English skills led to increased time spent with members of one's ethnic group and extended family members. Rublee and Shaw's sample did not find support from the Latin American community and with few extended family members living in Canada; these women felt isolated.

Rublee and Shaw's in-depth interviews addressed three topics: paid work (satisfaction, socializing experiences, problems finding work), the family and home environment (in which leisure was explored by focusing on enjoyable activities), and participation in various activities within the community. An interpreter was used to conduct the interviews and one researcher was present to ask additional questions or request clarification when necessary. The interviews were semi-structured and ranged from 60 to 120 minutes. All 13 sessions were audio taped, transcribed and later translated into English.

Participants in Rublee and Shaw's study identified changes in both the physical and social environments as barriers to their participation in leisure activities. Specifically, the cold Canadian climate affected how social life unfolded and limited the opportunity for mobility and informal contact with Canadians. Without work or sufficient English language skills, these women had difficulty accessing the larger community that may have provided venues for social interaction. These unemployed study participants reported that their 'free

time' was difficult to fill and not perceived as leisure. They emphasized experiencing a change in the sense of community more than the absence of any particular 'leisure' activities. The city of Halifax did not provide this sense of community that arose from the participants' previous experience of casual conversations and frequent visits with neighbors, that were enhanced by living in a warm climate and spending considerable time outdoors. The participants in this study linked leisure and other sociable activities to their general well-being. These Latin American women contrasted what they perceived to be a Canadian notion of leisure, having hobbies and doing specific leisure activities, with their perception of leisure, which is something that occurs in the context of everyday social interactions with family and friends. Rublee and Shaw's methodological approach increases the likelihood that the resulting descriptive model reflects the experiences of the women in the sample. Their research findings make an argument for leisure's role as a means of social integration rather than an end in itself.

Two of the differences between Rublee and Shaw's and Juniu's sample discussed earlier are relevant to my research. One involves the short length of time that Rublee and Shaw's sample lived in Canada, between six months and two years. The first three years are thought to be a time of initial adjustment when other priorities of resettlement may eclipse the kinds of social networks associated with leisure participation, especially for refugees (Rose, Carrasco & Charboneau, 1998). Another difference is the lack of information about the women's education and their current work status, compared to Juniu's inclusion of these data. Juniu concludes that differences in social class influence the meaning of leisure and activity choices before and after immigration. This highlights the importance of knowing the

educational level of my research sample, as well as understanding their past and current employment status.

*South Asian Immigrant Women in Nova Scotia*

Tirone and Shaw (1997) used a phenomenological approach to study the meaning of leisure for 10 women from India who had settled in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The researchers wanted to compare the meaning of leisure among their study participants to prevailing North American concepts of leisure. The participants in this study were married with children, except for one woman who was widowed. They all spoke English well and had lived in Canada between five and 22 years. Their employment ranged from department head of a large hospital to clerk in an Asian food store. Educational levels were reported for only half the women and included completion of PhD and MD training, similar to some of Juniu's sample.

Like the two studies reviewed earlier, Tirone and Shaw chose in-depth interviews as the best means of collecting data that reflect the lived experiences of each woman. A single interview was conducted with each participant; six interviews were audio taped and the other four were recorded by taking notes. The length of these interviews was not reported. The interviewer asked questions about what was important to the participants, what constrained their satisfaction with life, and then explored qualities associated with leisure experiences. The latter included asking the women what aspects of their life gave them a "...sense of satisfaction, fulfillment, relaxation and enjoyment" (Tirone & Shaw, 1997, p. 231). Tirone and Shaw used a constant comparison method to analyze their data.

Tirone and Shaw's findings identified the following themes, listed in order of their

potential to provide satisfaction, relaxation and other qualities associated with leisure experiences. These themes were: 1) the importance and connection to family, employment and friendships, 2) Canadian and Indian cultural traditions and, 3) the dual issue of privacy and private time. The participants expressed little interest in the need for time away from their families and in some instances referred to feeling depressed when they were alone. In North American leisure research, time to oneself is associated with opportunities for leisure and personal development, particularly for women. Tirone and Shaw interpreted the participants' orientation to family as being rooted in their Indian upbringing. The importance of social relationships these women described suggests that leisure is inseparable from other aspects of life and cannot be understood from the perspective currently used in occupational therapy.

Rublee and Shaw, working with Latin American women in Halifax, found that the experience of unemployment was not uncommon for women who had lived in Canada for fewer than two years (Rublee & Shaw, 1991). These women experienced isolation and lack of financial and social resources to engage in enjoyable activities in contrast to the experiences of the Indo-Canadian women who had lived in Canada for much longer. Most of the 10 Indo-Canadian women were employed, middle-class and expressed few dissatisfactions with their lives (Tirone & Shaw, 1997). Their beliefs about the centrality of family and their limited need for 'private time' challenge some western ideas about leisure and contrast with findings from Juniu's middle-class South American immigrant group. Tirone and Shaw identified culture as central to the participants' explanation of their beliefs and subsequent actions. The dynamic nature of culture and the considerable variation within

groups, however, limits the explanatory power of 'culture' to illuminate specific actions that occur in complex milieus, as Juniu points out. While the impact of social position affected the meaning and experience of enjoyment for these two groups of women in Atlantic Canada, many questions remain unexplored. The process of resettlement was not identified as an explanation for meanings attached to leisure and participation in leisure activities between this group of women and North American-born women.

### *Comparing Three Studies of Immigrant Women and Leisure*

Findings from these studies indicate that differences in leisure participation and its meaning are linked to language skills, economic status, support from family and friends, class position, and culture. All three studies suggest that community involvement and leisure participation influence social integration and women's sense of well-being. No two studies share quite the same research design but all offer guidance to my work. The three studies discussed above show the utility of a method that uses in-depth interviews with immigrant women. What follows is a comparison of these studies and an identification of how they relate to my research.

Shaw was involved in two studies (Ruble & Shaw, 1991; Tirone & Shaw, 1997) that share some design features. Both studies were conducted in Halifax with women who entered Canada as adults and were married (or had been) with children. The sample sizes were small: 13 and 10. The research data arose from single in-depth interviews with participants and some telephone follow-up in one study. There were similarities in the length of interviews, method of recording the data and approach to analysis (constant comparative method) in these studies. In both instances, researchers asked their participants for descriptions of

enjoyable activities and time spent doing things that brought satisfaction, relaxation and fulfillment, rather than specifically asking the participants about leisure.

The notable differences between these two research samples were the choice of economic immigrants versus refugees, ability to speak English, and the much shorter time the latter group had been in Canada. Rublee and Shaw used an interpreter to conduct interviews with the Latin American women whereas Tirone and Shaw interviewed their participants in English. Juniu's study of South American immigrants used a grounded theory approach that emphasized symbolic interaction and its goal of uncovering participants' interpretation of social life, and the impact that understanding has on their subsequent actions. Her methods of data collection and recording were similar to the Canadian studies with one notable exception: Juniu was able to conduct the interviews in Spanish, the first language of her participants. Another difference was Juniu's inclusion of men and broader age range she accepted (27-78 years) in her sample. Like Rublee and Shaw's study, Juniu's sample included people from several countries but all had Spanish as a first language.

In these three studies, lack of English language ability was identified as a barrier to participants' participation in leisure. Culture, although ill-defined, was shown to influence Indo-Canadian women's preferences for family versus private time. In Tirone and Shaw's study the participants described Indian traditions they retained and discarded, as well as cultural traditions they acquired in Canada.

The research shows how definitions of leisure and participation in leisure activities are strongly influenced by context. Although these studies all focused on the context in which leisure occurs, none explored the gendered nature of leisure explicitly or use of concepts such

as class relations and racialization to further an understanding of leisure. My work attempts to recognize the historical, social, economic, cultural and political influences on the participants' past lives and their present circumstances. The final section of this review identifies issues associated with resettlement that are particularly relevant for women.

### **Issues of Resettlement**

Resettlement is defined as "a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full resource potential in its immigrant communities" (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998, p. 9). There are significant challenges associated with resettlement in Canada such as finding work, often learning an official language and integrating into a new community. Research with immigrant women indicates that a lack of Canadian work experience, limited English fluency, accented English, and de-valuation of credentials may compromise women's integration into Canadian society (Mojab, 1999; Preston & Man, 1999). Decreased support in the domestic sphere, where many women have primary responsibility, may limit access to services that could facilitate obtaining work comparable to their experience. These kinds of resettlement changes seem to disadvantage women of Colour in particular (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; Jamal, 1998).

The idea that women and men experience resettlement differently is supported by the government of Canada's gender-based analysis process initiated since the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act has been in force (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003a). Among the issues for skilled workers raised in this document is the recognition that "Proposals to focus on the broader notion of 'human capital' attributes, including education,

language abilities and labour market experience, will have different impacts depending on gender” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003b, p. 3). There is an acknowledgment in this initiative that immigrant women have different employment outcomes due in part to their unpaid household and child rearing responsibilities.

In conclusion, the findings from three empirical studies with immigrant women direct me to pursue the broader issues that affect leisure participation and influence the meanings these activities have now. Among these issues are changed social networks, unemployment, and new physical environments that influence leisure participation and socialization opportunities. The gender-based analysis initiated by the Canadian government supports the contention that gender plays a role in the resettlement experiences and employment outcomes of women and men. In Chapter Three I discuss concepts from critical theories that frame the approach I took to this research.



## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Theoretical Perspectives

The problem is not that some women have more power and some less, but rather how to most positively employ in the struggle against women's exploitation and oppression the qualitatively and quantitatively different power potentials of women involved in the research process (Mies, 1991, p. 70).

In this chapter I approach methodology from a broad perspective that ranges from the theoretical underpinnings of the research to the methods of data collection and analysis. This perspective allows me to describe the conceptual linkages that exist between the theoretical framework, my role as the researcher, elements of the research design, and interpretations of the findings. Conceptual consistency reflects how ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects of a critical inquiry paradigm are fitted together (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Answers to the questions: what can be known, how can a researcher come to know it, and by what means should reflect an internally consistent world view. From a critical epistemology position, Carspecken (1996) proposes "ontological categories" (p. 20) as a way of explaining various types of 'truth.' Each category offers a means through which to claim various 'truths' and acknowledges that the nature of reality defies the notion of an absolute truth. Truth claims may be understood as subjective ontological, which refers to feelings and perceptions of the individual; objective ontological which refers to observable phenomena that are accessible to those present and; normative-evaluative which refers to understandings about what is expected and appropriate behavior. These categories are relevant to this research because they recognize that women's personal experiences and the historical realities that shape their lives are legitimate 'truths' that constitute knowledge.

Consistent with these ontological categories is that a researcher develops knowledge (comes to know) through trying to understand an individual's perspective and experiences within the context of objective historical realities. Thus, developing knowledge about leisure participation for immigrant women requires a relationship with individuals who are in a position to share their experiences and opinions. The means by which knowledge develops include attention to methodological issues such as what role the researcher plays in the research process, how the research is designed, and the choice of data collection methods. For example, the dialogic nature of ethnographic style interviewing implies some sort of intersubjectivity that develops to some extent between the researcher and the research participant. A discussion of this and other methodological issues appears later in this chapter.

In keeping with critical perspectives emerging from post-structuralism and critical theories, I draw on concepts arising from Bourdieu's (1991) elaboration of human capital to frame the methodology and foreshadow the analytic role that capital plays in Chapter Seven. Ethnographic concepts provide further guidance to the design and process of this study. By incorporating compatible theoretical perspectives, I have created a framework for situating my research.

#### *An Overview of Concepts Underpinning Critical Perspectives*

The theoretical framework that guides this research is informed by the principles and concerns of critical perspectives associated with post-structural scholarship. I draw upon Kincheloe and McLaren's (2000) writing about critical theory but recognize that my use of the concepts herein is at the level of critical perspectives rather than critical theories per se. A definition of critical theory is difficult because there is no consensus but some definition is

necessary as a point of departure from which to discuss specific traditions within this paradigm. Recognizing the lack of consensus, Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) offer the following definition: “A critical social theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class, and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (p. 281). The use of this definition sets an ambitious agenda for researchers who are interested in these concerns. In rethinking critical theory Kincheloe and McLaren propose several refinements to their earlier conceptualization. As the basis of my theoretical discussion, I draw upon seven issues that constitute principles of this reconceptualization. Key concepts from post-structural writings are integrated into this discussion which aims to clarify the critical perspectives that are relevant to my research. Towards the end of this overview of critical theories, I introduce Bourdieu’s ideas of capital that are relevant to this research.

*Critical enlightenment.* The aim of a researcher working from a critical theory perspective is to critique the socially constructed and mediated experiences of people that may be disguised as natural or inevitable. The first principle, critical enlightenment, has as its goal uncovering the power relations that shape those experiences and revealing the distribution and operation of power and privilege (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). This revelation should explicate the consequences or outcomes of different practices and decisions and who benefits from their implementation. For example, up to 20% of people working in Canada are employed in regulated professions such as teaching and engineering (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003c). The practice of regulating some professions is designed to

protect the public by having practitioners meet certain criteria to maintain professional standards of practice. For some immigrants the consequence of this practice is their exclusion from professional practice because their qualifications are not recognized as equivalent to those accepted in Canada.

*Critical emancipation.* A second principle of critical theory is critical emancipation, which despite its pretentious label has the aim of furthering human agency through empowerment (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). According to Lather (1991), this notion of empowerment is a phenomenon that occurs through analyses of “systemic oppressive forces” (p. 4) that influence the conditions under which people live, rather than something that arises from a personal sense of feeling power and acting assertively. Lather criticizes the position some researchers take in trying to bring emancipation to “the as-yet-unliberated” subject of the research (p. 16). The role of the researcher is taken up later in this chapter where related issues of positioning and voice are discussed. My plan to present the study findings to interested research participants and to staff and clients of at least one resettlement agency are attempts to put the principle of critical emancipation into practice.

*Re-examining economics.* The third principle of critical theory is an acknowledgment that economics plays a more nuanced role in people’s lives than originally articulated through deterministic Marxist thinking. A recognition that economic circumstances and policies vary in their impact is relevant to the participants in this research. Although the financial status of most research participants changed from when they were middle-income earners in their home countries, there are circumstances other than income that contribute to their present life circumstances. Here Smith’s (1999) concept of ruling relations is applicable because it is

broad enough to include but not focus exclusively on economics as one of many influences that shape people's lives. Smith defines ruling relations as "that internally coordinated complex of administrative, managerial, professional, and discursive organization that regulates, organizes, governs, and otherwise controls our societies" (1999, p. 49). My choosing to begin with women's experiences and then explicate some of the larger social issues that affect their lives reflects the influence of Smith's feminist method of inquiry on this research. Rather than using Smith's institutional ethnography method, I focus on the actualities of women's everyday lives and then use notions of capital, originating with Bourdieu, to examine the external forces shaping their lives. I suggest that Bourdieu's concept of habitus, introduced later in this chapter, is not incompatible with Smith's ruling relations. Both Bourdieu and Smith borrowed from traditional Marxist formulations as they developed their ideas. Smith cites Marx's view of social relations as "material states of dependence" between individuals and capital but thinks this perspective is too deterministic (Marx, 1973, p. 163-4 cited in Smith, 1999, p. 77). In developing her concept of ruling relations, Smith rejects limiting social relations to market forces because this fails to capture the complexity of people's lives, which are 'ruled' beyond the forces of economics alone. Smith begins with the multitude of everyday social relations that people engage in and from there attempts to explicate the textually-based ruling relations. By 'text' Smith means "written, printed, or otherwise inscribed words and images" (1999, p. 33) to which people are subjected and but do not necessarily recognize as they go about their lives. For example, 'immigrant woman' is an image that forms part of a discourse and also influences written policies that directly affect the lives of women who are immigrants. The determination of

equivalency of credentials constitutes another objectified text that becomes part of the ruling relations in which people function. The text-mediated ruling relations coordinate the activities that people engage in and the concept is briefly discussed here as it fits with the critical perspectives approach that influences this research.

*Critiquing methods and their roles in research.* The fourth principle of critical theory identifies society's preoccupation with issues around methods and techniques as an oppression of "instrumental/technical rationality" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 282). Kincheloe and McLaren argue that this over-emphasis on procedural issues comes at the expense of the value and reason why specific research is undertaken. In making this criticism their own emphasis on the values that influence critical theory research is revealed. I will take up Kincheloe and McLaren's concern about the oppressive features of a procedures orthodoxy by describing in some detail how other scholars approach validity. At the heart of this critique is the issue of validity in qualitative research: what it is, how to assess it, and its relationship to truth and value claims. Scholars from nursing and education offer responses that address Kincheloe and McLaren's concerns.

Sandelowski (1993) proposes that validity is an inherently theoretical issue that cannot be resolved through a set of methods. Research designs may incorporate methods such as member validation to enhance rigor and form a basis for later claims of validity. Sandelowski argues that an overly rigid adherence to these kinds of strategies is actually antithetical to the essence of qualitative research and suggests more of a positivist ontology. Instead of approaching validity from a highly technical or methods perspective, Sandelowski suggests that researchers trust "...contextually grounded linguistic and interpretive practices"

(1993, p. 2). While not renouncing the use of methods that help answer the research question and make visible the investigative process, Sandelowski cautions researchers to choose their methods judiciously.

Lather (1991) writes from a feminist poststructuralist perspective in education and offers several ways of dealing with validity, three of which are described here. These address Kincheloe and McLaren's (2000) criticism of 'instrumental or technical rationality.' Construct validity refers to the extent to which research works explicitly with theory; challenging, refining and building it. Lather suggests that a "systematized reflexivity" (p. 67) may be used to assess how data have modified a priori theory. Face validity is concerned with whether the subjects of research can recognize their experiences in the research. Lather suggests that researchers periodically return "...description, emerging analysis and conclusions back through at least a subsample of respondents" (1991, p. 67). Like Sandelowski, Lather expresses reservations about the drawbacks of this approach which comprise member-checks but acknowledges the narrative phenomena of people telling their stories differently at various points and rejecting earlier versions as untrue. Catalytic validity is compatible with the principle of critical emancipation and it refers to the use that participants can make of the research findings in understanding their lives differently and therefore having some power to make changes through this realization. Sandelowski's and Lather's ideas about validity that I have briefly introduced here reflect the importance of consistency between what can be understood, how researchers approach the question, and the relationship they maintain with the participants. This is a more difficult endeavor than the routine integration of a set of methods designed to increase the validity of research findings.

*The role of hegemony.* A rethinking of hegemony and ideology, and their relationship to each other, make up the fifth and sixth principles of critical theory. Similar to their current rejection of economic factors as determinants in people's lives, Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) take a more nuanced approach to how power relations form and maintain hegemony in society. They draw upon a Gramscian approach that views power and inequalities as constituents of oppression that are activated through social and cultural institutions rather than by physical force. For example, there are barriers to accepting education and work credentials of immigrants from non-English speaking countries that result in inequality of opportunities. These barriers function together with the preference for Canadian work experience and racialization of certain groups of immigrants to produce oppressive and inequitable conditions. These conditions are disguised as normal and for the public good to regulate, for example, who is eligible to practice in certain professions. Kincheloe and McLaren suggest that understanding the complexity of hegemony and challenging it requires careful analysis of many sectors of society, even the ones that researchers inhabit. The belief that oppression is constructed by more subtle means i.e., without physical coercion and maintained through societal consensus reflects the manner in which I use this concept in my research.

*Ideology and culture.* Critical theory's interest in ideology stems from its pervasive role in creating "...the cultural forms, the meanings, the rituals and the representations that produce consent" to maintain the hegemony (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 283). This refers to the ways that societal processes work together over time, and beneath one's conscious awareness, as ideology that constructs a pervasive view or reality. My choice to



study resettlement, women, and leisure through the lens of critical perspectives directs me to question the ideology that conceptualizes culture as a reified, static form that can be imported and function intact within Canada.

*Language and power.* The seventh principle of critical theory involves the discursive power of language and its role in constructing a view of the world rather than describing exactly what is observed and experienced. Here Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) reveal the values inherent in critical theory and that the methodology must reflect efforts to reduce power differentials between the researcher and the researched. Discursive power is concerned with issues such as who is allowed a voice through being a subject of research and how voices of the subjects and the researchers are constructed in the text. As well, investigating discursive power reveals who has the authority to determine when the discourse is considered complete.

Discursive power may be understood by examining how difference is conceptualized and represented over time and place. For example, the emergence of the concept 'immigrant woman' may be traced back through representations in the popular media, academic research, Canadian government policies and several interlocking discourses (Carty & Brand, 1993; Ng, 1993). While resistance to these discourses exists, 'immigrant woman' takes on a meaning that individuals and groups can manipulate to retain their power, conceal inequalities, and thus maintain the status quo in society.

In situating myself in opposition to that discourse, the discursive power of language becomes important and evident in how I represent the lives of the women who participated in this research. This brings the theoretical concerns of critical perspectives directly into the act

of writing this thesis. Alcoff (1991) identifies the danger of speaking on behalf of others who are in some ways 'different' than the researcher and inadvertently promoting an oppressive research tradition. It is challenging to represent plausibly experiences and situations beyond one's own; it is a task I take seriously but will not do perfectly. I agree with Alcoff's rejection of relativistic positions as evidenced by this comment, "Acknowledging the problem of speaking for others cannot result in eliminating a speaker's responsibility" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 17). It is my responsibility to contribute to scholarship that challenges the concept of immigrant woman and moves participants and researchers alike towards some form of emancipation.

I have used Kincheloe and McLaren's (2000) views on critical theory to discuss concepts underpinning critical perspectives and theoretical issues that have shaped this research from its inception to its completion. My use of the word 'principles' for these ideas does not imply that they constitute an orthodoxy but is used as a way to present current thinking on critical theory. The use of accompanying examples for most of these principles is an attempt to show their applicability. I turn my attention now to Bourdieu's theory of capital and identify linkages between Kincheloe and McLaren's view of critical theory and Bourdieu's ideas.

The principles of critical enlightenment and emancipation are particularly relevant to Bourdieu's initial thesis of cultural capital. These principles identify the issue of power relations and clarify empowerment as a process of analyzing the role that systemic or institutionalized practices play in reproducing the dominant culture. Enlightenment, in the form of uncovering social life through examining the social relations that may appear as

natural or inevitable, is of interest to Smith (1999) as well as Bourdieu. In Bourdieu's writing culture is defined as "a system of symbolism and meaning" (Lin, 2001, p. 14) that is perpetuated through its presentation as normative. Bourdieu proposes that prevailing culture and societal values are reproduced, most clearly through schooling, to serve the needs of the dominant class. Schooling and other institutionalized practices may be interpreted as vehicles for maintaining the relations of power through systematic but not overtly coercive means. This 'misrecognition' of the dominant society's values as objective facts contributes to what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic violence' and is unwittingly engineered by individuals such as teachers and parents who are in positions of power (Lin, 2001). The resulting internalized process contributes to what Bourdieu terms habitus, defined as "a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. . . . which are regular without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any rule" (Lin, 2001, p. 12). Because these ways of being, thinking and acting operate subconsciously, having been successfully internalized over time, individuals have a tendency to remain uncritical of their positions in the social and economic system, which serve to uphold the dominant class. Thus, the issue of hegemony that Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) raise has currency with Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and its contribution to the reproduction of culture to benefit those in relative and often real, power. The forms of capital – cultural, linguistic, economic, and social – that Bourdieu writes about are useful analytic concepts. They offer a means by which to view immigrants as agents making choices within social relations and also identifying when and how policies and practices outside of their control shape their lives.

In research involving resettlement, social capital is most often used as a conceptual underpinning for social cohesion (see for example, Waters & Teo, 2003). Social cohesion as an analytic concept is being refined and used by research networks that influence policy at the federal level of Canadian politics. Social cohesion refers to the process through which community is developed via shared values, reciprocity and equality among Canadians and has also been applied to international contexts (Waters & Teo, 2003). The literature on social cohesion, while emerging from notions of capital, is not directly related to my use of these concepts. In the next section I describe the role that ethnography has played in developing and conducting this research.

### *Ethnographic Concepts*

In keeping with my aim to have compatibility among the ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects of this study, the other primary influence on this research comes from ethnographic traditions. Although I do not claim that this research is an ethnography, I have been guided by the more agreed-upon features that define most ethnographic endeavors. An ethnography offers a descriptive, interpretive account of a particular phenomenon about which little is known (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). The descriptive aspect of ethnography focuses on the contexts of participants' lives, which is a strong feature of my study. Researchers situating themselves in the ethnographic tradition work with data that Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) call "unstructured data...that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories" (p. 248). This guides me to ground the interpretation of the findings in the data and apply theoretical constructs to help explain those data. Admittedly, the theoretical constructs chosen are somewhat

influenced by my occupational therapy orientation and identity. I am mindful of Lather's (1991) statement that "The search is for theory that grows out of context-embedded data, not in a way that automatically rejects a priori theory, but in a way that keeps preconceptions from distorting the logic of evidence" (p. 62). I am interested in how people use time in their daily lives and the larger issues arising from interactions with their environments, both of which are concerns to occupational therapy and relevant to the critical theories I use. These 'sensitizing concepts of theory' require acknowledgment because they form part of my occupational therapy theoretical framework. In a way that extends Lather's thinking about how to work with theory and data, Dyck (2000) states that sensitizing concepts of theory serve to "Colour the lenses through which the researcher reads study data, informing interpretation in a way that allows them to confirm, refine or contest existing conceptualizations" (p. 86). Both of these perspectives reflect the ethnographic approach taken in this study and provide guidance for the interpretation that I produce.

Interpretation is an central feature of ethnography but differs from Schutz's *interpretivism*, which is a hallmark of phenomenology (Stanfield, 1994). Consistent with critical theories that guide this study, Stanfield argues that interpretivism carries with it the implicit assumption that people have unmitigated choice in constructing their identities and social reality. This is not the situation with many socially and politically oppressed people because "[interpretivism] ignores how much the voluntaristic presumptions of social constructions of reality are very much notions of social privilege" (1994, p. 180). In place of interpretivism, I have drawn on concepts from the critical theories described earlier to make sense of women's leisure participation and what it means to them. The following discussion

about my role as the researcher reflects the theoretical perspectives I have presented as the organizing framework for this research.

### **The Researcher's Role in the Research**

#### *Reflexivity*

Critical theory methodology directs researchers to design and conduct research that addresses certain concepts reflecting their values (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). Reflexivity is central to a critical theorist's project as it provides a means by which to examine the process of the research and determine how power has been articulated in relationship with the participants (Dyck, Lynam & Anderson, 1995). The reflexive process makes the researcher visible in the research. This visibility constitutes a stand against neutrality that is essential, given the researcher's role as the instrument of research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Reflexivity may be seen as calibrating the instrument and contributing to the trustworthiness of the research. The following definition is presented to clarify the topic and focus this discussion. As an alternative to looking for 'bias,' Carpenter and Hammell (2000) propose that qualitative researchers address reflexivity which in their definition "...entails articulation of the deep-seated (but often poorly recognized) views and judgements that affect the research topic, including a full assessment of the influence of the researcher's background, perceptions, and interests in the research process" (p. 113). Field notes, informal analytic memos, a research journal and discussions with colleagues and committee members contributed to my reflexive process. The issues that I discuss involve how my positioning and the representation of women's voices reveal something about the relations of power between myself and the participants.

*Positioning the Researcher*

I became interested in how resettlement influences women's leisure through professional concerns and the personal experience of immigrating to Canada. All my grandparents immigrated to the United States in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. My sister emigrated to Northern Ireland at the same age, 24, as I came north to Canada. I have been curious to understand how people go about reconstructing their lives in a foreign country and finding out what affects different resettlement experiences. I immigrated with English as my first language, a job offer based on recognition of my professional qualifications, and a belief that life on Canada's west coast would be substantially similar to life on the coast of California. Despite the social, political and cultural differences I encountered, my transition into Canadian life was relatively easy. The absence of time-consuming adjustments and family responsibilities gave me considerable free time and resources to explore and participate in leisure activities. The privilege that my position in life affords me has not gone unnoticed.

I have a long-standing curiosity about what factors and circumstances contribute to how people use their non-work time. In previous research I focused on how a board and care home environment influenced the likelihood of people with chronic schizophrenia to plan and enact activities in the proximal and more distant future (Suto & Frank, 1994). My experiences as an occupational therapy educator have reinforced a particular interactive view of the environment, the individual and their impact on occupational performance. The identification of leisure participation as an important feature of a person's life emanates from occupational therapy beliefs and subjective reports from clients and patients. The tradition in occupational therapy of focusing on individuals functioning in specific contexts implicitly

guided my analysis in the early stages of the research. From the development of the research questions and the interview schedule, to the choice of an analytic approach used in Chapter Seven, my professional interests provided a particular lens that may be traced to my position as an occupational therapist. My professional background and identity shaped what I chose to attend to and the analytic approach that is compatible with the interests of occupational therapy.

Occupational therapy lacks sufficient research about leisure to support its position in conceptual models that are used to guide practice. These models propose that the environment, broadly defined, shapes (and is shaped by) occupation. The unproblematized approaches taken by researchers in leisure studies, however, do little to explicate the concept of environment. In particular, little research exists that addresses the kinds of resettlement issues that women who immigrate to Canada face, which are likely to affect leisure time and activities. Thus my professional interests, positioning and personal experiences came together to influence this research.

In the context of her research with people who have high lesion tetraplegia, Hammell (2000) addresses personal and political positioning from the perspective of the choices the researcher makes. Consistent with notions of empowerment introduced earlier in this paper Hammell suggests “Perhaps it is not enough to state our personal and social positioning – where we are ‘coming from’ – but also our chosen political/philosophical positioning: where are we going *to*?” (p. 63). I begin by assessing how multiple identities that reflect where I was coming from influenced the research relationship and data collected. Some of the obvious differences in our social positions involve employment status, English language ability,



income level, racialization as a woman of Colour or white woman, marital status, and raising children or being childless. My position as a 'white' university instructor doing leisure research brought some authority to the recruitment requests, especially since university study was an experience shared among the participants.

In my larger project, pursuit of a doctoral degree at mid-life, I presented myself as a learner and explicitly stated my interest in creating knowledge that was grounded in women's experiences. Although I do not agree with 'woman' as a universal concept, I do think that gender relations work with other subject identities to create similar experiences for groups of women who resettle in Canada. In her discussion about feminist ethics of research Finch (1993) argues that representation of women's stories must consider "the collective interests of women" (p. 176) as well as the more traditional ethical concerns of confidentiality and anonymity. My political positioning directs me towards producing research that enlightens and emancipates, in part through educating occupational therapists to analyze people's situations from a critical theory perspective. My communication of these plans, along with a non-judgmental semi-structured interview, encouraged women to share their thoughts and feelings openly.

Differences and similarities between myself and the participants were acknowledged openly at times, for example when we discussed our respective educational achievements and immigration experiences. I believe these kinds of discussions enhanced the data collection and research relationship, and offer one example. One research participant, Dolores<sup>2</sup>, explained her need for connection with others through touch and sharing feelings and

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<sup>2</sup> All of the participants stated a preference for being addressed by their first names. The names of participants have been changed by the researcher to pseudonyms.

proposed that women were more similar to each other, than to men. Dolores said that women were “Cyclical and emotional and organized and anyway we have different feelings.” When I asked Dolores if these similarities made it easier for women to talk to each other she replied, “yes, yes absolutely...we feeling like woman...you speak to another woman and I can understand.” These comments support the concept that gender serves as a point of connection or an entree to disclosure. Some women may have withheld talking to me about experiences that they linked to racialization and their visible difference from European-Canadians. I present an instance in Chapter Seven, however, where Maria described a teacher who divided the class along colour lines. My positioning as it was presented and also interpreted by participants influenced the data collection, research relationship and, ultimately, the interpretation of the findings. The foregoing examination offers readers some basis upon which to assess how power was mediated between myself and the participants, and provides another means to judge the trustworthiness of the research. To conclude this section about my role in the research, I present my efforts to address reciprocity in the relationships with the participants.

### *Reciprocity*

One of the purposes of reciprocity is to create conditions conducive to empowerment. Following Lather’s (1991) interpretation of empowerment, it is taken to mean the process of discovering the many faces of oppression and analyzing how powerlessness can be changed through personal and collective action. This approach does not assume that the participants view themselves as, or indeed are, powerless and without agency within the research relationship. Instead it acknowledges that within the micro-politics of research power can be

seen to shift throughout the relationship even if the duration of the relationship is short and confined primarily to the interview context.

In addition to the issues of my position as an academic, a basic inequality between myself and the participants arose from my interviewer role which involved asking personal questions about their lives. When participants chose not to answer those questions, as they did in very few instances, I interpreted this as asserting some control over the interview. As well, participants had control over when to meet with me, how they wished to tell their stories, and if they chose to complete an activity log. These are not dramatic instances of power being contested and I acquiesced to whatever allowed the participants to want to be part of this study. I was dependent on their cooperation and sensitive to the difficulties of recruitment I had already experienced. Reciprocity remained an important issue for me and I engaged in three strategies that were designed to foster a sense of giving something back to the women who had generously discussed a part of their lives to me.

The first strategy involves my choice to conduct “an interactive, dialogic style of interview that requires self-disclosure on the part of the researcher” (Lather, 1991, p. 60). Using this type of interview helped to create more collaborative research relationships than hierarchical ones. In most cases, the interview transcripts reflect a guided conversational style proposed by Rubin and Rubin (1995). In my interview with Fereshteh, for example, we discussed American foreign policy in Iran, her opinion about what Iranians thought about Americans, and the role of women in Canada compared to Iran. I recognized that these issues influenced Fereshteh’s perspective of Canadian life and perhaps affected her view and

participation in leisure. Discussion of our feminist perspectives and my criticism of American foreign policy, however brief, revealed some mutual interests and ways of viewing the world.

Talk about the United States' involvement in other countries arose during an interview between one other participant, Rosa, and me. In both circumstances, these digressions seemed to flow naturally within the context of the interview and consisted of my disagreement with mainstream American news reporting about Iran and Guatemala, respectively. These comments seemed to build rapport between Fereshteh and me and encouraged her to compare her position as a woman in Canada ("...here is excellent") with the role of women in Iran. However, Fereshteh refuted my use of the word 'tradition' as part of what oppresses women in Iran and instead described their position as being 'forced.' Her clarification suggested that Fereshteh was willing to correct my misconceptions and at other times in the interview, she occasionally pointed out errors in my understanding her English. Our initial digression talking about politics may have encouraged Fereshteh's questions about my leisure activities. The presumption of some shared opinions of United States' foreign policy came into play when Fereshteh noted Iranians' anti-imperialist stance, which she did in the context of talking about having few foreigners with whom to practice speaking English.

During my interview with Rosa, descriptions of social and political life in Guatemala also arose but did not seem to compromise the ensuing dialogue. It was important to me that Rosa knew that I had some understanding of the American government's involvement in Guatemalan politics and, specifically, the civil war. I presumed that communicating some understanding would decrease any pressure Rosa might have felt to describe traumatic events

to me. Features of Guatemalan life were described occasionally during different points in the interview such as when Rosa explained aspects of Guatemalan society before the CIA incursion of 1954. My comments to Rosa supported her matter-of-fact descriptions of events during the civil war as they related to being outdoors alone, attending university and her family life. I consciously avoided making assumptions and believe that some shared understanding allowed me to view Rosa's comments about curfews and their effects differently than a researcher might without any knowledge of Guatemalan history.

My offering opinions and communicating some awareness of situations in Rosa's and Fereshteh's countries encouraged dialogue in these two instances without overstepping the boundaries that I perceived I should maintain in this project. Although I believe my contributions to the interviews had a positive effect on the research relationships, the absence of such comments within other interviews did not preclude a compatible, albeit limited, relationship between myself and the participants. In all of the interviews, the challenge of communicating effectively in English impeded the development of an easy dialogic style to varying degrees. I monitored the amount of self-disclosure (usually successfully) in hopes of building some reciprocity into the research relationship while ensuring that each participant remained the focus of her interview.

The second strategy for fostering a reciprocal relationship included my offering each woman a copy of her interview transcript and discussing my understanding of the findings. Only three participants took up this offer, perhaps because of the flatness of a transcript versus the dynamic nature of the actual interview. Reading in English is not always easy nor enjoyable for some participants. It is interesting that participants trusted me to use the

interview data without their reviewing it first. I anticipate that some of the women may find discussing the findings or reading a final report more useful to an increased understanding of their lives than reading the transcript.

A third attempt at reciprocity was my willingness to answer any questions and offer information about whatever the participants asked me. Information offered took the form of personal data that I felt comfortable sharing. The questions involved my marital status, whether I had children, where I lived before coming to Canada, and my leisure activities. I believe that participants asked about my leisure activities and what I thought about leisure personally to understand a Canadian's perspective of leisure better, and perhaps compare it to theirs. My stories of trips to Europe and daily commuting by bicycle seemed to match Isabelle's description of the 'competitive compulsion' that typifies many physical leisure activities in which Canadians engage.

Anderson (1991) proposed that the researcher's willingness to share information fosters the co-construction of knowledge, which in turn may alter the power differentials within research relationships. In her research with immigrant women who had diabetes, Anderson was asked and gave information helpful to the management of that illness and in doing this reflected the reciprocal nature of the relationship. My contribution differs in that the outcome of my reciprocal strategies, while not as significant as knowledge about chronic illness, helped women construct a different understanding of leisure. The dialogic nature of the interviews encouraged a give and take discussion of leisure that these women did not usually engage in but was relevant as they considered its impact on their health.

I provided other information that may have been helpful to the participants focused primarily on work. For example, Manuela and I discussed the process of her becoming qualified to teach elementary or high school in this province. I confirmed that the British Columbia Teachers' Federation would be a good place to get information and that credential evaluation was a key step in the process. When Dolores asked, "What do you recommend? Voluntary job here has a very good acceptance (acceptance?) acceptance," I was able to provide some clarification about the role that Dolores' volunteer work at the radio station may play in helping her obtain paid employment. I believe that these strategies that were initiated to create more reciprocal relationships and the opportunity to talk in a supportive interview setting were beneficial to the research participants. They gained a different understanding of leisure and the value of their contribution to the research was acknowledged.

The proof of how well I have represented women's stories and retained their voices lies in Chapters Five through Seven. I take seriously Anderson's (1991) cautionary message that "Research can serve to oppress women not only when the voices of women are stifled and edited out so as to conform to the scientific discourse, but also when women's knowledge is appropriated, and when research with women is not used for the betterment of their lives" (p. 118). My claims to enhancing women's empowerment are limited and I end this section with Isabelle's comments. In an e-mail message to clarify points in the interview Isabelle wrote: "I wish you the best and do thank you for this opportunity to SERIOUSLY THINK about leisure (who would ever do that otherwise?!), and help me recognize all of the

above. So I think you have helped me more than I have helped you. So be it! Such is the wisdom and justice of our God.”

### **Research Design and Methods**

Qualitative research requires that the project design be flexible enough to accommodate adaptations to the study as it progresses (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The inherent flexibility of this research design encourages the researcher to respond to emerging insights and unanticipated situations that influence, for example, access to participants and data collection techniques. In this section I describe how the participants were recruited and the specific data collection methods used. I discuss the strategies I used to address ethical concerns and the approach I took to data analysis. This chapter concludes with a brief critique of the research design.

#### *Recruitment of Participants*

While recruitment of research participants seldom proceeds as anticipated, it was particularly challenging in this project and warrants an in-depth discussion. I planned to interview married women between 25 and 45 years old who immigrated to Canada (between three and 10 years ago) after age 19 and felt comfortable speaking English. I set inclusion criteria that required research participants to be employed and have children living at home. My intent was to capture the thoughts and participation patterns of women who were actively pursuing integration into Canadian society but were not in the throes of the initial resettlement process. After unsuccessful attempts to recruit participants, I changed the age range and number of years in Canada criteria. I had not anticipated that women who attended



resettlement programs, where I hoped to recruit research participants, would have a particularly high level of education.

According to Statistics Canada 1996 Census of Population report, however, recent immigrant women have attained a higher level of education than their Canadian-born counterparts (Badets & Howatson-Leo, 1999). The 1996 Statistics Canada data defined recent immigrants as individuals who arrived in Canada between 1991 and the first four months of 1996. These data showed that 31% of recent immigrant women between the ages of 25-44 completed university. In contrast, 20% of Canadian-born women in the same age group completed university. If the research focus is on resettlement issues, and leisure participation is one of those issues, then the 'middle years' of resettlement are a suitable range to study.

This designation of time periods to describe different phases of resettlement may be traced to a 1952 United Nations Economic and Social Council document (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998). Beginning with acclimatization and proceeding to integration, key features of a proposed continuum are the gradual nature of resettlement and the complexity of issues contributing to the presumed goal of integration. A process of mutual engagement between host country members and new residents is identified as furthering integration, which involves participation in social, cultural and civic life. The 'middle years' are defined as three to 10 years after arrival and distinguish the acute period of arrival, which is characterized by issues of short-term adjustment such as finding housing and employment, from a longer time frame that does not have a temporal end point (Aroian, 1992; Rose, Carrasco & Charboneau, 1998). Researchers have used the categories 'early, middle, and late

resettlement' to speculate about how immigrants' needs change over time and to examine the role that social support plays in that process.

There are disadvantages to using time periods to characterize progress towards integration, the most obvious being the lack of indicators that constitute full integration (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998). Another problem is that proposed indicators suggest employment occurs during short-term integration whereas career progress occurs within long-term integration. This does not reflect the experiences that women may have, especially when they are fulfilling family responsibilities and may not be competent enough in English to advance in their careers. Although six participants in this research fit the 'middle years' category, the intent of my using this very general time frame was to recruit individuals who spoke sufficient English to participate in interviews and who were unlikely to be in the throes of early resettlement, typified by needs for basic information, housing and other forms of immediate aid.

Early in the research process, I selected three agencies to approach for assistance with my recruitment of participants. I decided on these agencies after discussions with my thesis committee members, and also directors of the Storefront Orientation Services (SOS), and the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia. My relationships with the South Asian Women's Centre, the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISS), and the Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC) began when I introduced myself and described my research plans to their program heads and executive directors.

I called the coordinator of the South Asian Women's Centre, and followed up our conversation with a letter describing my research. The coordinator wrote a letter in support of my research plan; however she was unable to find a time and place where I could meet a group of women to request their participation. The office was short-staffed and coordinator left her position shortly after we met. On the organization's cork board I left brightly-colored recruitment flyers that described the research and included my telephone number. Despite a new coordinator's interest in my research, I did not find participants through the South Asian Women's Centre.

I contacted the executive director of the Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of British Columbia. I sent a letter describing my research plan and met with the executive director to discuss if she could assist with my research. The following month I received her letter of support with an offer to help recruit participants. Between July and November, I met with the executive director again and had several cordial e-mail contacts. Due to staff cutbacks at ISS, I was unable to present my research plan to any women attending the programs. I wrote my contact information on several recruitment flyers and left them at ISS but this was an unsuccessful technique.

I repeated the process described above with the manager of counseling services at MOSAIC. The manager expressed enthusiasm for my research plan and wrote a letter of support, offering to assist with recruitment of participants. I then presented my research plan to 20 people at a MOSAIC staff meeting. I ended the presentation by distributing recruitment flyers and asking staff members to contact me if they had clients who would like to volunteer for my research. One staff person indicated her willingness to seek volunteers if I hired a

translator from MOSAIC for the interviews. Due to a lack of funding, I declined this offer. After another call to the manager, I stopped trying to recruit participants from MOSAIC.

After the recruitment difficulties described earlier and consultation with my research supervisor at the time, I broadened the age range in my sample to include women 20 to 55 years old and expanded the time since arrival. I then approached other organizations in the lower mainland that provide services to immigrant women, advertised the study through a local university research interest group, and approached the director of SOS. The university research interest group is made up of graduate students and faculty researchers who meet informally to discuss qualitative research issues. One member of this group sent my e-mail notice to an acquaintance and she agreed to participate in this study.

I recruited some research participants through the Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS). It is a non-profit community agency in Vancouver that offers women a number of programs related to resettlement issues. Staff members Sylvia Hesby, Linda Fung and Agnes Tang gave me opportunities to present my request for volunteers to women participating in the Building Bridges Program and the Lead Program. The objective of the Building Bridges Program is to educate women to become effective group facilitators. The requirements for women participating in this program are “at least an intermediate level of English; some experience working in a group or setting (in Canada or elsewhere); an awareness of the settlement and integration process; good interpersonal skills; the ability to make a commitment to twelve 3-hour classroom sessions; and a practicum placement of up to 20 hours” (Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, 2002). The Building Bridges Program I visited was held on weekday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 and accommodated approximately

14 participants. Women who meet the admission criteria may join the program at the beginning of a 12-week session. The decision to participate in the Building Bridges Program may be made any time after immigration.

In contrast to the Building Bridges Program, the PIRS Lead Program encourages participation and offers support. The web site describes this program as of interest to women who “have enough English to take part in group discussions; are interested in developing their leadership and group skills; are willing to share their experiences with others; have completed other programs and want further learning; [and] are able to commit to twenty-four 2 hour classroom sessions” (Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, 2002). This program was held twice weekly in the daytime and had about 12 participants.

My final research sample comprises 14 women whom I recruited through various immigrant services agencies and a few other sources. The decision about sample size was taken, in part, after recognizing that data from the later interviews had not revealed much that was new but confirmed earlier information (Sandelowski, 1995). Recruitment was particularly challenging because of initial difficulties locating volunteers through resettlement agencies, in part due to my lack of funds for translation services. I do not currently have any personal connections to organizations like churches, political groups or schools that might have provided some assistance with recruitment.

#### *Ethical Concerns and Informed Consent*

As I explained on the consent form (see Appendix B), ‘the purpose of this study is to discuss what you think about leisure and what meaning it has for you in Canada.’ The consent form asked volunteers to agree to participate in two interviews of 60 to 90 minutes

each, complete an activity log for one to two days, and make a total commitment of two and three hours, although they were able to withdraw at any time. I indicated on the consent form plans to audio tape the interviews, take written notes and arrange the session at a time and place of the participant's choice. On the consent form, I wrote that the participant could decline to answer some questions and that she could opt to end the interview at any time. I indicated my offer of a written transcript of the participant's interview and an opportunity to discuss the findings of the study after I completed the project. To address confidentiality, I provided a description of data handling strategies I expected to use: removing participant's names from written materials and storing coded data on computer disks, with back-up copies in a locked filing cabinet. I received a certificate of approval for this research from the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

An ethical concern that arose during the research process involves possible identification of some participants and their stories, by other participants if they read this thesis or a research report about this study. The combination of recruiting in the different PIRS programs, the diverse countries that the women came from, and the small size of the research sample contribute to the possibility of participants identifying co-group members of their program from the descriptions provided. Alternatively, another concern is that two participants in the research are friends; one recruited the other for this study. If either woman reads the research report, it may be possible to identify her friend. This specific concern was addressed by asking these two women to read the information pertinent to themselves and approve it for inclusion in this public document. Their decisions about which elements of

their story should be cut or at least masked were made knowing that other women in the research sample might read the thesis or another research report.

The likelihood of identification by co-study participants, after reports based on this research are written and distributed, is minimized by strategies taken to mask their identities. These strategies are detailed in Chapter Four. Thus, I have presented as few identifying details about the participants as possible to eliminate their recognition by others. I reviewed with some participants pages of text from the penultimate thesis to ensure that what I had written met their understanding of the confidentiality of the data. I asked each participant if she wished to have a copy of her interview transcript, which three women requested and received. At the request of two participants, I agreed to provide them with a final research report but not my thesis. When these participants read a research report, it is possible that they could identify their co-group members by recognizing familiar stories, if these details had ever been shared in the group. I consider this possibility slight due to the passage of time since the women were in the program together and the nature of the group's activities. It is unlikely that the participant, who reads a report a few years after her participation in a resettlement program, would retain enough detailed information about co-group members to identify them. I have given all participants pseudonyms to conceal their identities and address the confidentiality of data issue. I have reported the participants' demographic data accurately (see Chapter Four) to preserve the situated nature of this research but chose to present these data in a way that will not link specific information to any one individual. For example, I have provided the range of participants' ages, the types of work they did prior to immigration

and a range of their educational attainments. An exception to this strategy is the identification of each participant with her actual country of origin.

The second issue is one of timing and responsibility. I promised to send two participants copies of their transcripts and stated that this would occur within a few months. I sent copies of the interview transcripts to three participants in total. I sent one participant her transcript within two months of our interview. Due to a delay in the research process, I mailed the other two participants' transcripts almost a year later. Beyond the issues described, I am not aware of other ethical concerns.

### *Data Collection*

Data collection is a deceptive term that suggests a unilateral activity whereby the researcher objectively seeks and records data from an unnamed subject. I approached this phase of the research as a collaborative activity that required cooperation, patience and good humour between myself and the participants in our efforts to understand each other. The process of interviewing, issues with transcription and the use of activity logs are discussed in this section.

*Interviewing.* Interviews provide a means to create understandings between people and is a site for negotiating power between the researcher and the participant. Interviewing offers a way to realize the objective of critical theory research, that is, the creation of "a mutual, dialogic production of a multi-voice, multi-centred discourse" (Lather, 1991, p. 112). In this study, I used a semi-structured interview schedule with the 14 participants (see Appendix C). The questions I posed centred on each woman's daily activities, her ideas about



leisure including what activities are enjoyable, how leisure relates to health and differences in opportunities for leisure in Canada compared to her country of origin.

I wanted to give participants an opportunity to talk about what was important to them so I did not ask every participant all of the questions in the interview schedule. Unlike a more structured interviewing format, an ethnographic style interview develops a life of its own. There is no prescribed order of questions and some questions are not asked if they are answered within the interview. For example, the description of a typical day sometimes led the interview towards a discussion about the climate and environment in Canada, compared to the participant's home country. A rich description that exceeded the scope of any one question sometimes eliminated the need for a question from the interview schedule. The disadvantage of this style of interview was the tension between allowing participants to tell their stories with limited guidance from me, and recognizing that when I was less directive, I missed similar categories of data from each participant.

After several interviews and further reading, I added questions about work and home: 'In what ways do other responsibilities affect your doing what you like to do?' Probing questions often followed such as: 'Are you working in your chosen area? Why not? What's it like to not work in your profession? How is the combination of work and home life different in Canada?' To identify aspects of life that may affect how immigrant women view and use leisure I added: 'What is the most difficult adjustment to make, living here in Canada?' Other questions arose in response to individual interviews. I obtained participants' demographic information such as age, country of origin and years since arrival in Canada in various ways. I often asked about or confirmed their years since arrival in Canada and country of origin on

the telephone when I made the interview arrangements. I began most interviews by asking questions to obtain the same kind of information from all participants. I also asked the participants questions about their education and marital status within the context of the interviews. Sometimes it was unnecessary for me to ask direct questions because this information arose during the interview.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) propose that "In qualitative interviewing you listen so as to *hear the meaning* of what is being said" (p. 7). While I was often able to comprehend the meaning, this understanding came at the cost of some interruptions and the use of paraphrasing. Attempts to clarify literal meanings of words have been termed "conversational repairs" (p. 123) and they were necessary in varying amounts. In many instances, I needed to repeat words the women had used both to confirm for myself what they said and to clarify the audio tape for the person who transcribed it. These interruptions were an unfortunate outcome of requiring the participants to speak in English but did not seem to bother the women. Indeed most of these women thanked me for interviewing them and recognized our communication challenge due to different skills at using English.

I wanted interviewees to choose where the interview would take place because this provides participants with some control. These small gestures contributed to flattening the negative effects of the hierarchy that existed in the research relationships. When asked about where they would like to be interviewed, seven participants chose their homes. The other seven participants decided to be interviewed in coffee shops, a college classroom, a university conference room, a community centre and at my apartment. The ambient noise level in the coffee shops was high during two of the three interviews. The noise did not

compromise the quality of the interviews, all of which were audio taped. Nor did talking in a public place seem to inhibit any of the participants who chose this option, perhaps because of the noise! In one instance, we were interrupted twice by the server asking if we wanted more coffee but we quickly picked up the thread of our conversation when the server left. In every setting, the participants appeared comfortable and the public places chosen were ones that they frequented. The choice to do the interview in their homes allowed four women to supervise their children, albeit from another room.

*Activity logs.* Each participant received a recruitment flyer that asked them to 'briefly record your activities, routines, and responsibilities in a diary for one to two days. Use this information to participate in two informal discussions about leisure in your life' (See Appendix A). I had hoped that this information, and my verbal request to complete a daily log of activities for one or two days would provide sufficient encouragement for participants to complete this task but it did not. Only three of the 14 participants wrote activity logs although when I telephoned to arrange the interview, I often reminded them of this task. Only one person forgot the actual interview date but it is likely that reminders about the activity logs would have resulted in a greater number being written. In retrospect, I could have given each participant an activity log that was printed with half-hour increments and allowed enough space for them to write in their activities.

The information I gleaned from the completed activity logs was quite detailed and useful. One participant, Ling, completed an hourly log for an entire week and it allowed me to ask her to elaborate on some activities during our interview. All three activity logs contributed to my understanding of the data and in particular helped me substantiate one of

the themes I developed. Completed activity logs structured the interviews by providing a starting point for our conversations. The absence of activity logs sometimes compromised my understanding of a participant's precise daily activities.

*Transcription issues.* I chose verbatim transcription of the interviews to create an accurate record of how the participants described their opinions, feelings and experiences. This style of transcription was time-consuming but ensured that I did not judge and then discard data that were presumed to be unimportant prior to the data analysis process. I provided instructions for the transcriptionist explaining how to record hesitations, laughter, sighs, interruptions and other forms of communication that I wanted to preserve.

I anticipated transcribing the interviews myself but problems arose when recruitment strategies suddenly bore fruit. I then felt a need to interview the women who volunteered within a short period of time as I was concerned that delays might prompt a change of heart. This decision, and my intent to transcribe the interviews myself, combined with work commitments created a backlog of audio tapes in need of transcription. If I had analyzed the first few interviews sooner I could have posed more focused questions to participants whom I interviewed later in the project. I listened to most of the audiotapes prior to interviews with these participants and identified topic areas to pursue. The accented English created some difficulty for the woman who I paid to transcribe the interviews. Without the context of the interview to refer to, there were gaps in the transcription of some participant's interviews. Despite having been part of the interview, I was unable to identify some of the recorded words but did perceive the overall meaning. I transcribed five of the interviews, listened to

each audio tape and corrected all of the transcripts. My involvement with transcription formed an initial part of the data analysis stage of the study.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis refers to how I made sense of the data arising primarily from interviews with the women in this study. In Chapter One I identified four questions that guided me in answering the main research question. Through the analytic process I realized that the data were insufficient for me to respond equally to these questions. Specifically my discussion in Chapter Eight regarding the question, ‘How do women think that their leisure experiences affect their health?’ is briefer than I had anticipated. This question receded from view and became less important as the research progressed. The result is a disjuncture between the question about health and leisure posed in Chapter One and my subsequent findings. The strength of the data I gathered relevant to the other three questions that guided my study resulted in their becoming more central to the research and allowed me to discuss them in greater depth within the final chapter.

Only in recounting the research endeavor does data analysis fit neatly into one section, when in fact much of the research process involves some level of analytic thinking. There are two aspects of the data analysis process that I describe here: the steps and methods followed and the circuitous paths to a final interpretation. Mauthner and Doucet (1998) make this distinction in their illumination of the thinking processes that occur throughout data analysis but are seldom delineated in texts. They state: “Perhaps data analysis is also difficult to articulate because in doing so we are directly confronted with the subjective, interpretive nature of what we do – having to interpret respondents’ words in some way, while realizing

that these words could be interpreted in a multitude of ways" (p. 122). I begin by describing methods associated with analysis and conclude by discussing the compatibility between theoretical perspectives presented earlier and the concepts that I use in the analysis.

As I left most interview sessions, I tape recorded my thoughts and feelings about each interaction while driving home. I wrote additional notes after most interviews and these, along with transcripts of the one to two pages of audio taped impressions, formed my field notes. I often listened to the taped interview soon after it occurred and made additional notes into an inconsistently recorded research journal. Hearing the interviews a second time allowed me to reflect on what the participants said and use this knowledge to modify questions in future interviews. Listening to the length and complexity of some of my sentences during the earlier interviews encouraged me to modify my interviewing style. Specifically, I decreased the amount of time I spoke during an interview, gave shorter explanations and tried to ask single, open-ended questions. After listening to the interviews, I wrote one-page interview summaries that identified topics, the interpersonal flavour of the interview, and ideas for possible themes.

I used a low-level coding approach on the computer to mark up the transcript data, focusing on sentences and paragraphs of text. Twenty-two codes formed my files and were highly descriptive rather than analytic. Examples of the codes included: work, friends, TV, solitary free time activities, health and education. The practice of asking myself questions such as: 'how does she describe this...?' and, 'what is this referring to?' helped identify low level codes. A year ago I developed a thematic analysis that formed part of a book chapter based on this study (Suto, 2004). I have since refined that thematic analysis.

The thematic analysis provided one view of the data but I aimed for a higher level of analysis by drawing on concepts that helped to situate the findings theoretically. Writings from critical theorists offered some guidance to the selection of these concepts as did further review of government publications related to immigration. I used Bourdieu's (1991) writings on capital to structure the conceptual analysis; his ideas have been successfully used by others to study aspects of immigration and resettlement (Boyd, 1999; deVries, 1999). The concepts I decided on arose primarily from extensive re-reading of the literature I had, obtaining new resources and trying out different ideas. Working with concepts of capital offered a way to uncover the larger issues that are likely to influence the lives of many immigrant women. My objective was to describe the very specific experiences and circumstances of these women in ways that allowed for some generalizability of the concepts.

In this chapter I have described the methodology and methods used to conduct this research. Concepts from critical perspectives are positioned front and centre because they guided much of my thinking throughout this project. I have made transparent the difficulties and successes I experienced with recruitment and data collection to provide a context for the completed research. While the challenges loomed large at times, the more important goal of describing the women's stories helped me persevere.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

In this chapter, I introduce the 14 research participants. The profiles summarize my relationship with each woman and provide descriptions of each participant's day to day activities, including leisure. The intent of these profiles is to create a snapshot that documents a particular time and place within the resettlement process. To mask participants' identities, some details have been altered such as the number of their children or the exact nature of their employment. If a participant attended a resettlement program, it is not named nor are the months that she participated stated. These changes do not affect the themes or the subsequent analysis. To reduce further the likelihood that women in this research could be identified, I provide information about the participant sample as a whole rather than, for example, linking age or arrival date in Canada to each specific woman. I have identified each participant with her country of origin, as this is central to their identities. I have given each participant a pseudonym, using a popular name from the country of origin. Table 1 summarizes the age range of participants, their countries of origin, their education prior to immigration, their previous work, and the years since their arrival in Canada.

Table 1

### Participants' Demographic Data

Ages	31 to 56 years old
Countries of origin	Bosnia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, Russia, and Taiwan
Education	1 year of university to post-graduate degrees and diplomas
Previous work	bank officer, businessperson, designer, engineer, teacher, psychologist, social worker, and financial systems analyst
Years since arrival in Canada	3 years or fewer: 8 women. More than 3 years: 6 women



## Introducing the Participants

### *Isabelle*<sup>3</sup>

#### Research relationship with Isabelle

I conducted our first 90 minute interview at the School of Rehabilitation Sciences in a private conference room. A church library was the setting for a second 45 minute interview. During both interviews Isabelle expressed interest in the topic and answered my questions thoughtfully. Isabelle's warmth and willingness to talk contributed to conversational interviews that both of us appeared to enjoy. I used my semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix C) for the first interview and questions arising from the first interview focused our second discussion. Isabelle's comments in response to my initial questions often led us onto related topics. For example, a description of Isabelle's work day elicited a brief discussion about mid-life as a time of increased interest in spiritual matters.

Occasionally Isabelle asked me questions such as if I had children, which I answered. I shared personal information within the context of the interview, for example my Catholic background. This limited self-disclosure meant that Isabelle did not have to explain Catholic rituals that her family engages in. At the end of the first interview, Isabelle asked me several questions about leisure and my own life. Two hours after the second interview, Isabelle sent me a long e-mail with her final thoughts about leisure. Beyond the two interviews, our relationship was limited to several e-mail messages. After the second interview Isabelle forwarded my recruitment flyer to some acquaintances with an accompanying message. The

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<sup>3</sup> All of the participants stated a preference for being addressed by their first names. This preference is reflected in the pseudonyms assigned by the researcher to the participants (and their children).

message read: 'If you are able, would you please help Melinda by volunteering yourself and/or by forwarding the call for volunteers to others? It is a fun interview, and she is more than accommodating schedule-wise, but she desperately needs some warm bodies. Thanks.'

#### Day to day activities

##### Weekdays

Isabelle gets up at 6:05 and dresses for work. Then she prepares the family's lunches before taking a bus to work. During the long bus ride, Isabelle either catches up on work-related reading or reads for pleasure. Isabelle eats breakfast at her computer in her office and then works from eight until four-thirty. While answering e-mail, Isabelle eats her lunch.

Around 6:00, Isabelle cooks dinner or helps her husband if he is already preparing the meal. The family eats together around 6:15. After dinner Isabelle cleans the kitchen, tidies the house, and helps her children with their homework. The family gathers together nightly to say the rosary between 7:30 and 8:30. Each family member leads a decade of the rosary and gives an 'intention,' which means praying for something specific. On a typical week night, Isabelle's children get ready for bed around 9:00. Isabelle gets into bed and starts reading around that time and is often joined by her youngest son, who brings his books to read. Around 10:00 'it's lights out' and everyone in the family goes to sleep.

##### Weekends

On weekends Isabelle stays in bed until 8:30 and then makes her children waffles or another special treat. Saturday is usually the day Isabelle does household chores which include laundry and housecleaning. The activities of the weekend vary but Isabelle said that,

'sometimes all I do is cook. Like three or four meals for the whole week.' Occasionally Isabelle does chores on Sunday and relaxing activities on Saturday.

Each Sunday morning the family attends church and afterwards Isabelle cooks a hot lunch. On alternate Sundays in the afternoons, the family participates in a religious organization affiliated with the Catholic church and later they socialize over homemade food. Later on Sunday afternoon, Isabelle and her husband spend two hours shopping at Canadian Superstore. Other activities that fill Isabelle's weekend are playing with her children, reading, and sending e-mails to family members.

### ***Graciela***

#### Research relationship with Graciela

Graciela received a recruitment flyer from the program director of a resettlement agency. During my telephone conversation to explain the research further, Graciela seemed friendly and volunteered eagerly. By mutual agreement, our interview took place at a busy Bread Garden restaurant near Graciela's home. Graciela greeted me with a wide smile and appeared happy to meet me. After I bought our coffees, we settled into a corner of the coffee shop where our 90 minute interview proceeded uninterrupted.

The interview proceeded in a comfortable, conversational manner interspersed with occasional laughter. Graciela spoke English with a strong Spanish accent and at times words were out of order in her sentences. Although I understood everything Graciela said during the interview, some words could not be transcribed from the audio tape. Graciela answered all my questions, which focused mainly on family life and generally followed the semi-structured interview schedule. At the close of the interview, Graciela said she had enjoyed

talking to me. I called Graciela a year after the first interview to chat with her. We talked on the phone for 10 minutes and Graciela responded warmly to my questions about her family.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

Graciela's husband leaves for work before Graciela is up to fix breakfast for her daughter Virginia. Before Graciela drops Virginia off at child care (two days a week) around 9:00, she plays with her daughter and tidies up the apartment. A visiting niece looks after Virginia the other two days, when Graciela is working. When Graciela returns home around 4:00, they eat the main meal of the day together. Graciela's husband joins them for a light supper around 7:00, before Virginia goes to sleep. Later each evening, Graciela cooks the meal for the following afternoon.

In between these routines there is grocery shopping, teaching Virginia numbers and letters, playing with her, and doing housework. Graciela vacuums, does the laundry, mops and cleans the basement suite in which her family lives. Fridays often find mother and daughter at the mall, eating cinnamon rolls and drinking hot chocolate. Or they may visit friends who live in a large house and whose children are Virginia's playmates. On warm dry days, Graciela plays outdoors with Virginia in the local park. In the winter, Graciela avoids letting Virginia go out in the damp, cold weather any more than is necessary.

#### Weekends

Graciela's weekend begins when she gets up around 9:00 and cooks a hot Mexican-style breakfast, which the family eats together. She usually organizes doing the housework on the weekdays explaining that, 'I try to relax and rest on the weekends. And it's a reason that

sometimes I don't have enough time to make exercise during the week because I try to, during the week, I cook I clean...' After playing with her daughter, the family often goes swimming at a community centre or visits a toy store where Virginia plays. Saturday afternoons around 3:00, the family eats lunch out or they return home to the apartment and Graciela cooks. Any socializing happens on Saturdays with other families who have children Virginia's age. Sometimes the family rents videos; one for Virginia and another for Graciela and her husband to watch. When Graciela's mother visited, the couple went out to dinner or to the cinema several times but now they stay home in the evenings. Graciela stated that there are few places for families to do activities together that are open later on weekend evenings. The nearby mall closes at 5:30 or 6:00 at night.

On Sunday mornings the family goes to Mass together and then eats breakfast at Denny's or IHOP. The remainder of Sunday is devoted to the three family member spending time together. Watching television, playing with Virginia and talking are among the other activities Graciela described for a typical Sunday.

### ***Rosa***

#### **Research relationship with Rosa**

Rosa and I met after she received my research recruitment flyer from an acquaintance. The interview was held in Rosa's apartment. Before the interview got underway Rosa asked: 'are you going to ask me questions and I'm gonna answer these? Or do you just want my whole idea at the beginning and then you're gonna ask me questions?' After determining that either process was acceptable to Rosa, I began by asking her to describe a usual weekday.

Rosa's question typified her interaction with me: straightforward and friendly. I asked questions from the semi-structured interview schedule and Rosa described two typical days.

Rosa's English was usually easy to understand and she did not indicate any difficulty understanding me. There were a few times when I interrupted Rosa and some of her words were unclear on the audiotape. Rosa declined my offer to send her a copy of the interview transcript and the research findings. Except for a call to Rosa several months ago to provide an update on my research, our relationship was limited to one interview.

#### Day to day activities

##### Weekdays

From Monday to Thursday, there is little variation to the family's routine. After showering and dressing, Rosa helps her children get dressed and ready for child care and school. The children watch the Magic School Bus on television while their father cooks breakfast for the family. After 8:30 when they have finished breakfast, Rosa's husband drives the family to various locations within a 15 minute commute. Alicia is dropped off before her school starts at 9:00 and then Beatrice goes to daycare nearby. Rosa and her husband drive together to Vancouver's downtown eastside and begin their work days at 9:30. Rosa describes her job as having flexible hours that allow her to take the children to appointments and also make work phone calls at home.

Rosa and her husband usually leave work at 5:45 and drive across town to pick up their children. The evening routine starts as Rosa bathes the girls and her husband cooks dinner. Rosa seldom cooks but does all the housework, helps the girls with their homework and gets them ready for bed. Homework is usually completed before dinner. The children

watch a Spanish-language soap opera after dinner and Rosa puts them into bed around 9:00. This routine varies when Rosa's children play with other children who live in their apartment complex. In the evenings and on weekends, Rosa reads and watches TV. She reads for pleasure or if she needs specific information, for example, learning about dogs because Alicia wants a dog.

Neither Rosa nor her husband works on Fridays. Rosa uses this time to do housework and they may run errands, attend appointments and do other tasks while Beatrice is in school. After Rosa and her husband pick Beatrice up from school around 3:00 the children play until dinner time. Then the usual week night activities begin, with the addition of Rosa playing card or spelling games with Beatrice and Alicia on Friday nights.

#### Weekends

On the weekends, Rosa's family gets up later and, while the children play in the toy room or on the patio, Rosa's husband cooks breakfast. Later, on Saturdays, the family goes grocery shopping together. In the summer, they often go out for ice cream. Since Alicia has asked to get a dog, the family has spent several Saturdays walking dogs at the Vancouver pound to help them decide whether to acquire a pet. Sometimes on the weekend, the family goes window shopping at IKEA or a mall. Other days find them visiting, taking one of their girls to a birthday party or having children over to play with their girls. Rosa's husband has the midday meal prepared around three o'clock and the family always eats together. Dinner is usually around 8:30.

Unless it is sunny and warm, Rosa does not like being outside or having her children play outside. She limits outdoor activities because of her own health problems and her

daughter Alicia's history of a serious illness. In the summer, Rosa's husband drives the family to a park in North Vancouver and occasionally to Whistler. Typically, Rosa and her husband have time alone when the girls are playing with their friends in the apartment complex.

### *Vesna*

#### Research relationship with Vesna

Vesna and I met through one of the women's resettlement programs in Vancouver. We arranged an interview date over the telephone but when I arrived at her apartment for the interview a few weeks later, Vesna had forgotten our appointment. We rescheduled the interview but it was postponed once again when Vesna called to inform me that she had to teach. When we finally met for the interview, Vesna said that she was happy to help me with the research. Our experiences of being teachers helped us establish rapport. My knowledge of the former Yugoslavia, gained through a trip there, my reading and stories from Croatian relatives, contributed positively to our interaction. Vesna's lively, descriptive way of speaking at length resulted in a conversational, one hour interview in which she explained a typical day for her. Vesna was seldom at a loss for words and demonstrated a very good command of English. At the close of the interview, Vesna welcomed me to drop over for coffee and a social visit sometime, which I did not do. Vesna declined my offer of a written transcript of our interview. After that interview ended, we discussed having seen a film about Bosnians and Serbs in Canada, which was written and directed by a friend of Vesna's. My last visit with Vesna was at her home and I asked her to review what I had written about her,



to ascertain if confidentiality had been maintained. After making a few changes to this thesis, we agreed to get together for coffee sometime after my doctoral examination.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

Vesna described a weekday routine that involves fixing breakfast for her children, walking her children to school and, twice a week, fulfilling a volunteer commitment in a classroom. A neighbor takes care of Vesna's youngest child for a few hours a week. During the mornings when she is not volunteering, Vesna has two and a half hours alone. She often spends this time writing at the computer. Around one o'clock, Vesna makes a meal that she and her children eat when they return from school after 3:00. Vesna helps her children with their homework, encourages them to practice the piano and may host friends who drop over for coffee. Vesna's husband usually eats alone after 5:00. The family comes together for a light supper at about 8:00. Vesna is involved co-op housing activities such as committee meetings, which are held in the afternoons or evenings. Over a 12-week period, Vesna attended a weekly women's resettlement group.

#### Weekends

Friday and Saturday nights are always for social events in Vesna's family. She described going to the cinema, having other families over for meals or vice-versa, and organizing multi-family barbecues. Her husband takes the children skiing in the winter and swimming during the summer. When the weather is mild, the family goes to local parks and lakes, where the children play tennis and everyone goes swimming.

Between family activities and responsibilities on any given day, Vesna spends considerable time reading, improving her English, and writing. We did not discuss who does the housework or when those kinds of chores are done. Saturday is Vesna's shopping day and she buys her groceries on Commercial Drive in east Vancouver. Afterwards, Vesna meets several women friends for coffee at the same café each week; sometimes their husbands join the group. Once a month, Vesna and her Bosnian women friends get together at a local pub in the evening to drink, discuss their families and tell jokes.

### ***Fereshteh***

#### Research relationship with Fereshteh

Fereshteh and I first met at a resettlement program. Our lively 90 minute interview occurred at a White Spot restaurant and I followed the semi-structured interview schedule used with other participants in this research. It was not difficult to understand Fereshteh although some words were out of the expected order in her sentences. Fereshteh asked me questions occasionally to clarify the meaning of certain words but it was clear from her contributions to the interview that she usually understood my questions. We developed an easy rapport that fostered a conversational style of interview. Because of similar views about feminism, and also the role of the United States in Iran, there were a few times during the interview that we digressed to talk about our experiences and opinions. Towards the end of the interview, Fereshteh questioned me closely about my leisure activities. Fereshteh was interested in receiving a transcript of her interview, which I sent her some months later. Fereshteh thanked me for talking with her and said she looked forward to any future conversation.

When I reconnected with Fereshteh, she confirmed receiving the interview transcript that I sent. Our conversation was pleasant and cordial. Fereshteh asked if I planned to make the final report available to immigrant women who could most benefit from it. I reiterated my intention to produce an accessible report and also to present my findings at the resettlement program where Fereshteh and I met.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

Each weekday morning Fereshteh gets up at 6:30, showers and dresses. She wakes up her teen-aged sons and makes breakfast for the family. Breakfast has been a traditional Iranian menu of tea, cheese, bread, butter and jam but recently the family has been eating cereal with milk. Her children leave for school by 8:30 and return around 3 o'clock. Fereshteh's husband has Mondays off from work. They spend this day doing things together: running errands, paying bills, and getting information about job training and additional education necessary to upgrade their work skills. For a 12-week period, Fereshteh attended a women's resettlement program one evening per week. Tuesday and Thursday mornings Fereshteh attends ESL classes. On Wednesdays, Fereshteh volunteers all day doing advocacy work and office administration at a local women's centre. Friday mornings Fereshteh goes grocery shopping with a friend.

Cooking all the meals, washing dishes, cleaning the apartment, and studying English exemplify the activities Fereshteh does during the weekday and evenings. She does not finish household chores until 7:00 or 8:00, at which time Fereshteh watches television or does her English homework. Fereshteh does outreach work with women in the lower mainland and

usually makes telephone calls in the evening related to this responsibility. While talking on the telephone Fereshteh often does another activity such as washing dishes or ironing. During the days or evenings, Fereshteh uses her computer to read about women's issues and news from Iran.

#### Weekends

Fereshteh's weekends are less structured and there is some time to do crafts, read novels, and write. She stated that her sons frequently interrupt when she is doing things for herself. Fereshteh played the organ previously but the instrument is in storage because she does not have time to practice now. She often listens to music or news programs on the weekends and commented that things are at a slower pace on those days.

#### ***Maria***

##### Research relationship with Maria

Maria and I met at a women's resettlement program and our interview was held some weeks later in her neatly furnished apartment. Children's toys were contained to one area of the combination kitchen/dining room, where I conducted a 45minute interview. I used the interview schedule but was unable to ask all the questions I had planned because Maria had to pick up her daughter from day care less than one hour after I arrived.

Maria greeted me in a friendly way and one of her first comments was that she had little time for leisure. Maria spoke accented English and we had no difficulty understanding each other. The interview progressed easily and without interruption. Each time I asked a question or made a comment, Maria gave a descriptive response. Maria answered questions without hesitation about her daily routine, meeting her husband and immigrating to Canada,

and working. After I ended the interview, Maria commented that she had enjoyed talking to me. My interactions with Maria were cordial but limited to setting up and conducting the interview. After several attempts to reconnect with Maria, we spoke on the telephone and I explained the delay in completing the research.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

The morning routine in Maria's household begins shortly after 7:00 when she gets up, showers and then dresses the children. Maria's husband usually makes breakfast and the family eats around 8:00, with both parents finishing before their children. If time allows, Maria's husband washes the dishes. More often the tasks of packing their eldest child's backpack, checking notes from the teacher and organizing the children's coats, lunches and umbrellas fills the time before the family drives off together. Maria drives her older children to school and then takes her husband to the café where he works. Daughter Sonia stays with Maria, whether she is working at either pre-school in the morning or running errands throughout the day.

Sonia and Maria have lunch around noon and then Maria shops for her husband if something is needed at the café. Maria drives to pick up their children Robert and Lisa around 2:30. She prepares dinner for herself and the children and they eat around four o'clock. Afterwards Maria helps her eldest child complete homework or she may drive the family to the library. Some evenings at 5 o'clock, Maria drives Robert to skating lessons. Maria and the girls stay to watch him skate. Before Maria picks up her husband at 7:30, she may do some grocery shopping or other tasks. The children eat a small meal with their father,

who eats his main meal of the day around 8:00 in the evening. A break in this routine occurred for a 12 week period, when Maria attended women's resettlement program one evening per week.

The rest of the evening is taken up with various activities: family television watching, Maria's husband playing with their children, and Maria playing educational games with Robert or monitoring his homework. The evening routine ends with Maria bathing the children and either she or her husband reading stories to their children before they go to sleep at 9:00. Maria did not have time to describe what activities she does on the weekends or how many days per week her husband works.

### *Ling*

#### Research relationship with Ling

Ling and I met at a resettlement program and had our interview in a noisy coffee shop in east Vancouver. The almost two-hour interview proceeded without interruption. There were no difficulties understanding each other although once or twice each of us asked a clarification question. We developed a comfortable rapport early in the interview and Ling appeared to enjoy talking about her life. Ling completed a seven-day activity log although I had only asked for a one-day record. This log and the interview questions that I had used with other participants focused the interview. When the interview ended, Ling and I exchanged e-mail addresses and she thanked me for the opportunity to participate in the interview. I spoke with Ling many months later to discuss the progress of my research.

Day to day activities

## Weekdays

Ling's weekdays begin at 6:30 when she gets up to make a stir-fried breakfast for her son Martin. Ling explained that her husband had his own schedule during the one year that he worked on contract at a multinational company. At the time of our interview, Ben had returned to work in Taiwan for some months. Ling has a hot drink for breakfast and then drives Martin to school around 7:30. Between 8:30 and 9:30 Ling does housework and uses the internet for a variety of purposes. These include reading the Taiwanese news and Buddhist scripture, accessing resources and information related to daily living needs, and communicating with friends in Taiwan.

Ling volunteers at a neighborhood house as an ESL assistant three mornings a week, for a total of six hours. On mornings when she is not volunteering, Ling meets with friends or drives to the grocery store. Around 1:30 Ling returns home, eats lunch and watches CNN television. After lunch, Ling takes a one-hour walk around a local lake before picking Martin up from school at 3:15. The next chunk of time is taken up with preparing dinner, which Ling eats before leaving at 4:30 to attend English classes. Ling drives to a sky train location, rides the sky train and then transfers to a bus to reach the class, which runs from 5:15 to 6:30. Most nights after class Ling returns home and may watch television, do household chores or phone friends. Over a 12 week period, Ling attended a women's resettlement program for three hours in the evening. On other week night evenings, Ling reads books and newspapers in Chinese and English, exercises a little, chats with her son or husband, and typically goes to sleep around 11 o'clock.

## Weekends

Saturday mornings Ling routinely spends two to three hours chatting on the internet with her brothers in China and Taiwan. Later in the morning, Ling does about an hour of housework and often has a girlfriend and her children over for lunch and to socialize in the afternoon. Most Saturdays these friends join Ling and Martin for a meal out and then they all play a video game or rent a movie. Exercising and reading complete the evening for Ling.

Sunday mornings is Ling's time to sleep later, between 7:30 and 8:00. After fixing breakfast for herself and Martin, Ling does housework and studies. Later in the morning, Ling drives Martin to his tutor's house and then she attends a Christian church service in English, located within walking distance of her home. After church, Ling takes a walk around the lake and sometimes naps before picking up Martin and his friend at the tutor's house a few suburbs away. The teenagers return home with Ling and she fixes dinner for everyone. When the friends leave after dinner and some social time, Ling exercises and always reads before falling asleep.

## *Alicia*

### Research relationship with Alicia

Alicia and I met at a women's resettlement program in Vancouver. Alicia volunteered to participate and a few weeks later she welcomed me to her modest upstairs flat in an older house. The interview occurred in the living room, while Alicia's daughter played with her baby brother in another room and Alicia's husband prepared dinner.

The tone of the interview was friendly and informal. Alicia's willingness to talk about her health problem in the past year exemplified the rapport that we developed. Alicia spoke



English with a Spanish accent that was easy to understand. There were no misunderstandings about the questions I asked or the descriptive responses that Alicia gave. At the close of the interview, Alicia confirmed that she would like a copy of the transcript sent to her, which I did. When I contacted her by telephone several months later, Alicia shared with me some positive changes in her life and asked about the progress of my research.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

Alicia's day begins when she leaves the house at 3:30 to deliver newspapers. Alicia comes home around 5:15 and returns to bed, talking with her husband until their infant son David awakens around 6:30. Alicia attends to her baby's needs and plays with him until about 7:30. At that time Alicia's husband takes care of David, which allows Alicia to sleep. At 8:30, with her husband and daughter Beatrice gone for the day, Alicia and David eat breakfast. The rest of the morning is taken up with showering, doing housework, caring for David and getting him organized for the afternoon out. Twice a week Alicia and David go to the resettlement program, which runs for two hours and offers childcare. On other weekdays, Alicia drives her husband to work and uses the car to go shopping, go to the bank or run other errands in the afternoons. Beatrice often does her homework at school or returns to the flat around 3:30.

Everyone returns home between 5:00 and 6:00 and the parents share the cooking tasks and socialize. Beatrice plays with David or helps with dinner preparations. Alicia describes this as a time when she and her husband talk about their respective days. Dinner occurs between 6:00 and 6:30 and later the family watches the television show *Jeopardy* together.

Both parents share bathing David and reading him bedtime stories in Spanish. After David goes to bed between 8:30 and 9:00, Alicia has some uninterrupted time with Beatrice before her daughter goes to bed at 9:30. Alicia struggles to stay awake past 8:30 in the evening and often falls asleep by 9:00.

#### Weekends

Alicia delivers newspapers seven days a week, although on weekends she does not leave the house until 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning. She returns home about an hour later but is unable to sleep. Alicia rests or takes care of David until Beatrice gets up around 9:30 and assumes responsibility for her brother. Alicia sleeps until around 1:30 and then eats breakfast. On Sunday afternoons, Alicia and her family may watch a video, go for walks in Stanley Park or go to a bookstore, and then to the main library downtown. The family visits with Alicia's mother-in-law on Sunday afternoons, and often they socialize together in their flat, watching television or playing with David. On Friday nights, Alicia and her husband have a 'date' together, where they may go out for a hamburger, take a walk, or see a film.

#### *Svetlana*

##### Research relationship with Svetlana

My first contact with Svetlana was at a women's resettlement program. I then called her to schedule the interview, which occurred on a Saturday at the college where Svetlana takes English classes. I used the hourly activity log that Svetlana completed to structure much of the interview. By discussing these activities, Svetlana often answered questions from the interview schedule that I planned to ask. Our one hour interview was uninterrupted and

although I understood most of Svetlana's Russian-accented English in person, several words were not clear enough to be transcribed.

Svetlana commented that she found it interesting to talk about her experiences, the recounting of which caused her eyes to well up with tears twice. Our interaction was cordial and Svetlana answered all my questions. At times Svetlana's serious demeanor changed as she laughed but more often she sighed, and then continued with her story. Our research relationship was limited to the one interview.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

To enable me to understand a typical weekday, Svetlana described the list of activities she had written down marked by half, and one hour increments. She rises at 7:00 to wash and dress, and then prepares breakfast for her family. Svetlana washes the dishes and tidies the apartment as her family is leaving for the day. At nine o'clock she stops and has breakfast alone. Svetlana walks the dog for a half hour in the neighborhood. The remainder of the morning is filled with watching television, doing laundry and preparing for ESL classes; the latter for up to three hours some days. Svetlana watches television and eats lunch and later walks to the library where she spends a few hours. She explained that any television watching is done 'in parallel' with other activities such as housework. Two afternoons a week, Svetlana attends the resettlement program which requires taking a bus to Vancouver from her home in a nearby suburb.

After fixing dinner and eating with her family, Svetlana attends ESL classes from 6:00 to 8:30 four nights a week. Then she walks the dog again, takes a bath and does other

personal care activities before relaxing with her family over a cup of tea. Svetlana watches a bit more television, chats with her children and then goes to bed around eleven o'clock.

### Weekends

We did not specifically talk about how the weekends differ from typical weekdays. There are no ESL classes on the weekends but Svetlana mentioned using the weekends for studying. She described walking in a park, going downtown to look at old architecture and spending several hours at a time in the local library as the activities she does and enjoys. Svetlana explained that she appreciates being outdoors in the cool climate and sometimes goes jogging on the weekend at a park close to her home.

### *Chin-sung*

#### Research relationship with Chin-sung

Chin-sung and I met at a resettlement program in Vancouver. The interview occurred in my apartment, at Chin-sung's request, and we talked for almost two hours with no interruptions. Chin-sung was quite descriptive in her recounting of a typical day. The conversational style of interview resulted in some topics being covered more extensively than others although I did ask most of the planned interview questions. When one of us did not understand a word or phrase the other person used, we asked for clarification. Chin-sung appeared friendly and confident, speaking at length to answer the questions I asked and laughing occasionally. My subsequent contact with Chin-sung was one telephone conversation which I initiated to update her on the progress of my research. At that time, Chin-sung told me she was enrolled in a post-graduate degree program.

Day to day activities

## Weekdays

A typical weekday for Chin-sung begins with getting up to fix her children's breakfast and packing their lunch boxes. After making sure they have eaten and dressed, Chin-sung walks her children to their school just five minutes from home. Then Chin-sung walks in the neighborhood for about an hour, returning home around 10:00 to do laundry and watch television. Later in the morning Chin-sung calls a friend, whom she knew in Taiwan, and they usually eat lunch together at each other's houses or at a restaurant. Although Chin-sung obtained her driver's license two weeks after she arrived in Vancouver, her friend sometimes drives them to the Yao Han Centre. This is a mall that offers retail services in Mandarin, which Chin-sung speaks, and other Chinese languages. Chin-sung visits a local library with this friend twice a week, checking out cookbooks, fiction and travel for herself and books that her children need for school.

For a period of 12-weeks, Chin-sung attended the twice weekly resettlement program during the day. As well, Chin-sung uses the internet to check real estate listings in her area each day as she seeks to find a house to buy. She also reads on-line to keep abreast of Taiwanese news and sometimes is at the computer for up to three hours per day. Part of that time involves Chin-sung writing e-mail messages to her husband in Taiwan each day, unless they talk on the telephone. Chin-sung's evenings are taken up with cooking dinner for the family, helping her children with their homework, watching television and reading.

## Weekends

We discussed Chin-sung's weekends briefly and she described going for walk on Saturdays with three women who also immigrated from Taiwan. Sundays Chin-sung goes to a westside community centre where she watches her children skate. A few times Chin-sung has taken her children to roller skate in Stanley Park, while she follows along on a bicycle. Chin-sung is responsible for driving her children to all their activities beyond the immediate neighborhood. At the time of our interview, Chin-sung's husband and one of their sons had returned to Taiwan so he could work and their son could improve his Mandarin.

## *Deepa*

### Research relationship with Deepa

Deepa and I met at a resettlement program where I described my research to a group of women and sought volunteers. Our 90 minute interview took place a few weeks later. We met in an open but little used area of a community centre that Deepa chose so her son could participate in the gym program downstairs. Deepa and I occasionally had difficulty understanding each other because of the word order in some of her sentences, which required me to confirm that I understood the intended meaning. Deepa answered many questions at length and sometimes her descriptive responses led the interview off of one topic and onto another. This occurred when I asked Deepa to describe a typical day. There seemed to be a good rapport established during the interview, perhaps enhanced by our short discussion about Deepa having lived, for a few years, two blocks away from my family home in California. Deepa's confident manner convinced me that she could refuse to answer questions if she felt so inclined. When the interview ended, Deepa said, "I really enjoy your company...I

enjoyed talking.” At then end of our interview Deepa requested a copy of any report from this research, which I agreed to send to her.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

Deepa is up at 7:00 to make breakfast and lunches for her husband and their son, Vikram. She cooks fresh chapatis for their lunches and they eat breakfast together. Deepa’s husband drops Vikram off at school by 8:30 and goes to work, coming home around 6:00. After they leave, Deepa first bathes and then prays for a half hour. Deepa described doing housework quickly and ‘getting free’ around 9:30. Twice a week Deepa attends the resettlement program in the afternoon. In addition to this program, Deepa participates in a local immigrant women’s support group one morning a week. Deepa wants to enroll in a parenting program that she read about at the community centre, a place where she has received information about many varied services.

At 3:00 Deepa picks up Vikram and they either return home to nap or go to the community centre, where there are children’s activities. Deepa has a half hour prayer time around 5:00 and then cooks dinner. When her husband comes home at 6:00, he and Deepa talk over a cup of tea, play with their son and watch television. They eat dinner around 8:30 and after Vikram goes to sleep, Deepa sometimes uses the exercise room in their apartment building. Frequently she watches television while knitting and crocheting.

#### Weekends

We did not discuss the weekends specifically but Deepa mentioned that she sometimes walks in the park and uses the exercise room in their apartment building. In the

summer, the family goes to the park where they play soccer with Vikram. Other activities include playing chess together and going to a movie, activities that occur on weekends and sometimes on week nights. There was no mention of attending religious services or what the division of household labor is on the weekends.

### ***Anita***

#### Research relationship with Anita

I met Anita through a mutual acquaintance associated with this research. Several weeks later Anita welcomed me into her apartment and our two hour interview got underway quickly. I asked many of the questions on the interview schedule, beginning with inquiries about Anita's education. An explanation of her education led us to her current work and then I encouraged Anita to talk about a typical day. What resulted was a wide-ranging discussion that compared Bosnia to Vancouver in terms of work, culture and the importance of money.

Anita had a assertive, engaging way of communicating and we developed comfortable rapport. Throughout the interview, Anita did the majority of the talking and articulated her opinions and feelings clearly. At times we talked over each other, usually when we agreed about something or had strongly-held opinions. When the interview finished Anita commented that it was interesting to tell her story and recognized her tendency to make comparisons between Bosnia and Canada. The visit ended with Anita and I talking about my traveling to Siena, Italy where she once visited. My last visit with Anita was at her apartment and I asked her to review what I had written about her, to ensure that her identity was unlikely to be revealed. We began by chatting about the photos of Siena I brought, drinking tea and eating cookies that Anita provided. Then we discussed making a few changes to the



text that were unrelated to what Anita actually said in our interview but that would decrease the likelihood of anyone identifying her.

#### Day to day activities

Anita spent considerable talking about the differences between Canadian and Bosnian cultures. She did not ever describe a typical day in Vancouver, despite a few prompts from me. Anita mentioned that it was important for her to spend time with her children but acknowledged that since they are teenagers now, they may go to Starbuck's with friends rather than visit with her after school. Anita talked about fixing the children breakfast and sometimes making a special Bosnian treat for them to eat. In addition to crocheting and creating designs for her business, Anita said that she enjoys talking with friends on the telephone and sometimes has them over to visit when she is working at home.

#### ***Manuela***

##### Research relationship with Manuela

Manuela and I first met at a resettlement program. I conducted the interview at her home, where she lives with her son's family. During our 60 minute interview we were interrupted only once by Manuela's granddaughter. The sound of parakeets chirping provided a pleasant backdrop to the interview. At times I could not understand some of Manuela's sentences due to her English language skills. Manuela had trouble understanding a few of my comments initially. Occasionally during the interview Manuela used her electronic Spanish-English dictionary. We laughed sometimes during the interview and it seemed that we had a good rapport. Manuela asked about my teaching and if any of the students were immigrants.

I began the interview by asking Manuela about her educational background. This initial question led directly to Manuela expressing concerns about an upcoming evaluation of her credentials that could enable her to teach here. Although I asked many questions from the interview schedule, Manuela often brought the conversation back to her qualifications and what she needed to do to be able to work in Vancouver. Manuela recounted a typical weekday by identifying activities that occurred in different parts of the day rather than describing an hour by hour routine. When the interview ended, Manuela requested for a copy of the transcript and audio tape, which I sent to her.

#### Day to day activities

##### Weekdays

A typical weekday for Manuela begins when she gets up at 6:30 to help her older granddaughter, Carlotta, get ready for school. Carlotta's parents leave for work so Manuela makes both grandchildren breakfast and packs Carlotta's lunch. Around 8:30, the three of them walk Carlotta to the school she attends. Manuela returns home with her younger granddaughter where they spend the day together. In addition to caring for her grandchildren, Manuela tidies the house and cooks dinner for the family who all eat together around 5:45. Three evenings a week, Manuela takes English classes from 6:30 to 9:30 at a resettlement agency. Twice a week for a 12-week period, Manuela participates in a daytime women's resettlement program.

##### Weekends

On the weekends, Manuela has no household or childcare responsibilities and Saturday mornings she teaches Spanish at a community centre in a volunteer capacity. Later

in the morning Manuela attends a day care program which, upon completion, will qualify her to care for children in her home. In the afternoon, Manuela visits friends and they shop and go out to eat. On Sundays, Manuela attends a Catholic church that offers the mass in Spanish and English. On Sunday afternoons Manuela trades language lessons with friends: they teach Manuela English and she teaches them Spanish. This friendship began several years ago and they continue to meet on the weekends in Richmond to visit, share a meal and practice their respective language skills.

### ***Dolores***

#### Research relationship with Dolores

After I met Dolores at a resettlement program, I contacted her by telephone and we arranged to meet for our interview at her home. I began the interview by asking Dolores what country she arrived from and why she decided to move to Canada. The interview lasted almost two hours and occasionally her sons interrupted us briefly. Throughout the interview Dolores spoke in a confident manner, appeared to enjoy talking with me and responded in some detail to each of my questions. There were a few instances when we misunderstood each other, so we repeated or asked for clarification.

When I ended the interview and turned off the tape recorder, we chatted another 10 minutes and then went into the kitchen where Dolores, her husband and I had refreshments. We talked about her husband's work, resettlement and a little about my work at the university. I left the house after 20 minutes of socializing. Dolores requested a letter that confirmed her participation in this research project, which I sent to her a few weeks later.

### Day to day activities

#### Weekdays

Dolores gets up around 8:00 with her sons, about an hour after her husband has left for work. She begins each weekday by making the beds, dressing her sons Pablo and Juan, and fixing their breakfast. Some mornings Dolores does the laundry while her children play, and around 9:30 they eat breakfast. Often Dolores drives them to a family community centre where they play with children, as she watches. Dolores' sons receive on-site childcare while she attends a daytime resettlement program, twice weekly over 12 weeks.

On Mondays, Dolores has a volunteer job at a local radio station that broadcasts some programs in Spanish. Each week she speaks for an hour on a different topic, chosen by Dolores and the producer. Three days a week, Juan attends pre-school while Dolores and Pablo go grocery shopping or run other errands. Later Dolores picks up Juan and they eat lunch together at home between 2:00 and 3:00. Afterwards Dolores makes telephone calls, tidies the house or checks her e-mail while the boys play. Her husband arrives home after 6:00 and the family eats the dinner that Dolores has cooked. Dolores washes the dinner dishes except for one evening per week when, 'by an agreement we made,' her husband does this task. After dinner, the family watches television, goes for a walk, or occasionally goes shopping.

#### Weekends

One of the main differences between weekends and weekdays is that Dolores' husband cooks on Saturdays and Sundays. Dolores visits her sister on the weekends and also sees a good friend that she has made since arriving in Canada. Once a month, Dolores

presents a five-hour personal development workshop for Spanish-speaking women. Dolores' other weekend activities were not discussed.

### **Similarities and Differences Among the Research Participants**

These 14 research participants offer compelling perspectives that can advance the understanding of how leisure participation and its meanings are shaped by the multi-faceted resettlement process. Although the women in this research have many characteristics in common, they are not a homogeneous group. Here I will compare and contrast characteristics of the research sample, beginning with their similarities to one another. Attainment of post-secondary education is one characteristic the participants share, ranging from one year of university to post-graduate degrees. These high educational levels suggest that the participants' families not only valued their daughters' education but in many instances were able to contribute financially to support this endeavor. Experience in higher education contributes to the research participants' present English language skills. In many countries, English language instruction is offered in the higher grades and provides a head start for future language training. All of the participants learned English as an additional language.

The research participants are all married and have children living at home, with the exception of Manuela who lives with her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. All the participants take primary responsibility for child care within their families and receive various levels of help with the children from their husbands (except for Manuela). These domestic arrangements may be influenced by the employment changes that the participants, and often their husbands, have experienced as part of the resettlement process. Such changes include working in jobs or professions that are different from those in which they were

educated or had experience, working fewer hours, and being unemployed. Some of these changes were initiated by the research participants, even welcomed by women like Chin-sung whose former work involved long hours and considerable stress. All of the participants, whose ages range from 31 to 56 years old, expressed interest in paid employment. Finally, the participants immigrated from large, urban areas where most of the women had lived all their lives.

Differences in other characteristics reflect the sources of recruitment for this research. The participants' countries of origin include Taiwan, India, Iran, the Philippines, Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Bosnia and Russia. Their first languages are Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hindi, Farsi, Tagalog, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian), and Russian. The following religious affiliations are confirmed for eight of the 14 women: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity; I am unaware of other participants' religious allegiances, if any.

Nine years separate Rosa, the research participant who has been in Canada the longest, from Chin-sung who arrived most recently. The final difference between the research participants involved some change in work: unemployment, underemployment or employment in jobs that are different from their previous jobs. These changes influenced the total family income and were obviously linked to the resettlement process, and to some extent English language proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

The research question focuses on how leisure participation and meanings are shaped by the resettlement process for immigrant women. It is challenging to discuss a concept like leisure in English effectively, with women who speak it as an additional language. What

anchors leisure to their everyday social relations in these discussions are the participants' descriptions of leisure activities and daily schedules of family and work responsibilities. The women in this sample have helped me uncover some of the complexity of leisure. In contrast to the un-problematized notion of leisure often presented, the participants' stories have shown how leisure is grounded in everyday social relations that are mediated by English language ability. These kinds of realities bump uncomfortably against the notion of leisure as merely an activity, experience or chunk of time that can be transplanted from one situated life to a completely new set of circumstances.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### MANAGING CHILDREN, HOUSEWORK, FAMILY AND WORK

In the previous chapter I presented profiles of the study participants. In each participant's profile I described the research relationship that developed and then the features of that woman's day to day life. These profiles are influenced by Dorothy Smith's (1990) contention that the standpoint of women's everyday worlds is the place from which to start answering the research question. That question is: *How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate in leisure activities?* To help answer the question, I draw upon George Smith's (1995) definition of a social relation as "not a thing to be looked for in carrying out the research, rather it is what is used to do the looking" (p. 24). Thus, I focus on gender relations as a means of understanding family responsibilities that are divided between the women and their husbands and families.

The thematic analysis presented in this chapter reflects the importance that Dorothy Smith attaches to investigating the context of women's lives and what they do; what, when, where, how and with whom. This doing is understood by examining the social organization that frames each woman's life, often without her knowledge of its influence. Through analyzing the stories women told me it became clear that one theme, *orchestrating the day*, was central to all other endeavors that constitute recomposing a life in Canada. In this chapter, I attempt to maintain the integrity and unique character of each woman's story while showing the recursive nature of their routine activities, by using the notion of orchestrating the day. I begin with a description of what the participants do routinely: activities involved in caring for children, maintaining a household, and doing wage work or preparing for it. These



are similar to ones done by many other women in Canada who are part of two-parent families with children. For the women in this study, though, the activities differ because they are challenges to meet in the resettlement process. An additional thread woven through these activities for many immigrant women is the time they spend in language classes and other immigrant programs. These activities and descriptions of other routines and tasks women do during a day are a good place to begin to answer the question of how resettlement influences women's participation in leisure.

The participants have little family support in Canada. This factor affects how daily routines are organized and highlights the increased desire to socialize with people who speak their native language, primarily family but also friends. In the second part of this chapter, I explore the theme, *Connected yet apart: trading family support for 'best environment, best future.'* I describe how the strategies women use to maintain family ties and meet the social needs for themselves and their families, constitute additional tasks in the orchestration of their days. To expand on the themes and authenticate this snapshot of the women's lives, I retained the phrasing that the participants used and chose not to indicate grammatical errors with the usual *sic* designation. Exceptions to verbatim quotes were made where I have excised non-word utterances and where clarity would be compromised by extraneous words.

### **Orchestrating the Day**

The phrase 'orchestrating the day' (Primeau, 1998) brings to mind the image of a conductor with her baton, combining individual musical efforts to create a successful symphony. In each description of routines and activities that make up daily life, women were the organizers or conductors. As Isabelle said, "It's like we have a parallel computer, doing

things, everything is trying to be scheduled in the background, and trying to keep things synchronized... You have to synchronize activities of five people, whereas my husband is just, he can barely keep up his own." Even when both parents worked full-time, as Rosa and Isabelle did, it was the women who met the primary childcare and household responsibilities with few exceptions. Women's accounts of their days vary depending on factors like employment status and the ages of their children. Their involvement in formal resettlement activities such as language classes also influences the orchestration necessary. Still, the tempo of the day and similar patterns of activity bind this part of the women's stories together. When the day begins these women 'hit the ground running.'

*"We're Rushing All the Time. Busy, Busy, Busy"*

Allegro is the tempo of the morning routine in many households with young children where at least one parent is working full-time. Maria teaches pre-school at three locations in Vancouver. Her husband is the owner-operator of a coffee shop. He often fixes breakfast while his wife readies their three children for the day. Maria's recounting of how the weekday mornings begin is presented in its entirety to capture the time pressure that is shared by other participants with somewhat different circumstances.

Okay, when I get up it's 7:30 and, well, my husband and by then my daughter is awake too and, he gets dressed and comes down. Sometimes we take a shower or something. We get ready you know dress up and everything, and choose the clothes for my children tell them 'okay this is what you're going to wear' and this kind of thing, while he's making breakfast or getting ready, going to have some milk and cook something light...

So he prepares that while I am getting ready with all of them upstairs and my son too because after 8:00 we are all here. We sit down and eat the breakfast and then I finish first, cause I don't take long. So then I go and start putting snacks in their backpacks and I do that so he helps me too. So then yeah, we come here 8:00 or 8:30 so it's ready (ready? okay), yeah ready. We

sit down and eat but like I said he and me sometimes usually faster than them so they take longer. Then after we go back to the kitchen and sometimes he wash the dishes but I say 'don't, just leave them.' Because there's no time and if they get – put everything in the backpack and not to forget anything. And sometimes we have papers that I have to check, sometimes from school.

We go in a car. And then it depends what direction we are going. If I'm going to work on Broadway, close to Broadway, then I would have to first take one of the children, first, then my husband, then my son and then myself with my daughter and then we go together because she comes with me to work... So by 9:00 o'clock, I have to be at work. By 9:00 o'clock.

Only 90 minutes have passed since Maria awoke and her work day has yet to begin. With her youngest daughter always in tow, Maria teaches part-time at pre-schools in two community centres. On Wednesdays she works at the Three Bears program for mothers and children. Maria finishes work at 12:30 every day and then, "when I've finished if he doesn't need anything from me, then I come home. But if he does, then I won't be coming home and sometimes I don't come the whole day." Maria expands on her role in her husband's business, which was prompted by his recent job loss.

It's new yeah, something new that we have tried. So we sometimes go crazy with that but we are trying and like I said, when I finish sometimes he phones me and says, 'well I need this and this and this.' So I have to go and shop those things for him because he's, we don't have nobody in, you know that is helping us. So it's just he and me. So if he's in the store, then I am out. If I am in there, then he's the one who because he does, he also does jewelry repairs, he's a jeweler... That is his original occupation, yes, and he like it. So he puts something there some jewelry, some things that are in gold.

After fixing a late afternoon supper for her children, supervising them until they share a meal with their father at 7:30, Maria's day ends when she puts the children to bed around 9:00. In response to my asking when Maria had time to herself she referred to our mid-afternoon interview, "just this time, when she's sleeping." Maria's schedule is familiar to many of the research participants although differences are seen when the family comprises older children

who attend school, as Fereshteh's boys do. Her sons require less direct care but Fereshteh's household responsibilities are similar to those of Maria. It is Fereshteh who cleans, cooks, irons and shops for groceries; her husband works full-time. With regard to her sons helping with household tasks, Fereshteh explains that their "... expectations are normal but their responsibilities is low." These responsibilities may change a bit but Fereshteh describes the boys as "really resistant to change."

*"Actually the Whole of the Day, I Give Service to Them"*

The pattern of Fereshteh's weekdays shows that they begin, end and are consumed with activities to maintain and support her family. Starting at 6:30 Fereshteh showers, eats and fixes breakfast for her husband and their two teenaged sons. Fereshteh expands on her comment about 'service' with this impression of a typical day.

And all the day and I sometimes, really sometime run away from them because they all the time ask me for something. When I want to read, when I want to do my crafts, homework: 'Mom give me this, Mom give me that.' Anyway, I prepare lunch, dinner and lunch, lunch and dinner sorry and dishwashing and you know clean the cupboard, in the morning...Everything is messy, so I should do arrange everything, and it takes until, I can say 8:00 o'clock, 7:00 o'clock afternoon. Oh, 7:00 o'clock to 8:00, I stay I can sit down and look at, watch the TV and do my homework.

In contrast to Fereshteh's responsibilities, Alicia's family contributes some to child care and household tasks which enables her to manage the demands of her infant son, David. Despite having her daughter Beatrice's help with David in the evenings and on weekends, Alicia is the main care giver and combines this role with household tasks that benefit the family. A glimpse at Alicia's routine shows that it differs from Fereshteh's because of the level of care and supervision David requires, the family support Alicia receives and the absence of English classes and homework. As well, Alicia recently began a morning

newspaper delivery job. Highlights of Alicia's day are excerpted here to show a version of giving 'service' to one's family when children of different ages are involved. Alicia returns home at 5:30 after two hours of early morning work and describes her routine in this way.

I can't fall asleep so I'm just resting in my bed, usually talking with my husband... So at around 6:30 or 7:00 my baby's awake so I mean to change his diaper and get the bottle and stuff and play with him and do things. Because I'm trying to clean the house while he is with me but in the morning and it's very difficult because he wants to be with me. He wants that I carry him and take him whatever I do or wherever I go, I need to take him.

Between 8:00 and 9:00 I give him breakfast and usually I'm trying to have breakfast with him... But between 9:30 and 11:00, I clean the house... 11:00 I take a shower. I take him with me in the highchair, I put him in the highchair with some toys and inside the bathroom. I'm finished around 11:30 and I've started to prepare a diaper bag. It takes me around 15 minutes to prepare the bottles for him, everything that I need... And I change his diaper again, and change his clothes and so 12:00 we are getting out, we need to do something, I need to go to the bank or I need to read or –

Two days a week Alicia goes to a women's resettlement program, which runs from 12:00 to 2:30 and provides child care for David. On other days Alicia goes to the bank, shops, and runs errands in the afternoons traveling by bus or driving the car. The close proximity of their apartment to William's job, the resettlement program, shops and services all contribute to Alicia's ability to get around by car easily or less easily, by bus. The early evening routine shows some shared effort with the meals and child care.

We arrive here usually between 5:00 and 6:00. We are preparing dinner and cleaning dishes or something else, the living room usually once we are here, he does something, he does something and I'm doing something else. Like he takes David and I clean or the other way around. Or sometimes Beatrice, my daughter, can help us if he is here and she wants to watch TV or something, she takes care of David... Yeah, we really enjoy each other and we cook together, so and kind of fun time when we come home... Yeah, we can speak about how the day was and I don't know, talking and doing things while we are cooking. And around 6:00 to 6:30 we are having dinner.

Despite variation between families, the daily routines of these women share similar features. Foremost among them is the responsibility women have for the essential activities of child rearing, household management and either wage work or preparation for employment. Divisions in domestic labor arrangements are shaped by employment circumstances, availability of child care and societal customs, among other influences. In many parts of Canadian society it is accepted and customary for women to take on primary child rearing and household responsibilities, even when the women are working full-time. Rosa and Isabelle work a 'double day' because even though both husbands and wives work full-time, it is the women who have primary responsibility for the home and children. Most of the women in this study, however, are presently unemployed or work part-time. The women's unemployment and underemployment is a curious outcome, considering their high educational attainments and work experiences. In contrast, most of the women's husbands are employed full-time in Canada although not always in the fields for which they were qualified and frequently at a lower wage than before. For example, Vesna's husband had a good-paying engineering position in the former Yugoslavia. Now he is taking courses to become qualified as a draftsman. His current job is one of less responsibility and as Vesna states "he has much lower position than he had back home."

The unemployment and part-time work status of these women suggest they have extra time to complete the activities that support a household and provide care for children. Indeed a cursory glance implies that they even have more leisure time than when they were employed. But what explains their feelings of being rushed and giving service all day? One place to look is at the formal resettlement activities that consume a large part of many of

these women's lives. Another place to look is at the activities that were once routine and have evolved into something rather different in Canada. Of these activities, stories about grocery shopping reveal it to be a site for leisure, a means of building friendships, and an exercise in frustration.

### *Shopping Stories*

Grocery shopping is a mundane activity but one that can confirm a woman's sense of identity and competence if done, for example, with friends who speak her first language. Alternatively, shopping can prompt feelings of doubt about one's abilities; a formerly simple activity is made difficult. Associated with this may be a concern about where to find the quality of food to which one is accustomed. Shopping is linked to leisure in two ways. Shopping may provide women with a means through which to socialize or the activity itself may require extra time to complete, resulting in fewer discretionary hours available for leisure activities.

The context in which grocery shopping occurs in the lower mainland influences how women experience and describe this activity. Context includes where the woman lives in relation to stores that have familiar foods and people who speak her first language. Chin-sung's present situation illustrates the importance of context. Mandarin is Chin-sung's first language and where she lives on the west side of Vancouver there are large numbers of Mandarin-speaking people and shops that serve people in this language. Chin-sung speaks of accompanying her Taiwanese friend grocery shopping in the nearby suburb of Richmond, an area that is home to a large number of people from China and Taiwan. Chin-sung describes shopping as easy to do saying, "Sometimes in T & T, we need to speak English but in Yao

Han we do not need, we do not speak English.” During their social time, which includes house-hunting, Chin-Sung and her friend speak only Mandarin.

In contrast to Chin-sung’s journey with her friend to stores where people speak Mandarin, Vesna’s Bosnian-speaking friends converge on a part of town where numerous languages are heard on the street. Vesna travels across town every Saturday to shop on Commercial Drive and meet with her friends. Vesna explains the shopping activity and its meaning to her.

Yes, it’s always the same: Santa Barbara. Yeah everybody goes there. I don’t know why. I really still cannot explain because you know it is a little bit cheaper than other places...I don’t know why exactly this shop of the all of the Commercial Drive but probably the secret is there is a coffee shop, like cafeteria across the street. And then we eat, drink coffee, there is good Italian coffee and we always meet there to drink coffee together.

The kafana (café) is a location for much of the social activity in Bosnian towns, serving as a place to meet friends, discuss business and pass the time. Vesna’s continuation of this custom in Vancouver may be interpreted as a way in which she is negotiating her Bosnian identity with her ‘Canadian’ identity. I asked Vesna if the same group of friends joined her each week.

Same yeah, not only women, sometimes the husbands and wives, sometimes just wives. It depends on what other activities on Saturdays. But most of the time three or four of us the same 10 peoples, some bring friends, sometimes even Canadian friends. So Saturday morning is a combination of leisure and shopping for both of us and they have very good coffee there. That’s why we meet.

Vesna expresses little concern with the process of shopping and even describes finding a butcher who prepares meat for cevapcici, a favorite barbecue food in Bosnia. In contrast, Vesna’s friend Anita describes grocery shopping as a task that was initially stressful because



of her concern about the quality of food available in Vancouver. Anita can now afford to buy groceries at organic food stores that are in close proximity to her co-op apartment and where she works part-time but her introduction to Canadian food distribution still rankles her.

I never go to Safeway, the first time it was May when we came, in June already I asked my friend if they have a real store here. Because I don't want to go to this big nothing stores, you know supermarkets where I am afraid of looking at these carrots you know. This big and this cabbage, I really, and they don't smell and I'm afraid of giving this to my children. So my biggest concern here was how to find a normal store, where I can find people from village or some you know farms, where I can find real food.

Whereas Anita's concern about finding 'real food' was resolved fairly quickly, other women describe frustration in learning how to shop for groceries in Canada. Dolores emphasizes that although there are similar foods available in Mexico, Canadian brands are different. This prompts trial and error shopping methods and some exasperation.

Yeah is so difficult, you never can believe what is so difficult...And you don't know what is right for you. In your country, you only go because your mom go to the store and you learn about your mom and the friends, and you do it...But here you have nothing and you go out and you only go, okay just take the food because, you know, I can't believe that I can't do this!...Yes, and you lost time and you prepare and sometimes it's no good. And when you buy some soups and it's no good taste...You feel frustrated about it and I say, okay.

Thus, the routine task of grocery shopping may create a space for leisure but also may cause some distress for these women, despite their relatively secure financial status. Like other tasks that were once simple, grocery shopping may be more challenging for women particularly in the first years of resettlement.

*"The Way You Make Friends in Mexico is Different Than Here"*

There are many activities in the lower mainland that require speaking English and also understanding how certain processes work, like developing friendships. Women are

responsible for resolving immediate concerns such as finding tutors for their children and choosing a family doctor. The mundane nature of these kinds of social relations allows them to be overlooked or seem unworthy of identifying. But the impact on women's lives suggests that they are aspects of resettlement that may affect their identity, as well as influence leisure time and participation in activities. Ling defines leisure as something to "...lessen my anxiety, especially in Canada I feel many things can cause me to feel anxiety" and elaborates on the difficulty of not knowing how some things work in Canada.

OK, language is one thing. I'm not quite understand the culture and the custom here and sometimes I just, you know make some mistake and embarrass myself. And sometimes I feel I cannot help my son in many ways. In Taiwan, it's very easier for me to assess different resource and but here I just get confused...I separate with my family and especially with my husband right now. So it's all become overwhelming to me you know.

Making friends and socializing is linked to leisure and family relations and will be discussed in Chapter Six. It is introduced here because it forms part of the day that women orchestrate. Making friends constitutes one of the more subtle but time-consuming resettlement activities that influences family life and is likely to be different than what women experienced in their home countries. It took Dolores and Graciela some time to discover how to develop friendships in Canada, both with Canadian-born people and Mexicans who had acquired a more formal style of socializing. Dolores describes the benefit of having Canadian friends when she is uncertain about how to do something such as starting savings plans for the children or finding a good pre-school. She perceives that Canadians make friends primarily through shared activities and often these friendships cease after the activities that brought people together are over. Dolores cites swimming and karate classes as activities that enable one to make friends, explaining "Yeah but you only have friends for this

class and later they are gone. In Mexico, it's different, you have the friend in this class, you friend for your life." Making friends was especially important to Dolores during her first two years here. At that time Dolores just had her second child and lack of access to a car, coupled with her suburban location, limited mobility around her immediate community.

Having friends with whom to spend free time was important to many of the women who described themselves as alone in Canada with their families. Friends help to shape the routine of their days, as the earlier description of Chin-sung's shopping journeys shows. The absence of friends and the need to learn new ways of making friends influence day to day activities. Isabelle echoes Dolores' sentiments as she explains that for her Filipino friends in Canada, "the activity is an excuse for getting together...whereas here I think, it's not so much who you're doing it with as what you're actually doing." Graciela and her family have some Spanish-speaking friends now but initially were perplexed with the formality and lack of spontaneity that characterized attempts to make friends with whom the family could socialize. Graciela describes her early experiences in this way:

I have a lot of friends in Mexico and not always I visit but I have a lot of friends who call me and always, I don't know they try to take out me or, I don't know. And here is, I try to feel and I think they're comfortable with some of them call, but I can't be as spontaneous with them. And I think it's not the same; affect the socialize I think yes, affect because maybe because I'm here for three years and maybe it's not too much...Even the Mexican man or person is the same culture as me but now they have activities or they have to make a arrangement. I think we understand it, we sometimes they feel us alone here. And I think OK, we got friends but we can't visit them [and] they can't visit us, or I don't know.

Graciela's experiences and feelings resonate with Deepa, who knew English prior to arriving in Canada, unlike Dolores or Graciela. Deepa was familiar with shopping and other North American activities from her time living in California and New York. With her son in

elementary school and routine household chores described as simple compared to those in India, Deepa has more time with which to make friends than some women. Despite this Deepa initially found making friends a challenging endeavor in Vancouver. She explains that "I have a situation of depression when I feel isolated. There is no friends for me here, no one to talk, how to like communicate my expressions to the other ones and I am not familiar about the Canadian culture." The loneliness and sad feelings about having few friends here was raised by several women, especially those who want English-speaking friends but do not yet have sufficient conversational skills.

*Time crunch: "It's hard to only study all the time"*

The time that Svetlana and several other women in this study spend in immigrant-specific activities diminishes the 'free time' that unemployment and part-time work might otherwise offer. A look at a typical day for Svetlana (see Table 2) illustrates the many hours she spends in formal resettlement activities; a process familiar to her because of the family's initial immigration to Israel where they lived for five years. According to Svetlana "...it will be about 11:00 and then I start to do my homework because if I want to do all my homework, it's took two, three hours sometimes because it's serious work." Although busy enough, the day Svetlana chooses to describe is not one of the two days when she leaves her home in the suburbs at 11:00 to attend a resettlement program, and returns at 4:00 in the afternoon.

The extent to which women involve themselves in immigrant-specific activities is influenced by several factors; their time in Canada, present language skills and employment are among them. Svetlana has been in Canada for only two years, knew little English before immigrating and has not found work. In contrast, Maria arrived eight years ago, completed

Table 2

**Svetlana's Typical Day**

0.25	1 <sup>st</sup> wake up; drink water and come back to bed
6:05-7:00	was lying in the bed and trying to sleep
7:00	2 <sup>nd</sup> awake; up
7:00-7:25	washroom
7:25-8:15	preparing breakfast for family
8:15-8:35	washing dishes
8:35-9:00	cleaning the house
9:00-9:30	breakfast
9:30-9:45	washing dishes
9:45-10:15	walk with a dog
10:15-10:45	watching TV
10:45-11:25	preparing laundry
11:25-13:00	preparing homework for ESL classes
13:00-13:30	watching TV
13:30-14:00	dinner
14:00-14:20	washing dishes
14:20-16:30	walk to the library and job search centre
16:30-17:00	reading and studying
17:00-17:30	supper
17:30-17:45	washing dishes
17:45-18:00	walking to the college
18:00-20:30	ESL classes
20:30-20:45	come back to home
20:45-21:15	walk with the dog
21:15-21:40	bathroom
21:40-22:00	tea
22:00-22:30	speak with child
22:30-23:00	watching TV
23:00	go to bed

English classes, and her husband spoke English when she immigrated. Alicia's husband is a native English speaker and her previous work as a waitress prompted rapid acquisition of English. These differences are important because work settings, if they have English speaking co-workers, provide opportunities to learn the language.

Fereshteh's participation in the evening resettlement program requires three hours per session, over 12 weeks. Fereshteh attends language classes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and does homework from these classes. The time Fereshteh spent volunteering at a local women's centre doing administrative and advocacy work provides a link from her social work career in Tehran. It also helps Fereshteh pursue her interest in women's issues. She states that, "I think all of my life I was involved in social issues. That's why I came to Canada, right away I tried to find a woman's centre or organization like this." Fereshteh describes doing time consuming but rewarding outreach to other Iranian women early on in her volunteer job. From this outreach, Fereshteh initiated a support group that held meetings and engaged in social group activities. Fereshteh compares that early period of her life here with the time she has now.

Hopefully now is better because I couldn't finish. I couldn't continue because it took lots of time of me. I couldn't do studying, and all the time they call me, they ask me and it was just voluntary you know.

The time Fereshteh spends juggling household tasks, English classes and the resettlement program with other activities is reflected in accounts of other immigrant women. This time crunch is especially true for those who have lived in Canada for only a few years. It also sets them apart from Canadian-born women who face similar gender influenced family and household responsibilities. These activities function in parallel with the fact that only two

women in this study have their own extended family members in Canada. Dolores' sister lives in an adjacent suburb with her Canadian husband and Manuela lives with her son and family. The time pressure that most women feel is linked to the absence of family support and the subsequent strategies they employ to stay connected to family members.

### **Connected Yet Apart: Trading Family Support for "Best Environment, Best Future"**

The choice to immigrate to another country in search of a better future is a well-known theme that applies to these women. In this discussion of women in transition, I examine the ways that they maintain family connections and develop new friends for support and socializing. For some women, the move and subsequent reconstitution of their lives and those of their families is coupled with ambivalence. They left extended family behind and entered a life in which the support of friends and families requires considerable effort to maintain. Although losing the tacit knowledge of how to function in one's own society cannot be underestimated, these women also speak about how much they miss their families and the gap their absence leaves. As pioneers in Canada, the women feel keenly the loss of people who speak their language, provide a ready group with whom to socialize, and form part of their identities.

Most of the women speak fondly of their extended families. The loss of proximity to families and the options that closeness brought is discussed more than the actual assistance families gave. Graciela's sentiments are shared by many of the women, albeit in different forms.

I love to be with my family, at home or to share with them, only with my family...I don't miss Mexico. I don't miss. I miss my family and but I try to keep in contact with them.

To bridge those distances, women travel home and this causes considerable financial sacrifice. These trips home seem particularly important for Vesna, Anita and Rosa in part because of the circumstances of their departure, that is, as refugees. Both Vesna and Anita talk about how their Bosnian friends do not buy houses in Vancouver but instead save their money for visits back home. Vesna explains that two of her children recently spent a year attending school in England and living with Vesna's mother there. Rosa and her husband both took a six-month leave of absence from their jobs and drove to Guatemala with their two girls. Rosa describes the rationale for that trip in the following way.

So the main thing for my husband and I, in having our little free time together is that the girls realize that we do have a family and there has to be some, put some value to what a family means and everything. And that was my main thing for going back to Guatemala for six months. Too though, I wanted them to really see that they do have a big huge family...Lots of cousins, uncles and aunties and grandmas and grandpas that really love them and that. So they are not, here, like physically here they all have them in their minds and they are thinking about the two of them all the time, although they don't see them.

Rosa describes often thinking about what her nieces and nephews might like and sometimes buying clothes for them at a thrift store. In addition to visits home when they can afford it, as Alicia and her family did when David was born, some women receive visits from family members who assist with child care. Graciela's mother visited for six months and took care of her granddaughter while Graciela worked part-time. Although they live in somewhat cramped quarters in a small basement suite, Graciela describes being overjoyed with her mother's visit. Her presence also allowed Graciela and her husband to go out together once a week. Presently, Graciela's niece lives with them and cares for Virginia during the day.

In addition to telephone calls and letters, several women communicate with family members via email. Two women who were temporarily separated from their husbands



because of work commitments in Taiwan correspond regularly using email. In fact, Chin-sung admits that communication between her and her husband is better now than it was when they both worked upwards of 12 hours a day, and were too busy for quality conversation.

For Ling, the 'real time' chats with her brothers in Taipei and Shanghai every Saturday morning provide great pleasure. Ling says the following about these two to three hour conversations, "I think that's most important moment for me. I feel that I am not lonely." Loneliness and depressed moods are among the negative feelings that women discuss in relation to their lives in Canada. I will address these in the following chapter as they relate to leisure activities. One thing that lessens these feelings though, which is relevant here, is the ability to speak to others in their own languages. Spending time with people who speak their language figures prominently as one of the strategies women use to meet some of the social needs that absent families create.

Making friends with people who speak their language is a priority for some women like Graciela. She is concerned that her daughter and other Spanish-speaking children will lose their language and with it, a part of their culture. Graciela and her family socialize with other Mexican families for their daughter's benefit and for the ease of speaking in Spanish. The critical mass of Spanish-speaking people in the lower mainland make that possible for Graciela. Chin-sung is sufficiently concerned that her children maintain their language, Mandarin, that she arranged for one of her children to remain with extended family in Taiwan and attend another year of school. Chin-sung spends considerable time with her own Taiwanese friend here in Vancouver, a woman who majored in English and whose friendship has eased Chin-sung's entree to Canadian society. These women talk on the telephone every

day, have lunch together often and take weekly trips to the library. Chin-sung has this to say about their use of language.

But we speak Mandarin only when we're together, and most of time I have lunch with her. Most weekdays with her own, she will invite one, one of his friends to meet... Yeah, particularly in the period I'm looking for the house... So we can do some research for the house, for the location, and discuss for the house we viewed. So there is, I think there is most of the discussion is during the lunch hour.

Through this friend, Chin-sung met other Mandarin-speaking women and started a walking group in Pacific Spirit Park with three women. There are obvious benefits to having such a friend orient Chin-sung to house buying, shopping, using the library and even learning to bake cakes.

Perhaps more subtle is the role that language plays in maintaining one's sense of identity. Vesna describes this when she speaks about the informal Bosnian women's club, a group that comes together regularly at a local pub. There they tell jokes, complain about their families, laugh and have a few drinks. The meaning of such interactions may be inferred by Vesna's perspective on the role that language plays in identity, as illustrated here.

Because I strongly believe that we all as a human beings, we have to be rooted somewhere to be completely happy. And if you are uprooted and move somewhere then with rare exceptions, I think not many people could find total happiness again in big, especially if you come to country where you have to speak different language. You're never yourself because learning another language is not, it's not, it's not just language. It's mentality and it's everything else goes through language so you becoming somebody else when you speak.

Thus language provides a means to stay connected with oneself, family and especially friends in the absence of family here in Canada. Whether the loss of proximal family support is an acceptable trade for the future these women envision is difficult to judge. What can be

described are the time consuming efforts that most of these women make to sustain extended family relationships. The importance of friendships and retention of family ties gains prominence as the challenge of making friends with native English speakers is more limited, due to the skill level most of these women currently possess. This situation does not exist for Canadian-born women with whom they share similar life circumstances i.e., married with children living at home and trying to manage or find work.

### **Conclusion**

I began Chapter Five by identifying women's standpoints as legitimate places to start investigating how resettlement shapes leisure participation. I offered the theme of *orchestrating the day* as a means of illustrating the interconnectedness of their varied activities. Some of these activities are routine ones that Canadian-born women do and others are particular to immigrant women for whom English is not a first language. I argued that resettlement activities constitute an additional burden to their days. Although English classes and immigrant integration programs constitute formal resettlement activities, much of the real work of resettlement occurs in the everyday activities that these women must manage. In Chapter Six, I examine where work and leisure fit into these busy lives and propose that it is not something that may be transported unproblematically across time and location, a notion implicit in leisure studies and occupational therapy literature.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### NON-TRANSFERABLE: A GOOD EDUCATION, WORK EXPERIENCE AND LEISURE

In this chapter, I examine changes in work, language and socializing to illustrate their influence on women's understanding and experiences of leisure in Canada. The process of leaving the familiar and recreating one's life in another place and time brings into focus the taken-for-granted contexts of work, family, and community and their impact on one's life. These contexts include ruling relations that govern women's lives such as the regulation of many professions in Canada and the credentialing barriers to practice.

I begin this chapter by describing the education the research participants received and its relationship to the work they did before immigrating to Canada. A closer look at their employment history provides the basis for analyzing the impact of not working or being under-employed in Canada. From there I introduce the theme *compromised careers* to examine similarities and differences that influence their present career trajectories. The employment status of these women, who are at various points in the resettlement process, has implications for how they view leisure and their participation in self-defined leisure activities. Vesna's idea about the impact of language on identity is discussed as it relates to the women's employment status and their leisure options and choices. Identity is a thread that runs through education, work, and leisure activities for these women.

The second half of this chapter begins with the women describing their definitions of leisure, the leisure activities they do and some of the issues that make leisure problematic in the context of their lives in Canada. This discussion provides an introduction for the

significant role that language and family play in the women's free time and non-work hours which is apparent in the theme, *socializing is the key to leisure*. After describing some of the solitary leisure activities the women enjoy, I focus on what social activities and interactions can reveal about leisure participation for this group of immigrant women. I propose that it is the convergence of several circumstances of their current lives, rather than any one factor, that influences leisure experiences for this group of women. By circumstances, I refer to those features of daily life that are experienced personally but shaped by the social organization in which the women's individual lives are lived.

The two main themes I write about are grounded in the women's stories and contribute to the main argument of this thesis. That is, the concept of leisure is non-transferable and complex because it is situated in the contexts and particular realities of women's lives, which are transformed through the process of resettlement. Thus the tacit notion of leisure as typically presented in health care, leisure studies and popular North American culture must be challenged and incorporate this knowledge.

### **Post-secondary Education**

The diverse jobs that women held before moving to Canada are best described as professional careers, which in most cases were a result of their post-secondary education. These careers include social work, architecture, business, engineering, psychology and teaching; the latter ranging from pre-school to university levels. Regardless of where each woman grew up and was educated, completing post-secondary studies was rarely identified as anything out of the ordinary. As Anita stated, "like most people in my generation, I just finish elementary gymnasium which is high school, and then university I finished." Attending

university in the former Yugoslavia during the 1980's was financially accessible to many students like Anita and Vesna because of government subsidies. During the same period in Guatemala university tuition was inexpensive, according to Rosa, but possible only if one's family could survive without that person's financial contribution. Rosa's parents are teachers and put a high value on education, as evidenced by her three sisters' teaching careers and Rosa's own education.

Not all participants articulated the value their parents placed on education as Rosa did. The educational levels the women achieved, however, indicate support from parents even when sending their daughters to university caused some economic hardship. Ling's family struggled financially but found a way to send Ling and her three brothers to university.

When I was in childhood, I won't call as the middle class because no, the money my father earned was just enough to, you know, expense. So we had a little bit hard time, in my childhood. But later on, my brothers and I we graduate and we work and then economics, how to say?, economically? (yes, economically) Economically it became better and better.

The financial constraints experienced by Svetlana's parents influenced her career choice rather than determined whether or not she would complete post-secondary education. As a high school student in the former Soviet Union, Svetlana studied mathematics and physics at a special school outside her home town. She planned to be a doctor and described having many options "because when I was a student, I was successful in all directions." Svetlana missed getting into medical school by a small margin and said that she would have studied for the next exam but yielded to her parent's preference. Svetlana explained further "Yes and I come back to my native, to my native city to my parent's house and they said: No, we don't have money to study you in another city. Chose something in our own city." The income of

her parents determined Svetlana's subsequent career in engineering and she obtained her education at a technical university.

Most of the participants completed a bachelor's degree in their home countries and some individuals earned additional degrees and diplomas related to their careers. There are three exceptions to this pattern. Rosa's major course of study at university, interrupted by her sudden departure from Guatemala, is unrelated to her present employment. Alicia's university studies did not prepare her to work in the security position she had in Mexico. Although Deepa's two degrees are not in education per se, she believes that being well-educated helped her get a teaching position in India. Deepa explains her education this way.

Also, I have done bachelor in law and I have one year diploma in industrial relation and personnel management. And I was a kindergarten teacher over there for three years, while I was studying at law because the law courses are in evenings. So I started to teach in an elementary school. Like from 7:00 o'clock in the morning until 1:00 o'clock....So I got elementary school near to my home and I got a job because I have a lot of qualifications and everything.

In some instances, the exact Canadian equivalent of the qualifications these women earned is not clear. This is due to differences in other countries' educational systems and my unfamiliarity with those systems. For example, Manuela earned three diplomas in Panama. Manuela's diploma qualifies her to teach elementary school. The second diploma Manuela received is for secondary school teaching and the third diploma translates as a 'licence in philosophy' that she said all teachers need. Compared to demands of Canadian law school, it is surprising that Deepa's pursuit of a law degree in India allowed her enough time to teach kindergarten six hours every day. The names of the degrees are less important than the fact that the women's educational qualifications enabled them to pursue their careers and earn relatively good wages before coming to Canada. Aspects of those careers and the contexts in

which they took place are described to identify the gap between past and present employment, and better understand how work experiences shape identity. Based on their many years of work and plans to find suitable employment in Canada, it is reasonable to propose that work experiences influence how women define themselves.

### **Pre-immigration Careers**

Work constituted a central role for 12 of the women before they had children and began to coordinate child rearing and household management with a career. Graciela worked as a psychologist for several years before her marriage and up until her daughter Virginia was born. The circumstances of their life in Mexico were such that Graciela and her husband could manage on his income alone. Graciela cared for Virginia in the three-bedroom apartment their family owned. She hoped a similar at-home arrangement could be made in Canada, at least until Virginia started school. After resettling in the lower mainland, Graciela was disappointed to find that her family required at least one and a half incomes to manage the high cost of living, despite renting just a small basement suite. None of the jobs Graciela has held thus far make full use of her previous career experience. This pattern of underemployment is taken up later in the chapter.

The pre-immigration work experiences of many women in this study are similar to Graciela's and they retain particular work identities despite changes to their marital status and living circumstances. Prior to marrying her husband in Canada, Maria worked as an elementary school teacher and owned a home in Mexico. In the early years of her career there Maria earned enough money to take vacations to the United States and Canada. Initially, Maria and her husband were going to live in Mexico where she would have continued



teaching. This plan changed after they recognized the difficulties that another immigration, new language and resettlement would present for her husband. Maria now teaches at the pre-school level and manages to raise her three children, while helping with her husband's business. Anita first worked in a professional career but quit to do part-time design work at home, while raising her children. Anita's family was able to live well enough in the former Yugoslavia on one and a half salaries. When she and her family arrived in Germany as refugees, Anita learned German quickly and resumed work in her original career for three years before immigrating to Canada.

Before she married and began a family, Vesna established herself as a university academic. The flexibility of her career allowed Vesna to teach for six years while raising her two children. Later, as a refugee in Germany and alone with her children, Vesna completed another degree that provided continuity to her sense of identity as an academic. At times, the activities that affirmed her professional identity also offered Vesna a means of coping with the war in Bosnia. Vesna explained the process of completing her second degree.

At that time I always writing my thesis and it was, I really enjoyed doing it because the subject interested me and it wasn't kind of, you know, labour for me, hard work. It was (this was your master's?) my masters and of course, my doctorate too. I was doing my thesis here and it was kind of escape from reality. So it was for me really salvation because the war was going on in Bosnia and I would just, you know go to the library and study and forget what's happening and it really helped me to go through difficult times....I was, because I really felt that a salvation. Because if I stayed at home I would just watch TV all day, from every half an hour check. You know what's going on in Bosnia, can I recognize somebody on the streets who was killed; it was a really terrible time.

The role that academic achievement played in maintaining an important aspect of Vesna's identity continues in Vancouver. Vesna is enrolled in an English language program now that,

when completed, will qualify her to teach English as a second language. Despite the differences between Vesna's original academic career and this new endeavor, teaching remains a career focus for her.

Teaching was a portable career for Deepa too. Although there was no economic necessity for Deepa to work after her marriage to an engineer, after they moved to Delhi for his work she began tutoring students in math and English. Subsequent to a year in New York where her husband worked for a multinational company, the family moved to California. There Deepa worked at a pre-school that required parents' participation. Deepa described her volunteer and paid work.

So I worked there for 2 ½ years with my son and I have a very good experience about that school because I learned a lot about the kids and everything and at the same time my son didn't feel like he's separated from his mother....So I worked as an on-call substitute and they are paying very good, like \$12 an hour for a substitute....I have to work once a week and it's not paid. But sometimes if a parent is not able to work and they need some substitute. So they call another parent, 'can you work for me?' And there is a rate for the substitute in that school.

Despite the fact that both the husbands and wives were employed and most had young children at home, the women took primary responsibility for child rearing and household work. The kind of support available to women affected how difficult or easy it was for some of the women to maintain their careers, care for children and manage a household. A few examples substantiate this point. Given her very part-time work and the modern conveniences of an apartment, Deepa found her life in California easy compared to what women do in India to maintain their homes. As a single parent in Mexico, Alicia was able to work full-time because her sister-in-law, sister and mother took turns caring for Alicia's daughter, Beatrice. The availability of inexpensive household help that Graciela employed in Mexico allowed

her to focus on child rearing and not spend much time doing housework. In the Russia, Svetlana described using state-run child care that was available 11 hours a day and said, "Yes we paid some (some) but it's not big money, all families can afford it....It's maybe 5% of your salary or 3%, it's okay." This societal support allowed Svetlana's children to be cared for while she and her husband pursued engineering careers full-time.

These descriptions of the women's prior work and domestic circumstances are offered to provide some point of comparison to their current situations. Among the more significant changes that resettlement has brought about are learning to function in a new language and developing local social supports. I discussed these changes earlier in the context of discrete activities such as shopping and the less tangible processes involved in making friends. It is important to recognize, however, that speaking one's own language throughout the activities of work, family and community life was a given in the women's home countries. The necessity for most individuals to speak English now is one reason for the difficulty that women face in pursuing careers in Canada that are comparable to those in their home countries. In contrast, Deepa's childhood education in English, her experiences in the United States and the type of work she chose, have enabled a more successful job search in Canada than that of other women who are less skilled in English. For many of the research participants, though, their current downward occupational mobility is influenced by English language ability, lack of Canadian job experience and professional qualifications that are not considered equivalent to those required in Canada. These issues, along with the gendered division of domestic and child rearing responsibilities, contribute to a theme of compromised

careers that are experienced presently by the majority of the women in this research. A discussion of that theme forms the next section.

### **Compromised Careers**

Twelve of the 14 research participants were employed full-time before their resettlement in Canada and now only Isabelle and Rosa work full-time. Interestingly Isabelle and Rosa were the only women who were not employed before moving to Canada, probably due to their student status. The collective work history of the participants contrasts with their present situations where only two women work in professions for which they were educated; Isabelle is a web designer and Maria is a pre-school teacher. Most of the other women are either unemployed or employed very part-time, like Vesna who teaches ESL on-call and Dolores who conducts monthly personal development seminars in Spanish. Notwithstanding Isabelle and Rosa's employment gains, this situation exemplifies the downward occupational mobility that many skilled professionals experience after immigration to Canada.

No one skill or characteristic results in these women obtaining desirable work. That said, English language ability and, to a lesser extent, employment with people who speak one's native language have had a strong influence on the participants' work trajectories in Canada. Two examples help illustrate this point. Isabelle spent a number of years in another country, studying in English and earning additional degrees. One of these degrees prepared Isabelle for her current employment, which she started shortly after her arrival in Canada. Isabelle had not been employed in this area before nor did she have Canadian work experience, which is something that many employers require. Given the competitive nature of web design, I suggest that the English skills Isabelle honed as a graduate student contributed

greatly to her obtaining her present job. The impact of Rosa's lack of work history when she left Guatemala has been lessened by working in agencies where Spanish is spoken or, in the case in her current full-time position, where her clients may speak only Spanish.

The length of time that women have been in Canada also influences their employability as they are likely to acquire more English language skills over time. Rosa has been in Canada for several years, speaks English well and works full-time. Anita's facility with languages and her five-year tenure in Vancouver have enhanced interactions with her customers. Arriving within the past three years, Fereshteh and Svetlana are still unemployed but actively working to improve their English skills. The lack of professional licenses, teaching credentials or other qualifications equivalent to those accepted in Canada, along with language limitations, create significant barriers to work for many of these women. Svetlana's situation illustrates how the issues of language and lack of professional work experience in Canada function together to limit employment opportunities.

Svetlana has an advanced degree in engineering, a long work history and a good understanding about the process of resettlement. The latter insight is based on her experience of moving from Russia to Israel and working there for five years before coming to Canada. Svetlana explains that "In many ways it's predictable now because second immigration is easy, easy, easy for me because I know what I can expect. (Ah, you know the process) Yes, what must be after six months, after one year and five years..." Despite her knowledge of resettlement processes and willingness to do what is necessary for employment, Svetlana faces barriers to obtaining a job. Engineering is a regulated profession in Canada and provincial and territorial associations set standards and grant licenses for professional

practice (Canadian Council of Engineers, 2003). Among the steps applicants take to acquire a license include paying an application fee, having their academic qualifications and work experience evaluated, and passing a written exam. Only permanent residents are eligible to apply to be professional engineers. The process takes two years typically, during which time the foreign-trained engineer may work under the supervision of a professional engineer presumably for less salary.

Svetlana does not have Canadian work experience and it is questionable whether she could pass the engineering exam in English now. Also, even if her qualifications and experience from Russia are judged favorably, there are few opportunities in the Vancouver area for the type of electrical engineering design she does. Svetlana has already completed a Canadian Electrical Code course at a local technical college to improve her employability. Recognizing these immediate barriers though, Svetlana is willing to seek work as a computer draftsman which she trained for while living in Israel. But there are still other obstacles to overcome, as Svetlana's daily log reflects in the previous chapter and she identifies here.

But if you study my usual things, it's no time to find job here very seriously. So I must leave my English classes and find job all 8 hours every day or study English. Something's wrong. So in this period I tried to combine these things but it's not very successful.

Yes, some days I meant from this Monday, I try more closely to find job but I start if I find spend two or three hours at the computer find, only check at list of vacancies, I don't do my homework. If I come to class without my homework, I can't see teacher because I feel very bad and I understand that if I lie, I lie for myself and I don't study anything and nobody will win in this, so I choose to study English. But I choose to continue my English studies but the problems that I have break in my experience and after that if I go to interview they said, 'Oh what you were doing this time? Why you don't working?'

Through Svetlana's example it is clear that language ability, qualifications, and time conspire to postpone her successful employment as an engineer. Similar obstacles exist that currently prevent two other participants from working as a psychologist and a social worker, respectively.

For Manuela to work as a teacher in British Columbia she must have permanent resident status or a work visa and pass an oral and a written English proficiency exam. Manuela must submit university transcripts and an evaluation of her teaching. As well, if the Panamanian educational system is judged as unequal to the British Columbian school system, Manuela will be required to take additional university courses before she receives a teaching certificate. After 30 years as an educator, Manuela remains enthusiastic about teaching and wishes to continue her career in British Columbia. When I asked if Manuela had any questions during the interview, each question she asked focused on teaching: the process of credential evaluation, the likelihood of obtaining a job, and the expectation of English proficiency. Being a teacher is central to Manuela's identity and the volunteer literacy class she teaches to Spanish-speaking people at a community centre helps to maintain that identity. Several women engaged in other kinds of activities that confirmed their professional identities, perhaps because so few of these women were employed in their chosen careers.

The theme of compromised careers provides a way to consider the potential changes to identity through the current employment situations that women experience. Identity is a complex concept but it is reasonable to suggest that for these women, their identities have been partially shaped by years of successful work in positions of considerable responsibility and some status. A comparison of employment outcomes between husbands and wives who

immigrated together and are both currently living in Canada reveals one challenge to women's identities. (This comparison excludes Maria's and Alicia's husbands, who were working in Canada when they married and Manuela, who arrived alone. Ling's and Chin-sung's husbands are not included because they still work in Taiwan and their employment status here is unclear.) Of the remaining nine couples, all of the women's husbands found full-time work compared to only two of the wives. The two men who spoke English before arriving in Canada, Deepa's and Isabelle's husbands, found employment in their respective professions. In contrast, Fereshteh's husband works in retail sales and Svetlana's husband has a job that pays eight dollars an hour; both men are professionals whose jobs are regulated within Canada.

In their home countries many women like Vesna, Fereshteh, Svetlana and Chin-sung, had careers and also took primary responsibility for running the household and rearing the children. A different blend of social support, including the availability of family and friends, and skill with the language used in their home countries enabled these women to manage career and domestic roles simultaneously. Language limitations, problems with qualifications necessary for regulated professions and sheer lack of time are among the issues that contribute to the women's current employment outcomes. The lack of time to seek work arises from time spent completing household and child rearing responsibilities and participating in formal resettlement activities such as English classes.

Which spouse obtains full-time employment has implications on the reconstruction of gender relations between couples as they resettle in Canada. The way each immigrant is assessed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada may inscribe or infer a status upon the



applicant that influences the division of domestic responsibilities and employment. For example, the 'point system' used to assess immigrants leaves to the staff member's discretion the decision about which applicant in a couple or larger family unit will be categorized as the principal 'skilled worker' (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003d). It is reasonable to expect that Canadian immigration officers are influenced by gender roles in which the man is expected to be the primary wage earner for the couple or family. Conversely, women's employment is often seen as non-essential due to expectations that their primary roles will be as mothers and homemakers (Man, 1995). The point system presents yet another challenge to women's identities by its differentiation, usually along gender lines, of who is skilled and destined to work and who is expected to take on family responsibilities. While these institutional demarcations do not determine employment outcomes, they are implicated in women's compromised careers.

Fourteen highly educated women with good work experiences immigrated to Canada. Twelve of those women are now either unemployed or work part-time. Of those twelve, Ling and Vesna are involved in programs that will enable them to teach English as a second language. Graciela, Maria, and Alicia are employed part-time but at jobs that do not fully exploit their experiences and educations. Anita continues her design work and has never returned to the career for which she was educated. Only Rosa and Isabelle are fully employed in careers of their choice. The absence of work's benefits is particularly felt in a new environment. Alicia's description of teaching her staff at a bank in Mexico gives some clue about the importance of work. She explains "I really enjoyed that part, to teach people. So when I came here I felt so like nothing. I'm not doing anything."

Alicia's sentiments reflect the extent to which many women identify with their work and careers. The preceding examination of these compromised careers substantiates the connection of present English language ability and length of time in Canada, to employment outcomes. Linked to these outcomes are criteria that women must meet before pursuing careers that are regulated professions in Canada. In the next section, I discuss what women think about leisure, the activities they describe as leisure and how leisure fits into their lives. Central to this discussion is a recognition that leisure is intertwined with the ways women's lives are presently organized, as well as their personal beliefs, preferences and choices.

### **Views of Canadian Leisure**

My empirical data substantiate the contention that leisure activities and meanings are non-transferable. Data show that these activities are gendered, embedded in language, constrained by circumstances such as employment, and linked to values and beliefs that are evolving into new cultural forms. I begin this section by describing women's views of Canadian leisure, based on their observations of other people and how leisure is portrayed in the media. Framed against those perceptions, I report the ways that women define leisure and some of their solitary activities. I discuss the different meanings that some leisure activities have acquired for these women and the role that socializing plays in understanding their leisure. To conclude this section, I identify the intersecting forces that impede and enhance women's leisure activities.

Several women described Canadian leisure as physically challenging outdoor activities, often done in wilderness areas and sometimes carrying an element of risk.

According to Isabelle, there is “almost a competitive compulsion” to leisure activities such as hiking, bicycling and skiing. Isabelle elaborated on this perception.

I mean to me, it's like risking your neck and limb and I don't know what for. So yeah, I think that one thing that impressed me about Canada, and maybe Europeans are just as bad, and maybe that's where it came from. Yeah, the more dangerous it seems to be the more exciting it seems to be. Rock climbing and things like that.

Isabelle's observation that many leisure activities here occur outdoors was echoed by other women who think that Canadians have a need to connect with nature. But it is not being outdoors and doing leisure activities that these women find difficult to understand; indeed many expressed pleasure at being out in a uncrowded and beautiful environment. Rather it is what they perceive Canadians doing and their reasons for these activities that is at times perplexing. Ling described Canadian leisure in this way.

But I don't consider myself the same as the Canadian people do in the leisure activity. To me, I mean, Canadian they seems more enjoy the, how to say?, to connect themselves with nature. Just like they enjoy hiking or canoeing or some of those activities. But to me, those activities seems very far away from leisure. And I don't know how to do it....

Here in Canada I think, many people they do many things without any purpose. They just enjoy it.

Vesna and Anita identified the influence of the economy and media on leisure and stated that Canadians are directed towards particular activities through an associated leisure discourse. In particular they cited the role that television plays in popularizing and commodifying leisure activities, many of which are costly here. Anita and Vesna thought that leisure activities in the former Yugoslavia were less expensive, more spontaneous, and far less constrained than what they have seen and experienced in Canada. Vesna used skiing as an example of a leisure activity that was accessible to almost anyone in Bosnia.

But you know we had resources, everything was easily approachable for us because it didn't cost so much money. So I remember in my, when I was in high school it was all of my friends would ski. Because it wasn't expensive it was affordable even for low income families. The equipment was more expensive than here but the ski passes were extremely cheap. And there was always somebody who has cousins who has cottage in the mountain and we would go. You didn't have to pay for it, it was less centred around money.

The spontaneity Vesna and Anita described was associated with easy access to the coast and the mountains plus a different work ethic. Anita described it this way.

It was very easy it was, just because of the way I think we lived or because of the way we looked at the work and this time that we have after the work, you know. It was really relaxing, everything it was just very spontaneous....They would, a lot of people would just spend their working time doing nothing, believe me. That was really awful. In my country you could have people who would just act like they worked.

Vesna hinted at the commodification of leisure and, in doing so, identified the larger forces that shape people's leisure practices in Canada without their conscious knowledge of it.

While Bosnia now may be more influenced by North American leisure ideology and practices, Vesna's perceptions draw attention to the different cultural forms that mold and constrain what people describe as leisure. When I asked Vesna if there was anything else she wanted to add about leisure in Canada, this was her reply.

I think it's really important, the aspect of directed leisure. How easily they are influenced in planning our leisure time by media by, and the way how to get rid of what is trend, what is 'in' this season. And not only media but talking with other people what is I think it's loss of individuality in human spirit when you are so easily influenced by others in planning your free time. It's enough that we spend our working time! Let me have freedom at least in plan my leisure.

Yeah I'm sure at the bottom, they want to make money because there's so many places you can just go with families but they won't let you. So you have areas designed for and I feel it so restricted (constrained here) yeah because, look at all these mountains and wilderness you can go wherever you want but yet somehow it's restricted. I don't, is it just the desire to make, I

think it's a basic economy. They want to design places to make more money and but I think it's restricted human freedom. They want to make sure that every move is planned and I don't know who we always say 'they' but probably let's say big companies or whoever dictates the rules and so I just feel I want to do things on my own and not. It's not just that I don't want to pay. It's not the money; it's just question of freedom, choosing what I want to do.

Many women in this study identified the following as leisure activities that Canadians engaged in: shopping, eating out, reading, playing sports, watching movies, going to a library, walking, swimming and also attending the symphony and theatre. These were familiar to the research participants and, with the exception of playing sports competitively rather than casually, activities that most of them defined as leisure. The activities that these women do as leisure, the contexts in which the activities occur and their thoughts about leisure form the basis of the next section.

### **Leisure Activities and Definitions**

Leisure is not a universally understood concept but neither is it so different for these women than the definitions presented in Chapter One. After initially stating that she did not understand the meaning of leisure, Deepa offered this definition, "In our country, if a woman is resting, if you are resting too much because it's a lot of hard work over there [India].... Yeah, like in our country, leisure means rest." Later in the interview, Deepa described leisure as things she does that bring satisfaction, pleasure and "to do something really active thing, to create something like if I am knitting."

Nine of the women specifically defined leisure as free time, in which a variety of activities could occur. From the interviews it is clear that free time and choice are pre-requisites for most experiences described as leisure. Svetlana described leisure as doing what

she enjoys in the “empty hours.” This traditional notion of leisure as unencumbered time is compatible with many activities that women described doing. These include the frequently cited pastime of reading (in English and their original language), watching television, listening to music, taking walks, knitting, socializing, and doing various activities with their families. The freedom to choose these activities was important to the women but free time for leisure did not always coincide with disposable income for higher priced activities such as going to the symphony. At other times the need to engage in resettlement activities limited the free time available to participate in leisure. Fereshteh explains possible outcomes of the availability of time and money for leisure.

No, maybe you have free time but you don't have money. For example, I have free time but I don't have money to go the theatre. I don't. I cannot travel. For example, we like ski with we like to go to (downhill?) but cannot afford it you know. But maybe I have free time but I don't have money to use it. But, in free time could be leisure too because in free time you can do some simple thing that you cannot do other times. For example, taking shower really slowly, talking by phone with your friends, calm not in the hurry.

Some activities that women experienced as leisure served multiple needs. Vesna's weekly Saturday grocery shopping excursions also included meeting friends and having coffee with them, and then browsing at a newsstand that carries European magazines. The blurring of work and leisure is evident in Vesna's description of writing, because of the enjoyment she derives from it. Isabelle identifies playing with her children as leisure but this may also be understood as a parenting responsibility, albeit a pleasant one. Words like enjoyment, satisfaction and pleasure were all used in women's attempts to describe their understanding of leisure.

Foremost among the features of leisure that are important for these women is relaxation and its relationship to their subjective sense of good health. Relaxation is important because several women identified feelings of stress that they associated with resettlement circumstance such as unemployment. Fereshteh believes that during the first year in Canada her worries about money and the future were responsible for the increased ill health that she experienced. When I asked Chin-sung whether leisure participation had any effect on her health, she offered this answer.

I think so because if you can get more leisure you have more time to take off the pressure. Sometimes too much pressure will affect to your health. Especially from the mind. (Especially from the mind?) Yeah, because if you have too much pressure, you will feel anxiety then sometimes you can't sleep well.

Rosa recognizes the need for relaxation after stressful group sessions with her clients in the downtown eastside, whereas Ling's day to day anxieties are lessened through the relaxation she experiences from taking scenic walks. From Graciela's perspective the type of leisure activity seems less important than the outcome.

Yes, but I think leisure could be any activity that gives you uh, a support in your, in your emotional and mental health. For example. I think to make some sports, swimming pool and to share with your family, is giving you good emotional health, yeah? Supports you emotional health and this is for us, a leisure. And to give you relax and you can do extra. I don't know how to maybe it's extra things, it's not a routine exactly.

One of the biggest issues for this group of women is that they seldom experience the "empty hours" to which Svetlana refers. Typically these women are busy with mothering and housework responsibilities plus taking English classes and doing various forms of homework from resettlement programs. Several women described leisure less in terms of specific activities and more with respect to the outcomes from leisure participation. Manuela stated

"For me, leisure is to take time for you, for you for something you like. I like to study."

Graciela talked about the need for leisure activities at community centres to be conducted in different languages to accommodate patrons. Although Anita identified pursuing hobbies, dancing and playing soccer as relaxing and fun, she also said "It's also this connection with people that very important you know." This connection was often made through doing leisure activities with their families, where women could enjoy themselves without having to speak English.

### *The Importance of Family to Leisure*

The differences in how women defined leisure reflects their experiences in the countries they lived in and specifically the ways that work, family and community life intersected with free time. As Deepa's comments show, those experiences offer insight rather than determine the current views of leisure that women hold. For Rosa, the years of civil war, the value of close association with family and the few leisure activities that were available in Guatemala contribute to this articulate response to my question about leisure.

I guess that the concept of leisure... You see we don't give a name for things that we do. We just do them, we don't say 'oh we're going to have some leisure,' or 'we're going to have a little bit of recreation.' We just do things and we never call them by a name which is very much the northern kind of way, American and Canadian kind of way of giving a name to everything that we do here and we don't in Guatemala. So when we are doing things we're never kind of like, 'oh this is what we're doing,' we just go and do those things. So the concept of leisure is not very clear to me, whether it involves recreation for physical purposes or things like that. So most of the things that we do we call it free time, having our free time together.

Family togetherness was an ideal expressed by many of the women but of heightened importance to Rosa because of the interdependence within her family of origin that was necessary for survival. In Chin-sung's situation as a manager working for a multinational



company in Taiwan, there were many leisure activities available that she could afford but little time to pursue them. Chin-sung's definition of leisure showed the influence of her pressured 15-hour a day work weeks. When I asked what qualities were part of leisure, Chin-sung gave this answer.

I think that relaxing is a most, that's the number one. The second is to purify your thinking. Not so many things to bother you, nothing to bother you. And the third is, you should do some healthy exercise, that's good for your body, or good for your mind.

Ling lived in Taiwan during the same time as Chin-sung and Ling's discussion of leisure reflected the busy pace of life for middle-income earners in that urban area. She identified people in Taiwan as having a "...different definition about leisure. We think leisure is uh, extra things, except our basic needs. We can't have a bad result in leisure to us, I mean in Taiwan, by our definition." Ling defined leisure for herself as activities that reduced her anxiety. Ling's definition has changed somewhat as seen by her comparison of leisure activities that fit circumstances in Taiwan to the role that leisure plays in her present situation, where the need to lessen anxiety associated with the resettlement process is important. All the women have some understanding of leisure and their different descriptions implicate time, place, and circumstances as significant factors that shape the meaning of leisure.

### *Reading and Solitary Leisure Activities*

The most helpful description of solitary leisure activities that this group of women enjoys is one that situates these pastimes in particular contexts. Reading for pleasure was the most frequently cited leisure activity that women did alone. Compared to other preferred leisure activities reading has cost, portability and familiarity with the activity in its favour. Leisure reading differed from required reading such as doing English homework or selecting appropriate books for children's school projects. When women chose to read it was often for the sheer pleasure of the activity. But reading in English was sometimes less than satisfying. As Alicia stated "If it's in English, it's not so leisurely." Reading also provided a way for women to maintain some aspect of their identities and this was obvious for several women. Fereshteh described reading and writing as long-time interests that have persisted during resettlement. These are activities that occur within her home and are relatively inexpensive. Fereshteh elaborated on her passion for reading and strategies for overcoming limitations in English comprehension.

Reading is the best leisure...I don't like to read just one subject. In the same moment, I read different things. For example novel, history, and like classic books ... More than 4 or 5 books around me sometimes this, sometime this, sometime this, I can. (Are you reading in English?) Yes in English, yes. (Novels?) No, this is hard for me but social books is easier. I borrow from library...Social issues about women, about poverty, about relationship between time and children. About children issues, about women issues... If the topic is family, I like. And if I have time I always do this. When I am waiting for something (you're reading) yeah. I love to read. And the same thing: I love to write too because I used to write when I was at home. It was my leisure, writing.

Chin-sung reported that reading in English for pleasure was getting easier especially since she has been unemployed. She identified reading home decorating, cable television, travel and

cooking magazines as enjoyable and helpful to improve her English. Chin-sung mentioned needing a dictionary at times but being satisfied to obtain the general meaning of a book. At the time of our interview, Chin-sung was reading a Harry Potter book in English. When I asked if she read novels in Chinese or English, Chin-sung replied: "I reading both. In Mandarin and in English because before I came to Canada I already read Chinese, Mandarin version in Taiwan." This constitutes an effective but different strategy than Fereshteh's practice of reading English books on topics that she is familiar with.

Vesna described reading as a multi-faceted activity, one in which she takes pleasure but has also used to find comfort and solace from the stress of resettlement. Her identity as an academic and now as a writer has been sustained partly through her passion for reading. For Vesna, the separation between pleasure, which is often associated with leisure, and work was difficult to make. In a conversation about her leisure activities, Vesna offered these comments.

For example, I like walking. I go to the beach and then my, but reading is mostly, but it's so strange because reading is something I really have to do because its part of my job and for writing you have to be [reading]. But it's more leisure because I really enjoy so I think reading is my first leisure....First thing in the morning I read newspaper, go to just flip through it and then I would, for example at the moment I read Phillip Roth....[Or] a novel and some like a documentary book. So, all sorts of books.

Reading is a leisure activity that occurs at home and is relatively inexpensive. In addition to the pleasure it gives, reading has provided a sense of identity continuity for immigrant women even now when it is often done in English.

*Barriers to Leisure Activities*

There were many other leisure activities that women wanted to pursue but three main barriers existed: cost, time and language. For many women, the cost of attending concerts and theatre, traveling, and even taking swimming lessons often precluded their participation in these activities. Svetlana remarked how expensive cultural activities are in Vancouver, comparing the regular cost of a symphony ticket here to the Ukrainian price of about one dollar. Typically it was a combination of unemployment or part-time work and the high cost of living in the lower mainland, including leisure and recreational activities, that deterred women from engaging in some of their preferred leisure activities. In contrast to other participants, Ling and Chin-sung found the cost of living in Canada less expensive than in Taiwan.

The changed meaning of some leisure activities prevented women from experiencing relaxation, enjoyment and other qualities they associated with leisure. Watching television was one activity that could be perceived as leisure at some times and at other times served a different purpose. Ling explained it this way.

And in fact before I came to here, watching TV is quite fun for me. But right now, because watching TV that means includes I have to understanding what they are talking about (pay attention?), yeah pay attention. So it's a very mixed feeling. I feel, still I quite enjoy watching TV but the other way I feel, I 'have' to do that...If I try to improve my English, I have to do that.

Ling highlights the subjective qualities that may be experienced within one discrete activity. Some other activities that may feel like leisure to some women, like taking an adult education class, were described as work. In Chapter Eight, I will discuss the implications of

understanding changes to the meaning of leisure activities and the importance of not making assumptions about others' activities.

The lack of free time to engage in some leisure activities has been described in Chapter Five and linked to the orchestration of multiple responsibilities that these women have taken on. As Maria declared while I was explaining the purpose of the interview, "Where leisure fits into my day? I don't think I have any leisure!" Although this may have been said in a moment of exasperation or exaggeration, Maria's daily schedule leaves little room for leisure activities and most occur in the context of family leisure. The perception and reality of a shortage of free time was unanimous among the women who spoke with me. When I asked Isabelle if there was anything getting in the way of doing more leisure activities, she replied "work." Isabelle talked about her need to combine the disparate threads of work, leisure and family life because of the time crunch. She explained the importance of this in the following way.

Because I tend to be you know, 'what needs to be done' and what's left over is leisure OK or fun time. But there's usually nothing left over. There's usually no energy for that and so, you know that's why you have to just intersperse it.... I think I've answered that in the sense that not to expect too much by way of leisure and try to grab it where I can. Or try to mix it with my work, or try to work into my leisure. I think those are all, you know, a consequence of that shortage of time.

From a different perspective Graciela also talked about limited time for leisure. Although she works only part-time, Graciela identified the limited hours of operation of the local community centre, shopping malls and other public places as impediments to leisure activities. She wondered why so few leisure activities around the lower mainland were offered in Spanish. Along with limited time and money language, and the social function it

serves, was a barrier to some leisure activities. The impact of English language skills on leisure participation is best discussed in the context of socializing. To a large extent family and friends facilitated the majority of the participants' leisure activities in their native languages.

### **Socializing is the Key to Leisure**

'I think for us, to socialize and to share with our friends is our leisure.'

It is generally understood by those writing in leisure studies that leisure is inherently social, woven into people's roles and activities, and strongly influenced by the contexts in which they function (Kelly, 1992). Despite their stated enjoyment of some solitary leisure activities, the most consistent means through which intense feelings of pleasure, relaxation and enjoyment occurred was socializing. Socializing was the main thread that ran through women's descriptions of leisure activities, with family being the primary leisure group for most women. While family constitutes a ready-made leisure group for many Canadian-born women who share similar characteristics with the participants, the heightened importance of family leisure may be traced to language skills. Simply stated, most of these 14 women were more comfortable doing leisure activities in social settings with people who spoke their native language. Even Rosa, who speaks English well, described weekends filled with family leisure activities, interspersed with shopping and other errands that they did together. Rosa stated, "I think one of our main things is to have fun and have our time together...Yeah, us as a family." Given this value, it is not surprising that everything from walking dogs at the SPCA to having a picnic by a river, is done with the family.

In addition to attending live theatre or grocery shopping with a friend, Fereshteh also identified leisure as time spent with her husband in the evenings. She explained their time together this way.

Or talk to your husband, for me relax, and talk and read a poem. It is the thing that sometimes we did in our country the night when the children came to the kitchen; listen to the music, read the poem or talk about books...as a leisure, I prefer to have free time in my apartment, talk to my husband about day to day, different things. Because he is very, he has a very high quality things to say sometimes.

Given Fereshteh's busy schedule of English classes, volunteer work at the women's centre and resettlement program activities, it is not surprising that solitary and family leisure are most satisfying now. The limitations associated with being a relatively new English speaker and wanting to socialize with English speaking people were communicated poignantly by Svetlana. She stated "maybe I feel that by my poor English, I don't interesting person to Canadian people, because it's difficult for them understand or conversate with me." Interestingly Svetlana did not talk about friends she had made except to say that she is different than Russian-speaking people in Vancouver because of her five-year experience in Israel.

The absence of extended family in Canada emphasized the importance of having family members and friends who conversed in the participants' native language. These were people with whom women could share leisure activities. For example, both Ling and Chinsung were alone with their children while their husbands were living in Taiwan temporarily. One of Ling's leisure activities was spending several hours per week chatting in 'real time' on the internet with her brothers in Taiwan and China. Ling's weekend leisure activities involved spending part of each day with a Mandarin-speaking friend and her children, playing

games, watching videos and making meals together. Ling described these social times as helping with the loneliness she experiences here.

Many of Chin-sung's leisure activities occurred in her home with a close friend that she sees almost every day. This particular friend is a native Mandarin-speaker who also speaks English. During their lunch times together and when this friend is teaching Chin-sung to bake cakes, Mandarin is their language of choice. Along with two other Taiwanese women they know, they take weekly walks in a local park and converse in Mandarin. Findings from the data show that socializing with people who speak their native language, whether those people are family members or friends, enables the participants to access and engage in leisure activities. Leisure is one means by which people integrate into society. The situation of socializing primarily with one's linguistic compatriots is a reasonable choice since people often feel most comfortable speaking their first language. But coupled with a changed work environment, or no work setting in which to meet native English speakers, this choice may result in diminished opportunities in which to become friends with other people. Although English language skills may not determine leisure activities, it was clear for this group of women that most of their leisure occurred alone or with people from their own language group.

The role that friends of the research participants play is a dynamic one, as they not only socialize with the women, and their families, but also provide emotional support. In the context of their resettlement and lack of family support, some friends have been like family for women who are recomposing their lives and the lives their families in Canada. This re-composition involves a process of creating new meanings out of the juncture of multiple



cultural forms, those one claims as her own and those she may be claiming part of that are 'Canadian. Socializing with friends from one's country of origin can ease the difficult times, as Vesna described.

I think it's a need to share, especially when I'm depressed, when I'm sad I need, when I feel how terribly I miss my country and my previous life. It really helps if you share with somebody who is in the same situation. You know we sit together, we tell jokes. It's not only jokes but we share our bad mood and then it helps. It somehow helps, I think it would be the worst to isolate myself and just be alone. It doesn't help. It helps when we get together often and see that we all have similar problems. Sorry, I think I feel very strongly to socialize.

Vesna's comments suggest that socializing with friends not only provides a venue for good times but support in times when life's difficulties are linked to the losses associated with resettlement. In another part of the interview, Vesna talked about going out for 'kafana' (coffee) as a leisure activity but also an opportunity to receive support. This is a practice that Vesna and her friends have instituted in Vancouver and its purpose goes beyond just leisure.

Coffee is like institution. It's something, it's not just drinking coffee, it's getting together talking. Sometimes it makes fun, it's like you don't, you don't have to go to counselor or psychiatrist if you're upset. You just get together for coffee with few of your friends and you talk.

As stated earlier, leisure is influenced by context and social interactions, both of which are undergoing change for this group of women. Given the challenge of speaking English comfortably and the extensive family responsibilities each woman has, socializing with people who speak her language is not a surprising finding. While it facilitates leisure participation and social support that may otherwise be lacking in their current lives, socializing with members of one's native language group may limit integration to Canadian society.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I set out to show that leisure must be problematized to reveal the disjuncture between definitions and activities that were part of each woman's previous life and what fits with her life in Canada. I have argued that the way to understand the leisure participation and beliefs of immigrant women is through an examination of the social structures that now influence their work, home and community life. Personal choice certainly has a role in the leisure activities these women do and the resettlement process offers opportunities, as well as barriers, for negotiating new leisure meanings. In the next chapter, I analyze the findings of this study by using Bourdieu's concept of capital.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The intent of this chapter is to explain the findings in ways that extend their application beyond the participant sample from which they arose. The findings I presented in Chapters Five and Six provide the basis for the analysis that answers the research question: *How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate in leisure activities?* I have chosen to engage with selected concepts from Bourdieu's (1991) theory of human capital for several reasons. First, my understanding of Bourdieu's work situates it firmly within the tradition of critical theory. His contribution to a reflexive view of social life acknowledges that the researcher inhabits and is not separate from the social world of the people he or she studies. Bourdieu's work aims for an emancipatory outcome that "seeks to illuminate the social and cultural reproduction of inequality by analyzing processes of misrecognition: that is, by investigating how the habitus of dominated groups can veil the conditions of their subordination" (Postone, LiPuma & Calhoun, 1993, p. 4).

Second, Bourdieu's theory of social practice, to which habitus is central, attempts to bridge the divide between the structural determinism associated with Marxist thinking and the individualism of phenomenology. Third, Bourdieu's view of human action is one of the environment and social structures shaping people's actions and those actions, in turn, affecting the social structures. This is similar to occupational therapy's view of the individual and the environment in occupational performance.

I begin by reviewing key features of Bourdieu's theory of practice. Then I review the combination of changes that occurred for the study participants, as evidenced through the

themes that emerged. I address the three of the themes introduced earlier and discuss the social structures and forces that shape the circumstances for these women using the relevant features of capital (cultural, social, and economic). In revealing the external features that shape their lives, I argue that the relations of power demonstrated in this study have currency for other women in similar resettlement situations and may be illuminated through the concepts of capital. To use Bourdieu's terms, I am analyzing the relations between the dispositions (what women embody) and the fields (contexts) in which they function, to identify the disjunctures that might otherwise be interpreted as individual in nature.

The term *habitus* is defined as a "set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways" (Thompson, 1991, p. 12). *Habitus* refers to the embodiment of social structures that occurs through inculcation, is durable, generative and transposable. The concept of capital refers to objective capital for example, economic as measured by income, bank accounts and property, and the less tangible forms such as symbolic and to some extent cultural capital. Although cultural capital comprises an individual's qualifications and skills, it also refers to knowing implicitly how things work in society, having information and taking appropriate actions based on that information. Thompson defines linguistic capital as "the capacity to produce expressions *à propos*, for a particular market" (p. 18). It fits within the concept of cultural capital because linguistic capital encompasses language skills that may be used in a variety of contexts. Linguistic capital is important to this research because how people speak situates them in particular social positions of more or less power, depending on the situation. So if a person speaks English with an accent and lacks proper grammar, this display of linguistic capital allows others to determine his or her social position. This

judgement may, in turn, diminish an immigrant's opportunities in many ways: ranging from obtaining work to having his or her comments viewed as credible in a social conversation.

One question that guides this analysis is: What prevents immigrant women from recapturing the capital that they had in their countries of origin to create circumstances that influence leisure participation?

### **The Role of Capital in Orchestrating the Day**

The theme, orchestrating the day, captures how the participants in my research manage to fulfill all their responsibilities but with different resources than they had available before moving to Canada. Earlier I proposed that these women are busier and have less time than their Canadian-born counterparts. These findings do not arise from being an immigrant per se but come into play through the kinds of social interactions that require language skills and knowledge of how to handle day to day activities in Canadian society. Bourdieu (1991) explains linguistic capital this way.

On the one hand, there are the socially constructed dispositions of linguistic habitus, which imply a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things (the expressive interest) and a certain capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation. On the other hand, there are the structures of the linguistic market, which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships. (p. 37)

I am interested in how difficulties with English change the social capacity of immigrant women to use language in ways that enable them to navigate their 'orchestrated days' more effectively. This changed capacity limits their opportunities for employment and those resulting 'sanctions and censorships' will be analyzed later within the compromised careers section.

Given the scope of 'orchestrating the day,' both linguistic and cultural capital are implicated in the activities of child rearing, household labor, paid work, and participation in formal resettlement programs. On the surface it may be difficult to see how linguistic and cultural capital shape child rearing activities, which appear situated in the home where one has the choice of which language to use and also some experience raising children. Many activities that mothers assist their children with, or monitor in the case of older children, occur within the main sphere of influence for these women, the home. Bathing children, helping them with homework, guiding children to express emotions in socially appropriate ways are some examples of what women do to rear their children.

But many more tasks and interactions are located in relations with school teachers, doctors, clothing shop clerks and parents of children's playmates. Each of these require women to communicate effectively in English with people outside her family and typically her linguistic group in order to meet her child's needs. For example, language skills (linguistic capital) and knowledge of acceptable ways to supervise children's play (cultural capital) are necessary for communicating to the parents of her child's playmates that she is a trustworthy adult capable of safeguarding the children. Despite having skills and experience parenting, a woman who speaks English with difficulty or with a strong accent may appear less credible to others. Situations like this arise in an apartment complex courtyard or at local park and may be understood as sites where the struggle to regain linguistic capital is played out in the guise of everyday mothering activities.

English language skills are necessary for many of the activities that women orchestrate in their daily lives and this includes grocery shopping for the family. This routine

activity creates possibilities for misunderstandings about products as well as opportunities for socializing. Immigrants whose English language skills represent a decline in linguistic capital and who are unfamiliar the range of options for example, corner stores, super-stores, and specialty markets, typically spend more time shopping than non-immigrants. Exceptions to this may occur if these immigrants live or have access to stores where people speak their first language and the food is more familiar. Although diminished linguistic capital may function as a 'sanction' or limitation to grocery shopping, there are opportunities to subvert this disadvantage by trading on intact linguistic and economic capital. Chin-sung, for example, travels with her Taiwanese friend to nearby Richmond where Mandarin-speaking grocery store staff and Chinese foods are available. There, Chin-sung speaks Mandarin and is able to buy whatever food she wants. Her favourable economic position gives Chin-sung access to a car that enables her to drive wherever she wishes to shop, and the income to buy preferred foods in the language of her choice. In these ways, Chin-sung's actions demonstrates the dynamic nature of capital and how it may be negotiated within different settings.

Linguistic capital has obvious application to the women who were involved in resettlement programs, where the development of English language skills was emphasized. The activities within these programs required a significant time commitment for the women who participated, as did the English classes that many of them also attended. The impact on diminished free time for leisure activities and other endeavors may be understood as a trade-off for the potential increases in linguistic, social, cultural and economic capital as they learned more about Canadian society. At first glance it may seem that these women were in social positions which, through their lack of English proficiency and its implications, situated

them as passive recipients of services. A closer examination reveals the interplay between being a learner who is seeking knowledge and experiences, and being the purveyor of cultural capital in the form of information shared with other women. The type of information exchanged was more personal and experiential, about how to do some of the little things that make up Canadian life, compared to the equally useful information disseminated by resettlement facilitators. In this way, the participants may be viewed as using their available linguistic capital to help others, in settings where their changed social position may have fewer negative consequences.

I have applied the notion of linguistic and other forms of capital as applicable, to the theme of orchestrating the day. In one sense, the ability to speak English trumps all other forms of capital because of the social and economic position this skill enables. The effective use of language facilitates other forms of capital that function to an individual's benefit. Immigrants can certainly survive in Canada without speaking English (or French) if, for example, they have considerable material wealth and live in an ethnic enclave where their language is spoken in business and social interactions. The ideal of integration to Canadian society however, would be much harder to achieve without the linguistic capital of speaking English.

### **The Role of Capital in Compromised Careers**

The theme 'compromised careers' reflects the unexpected downward occupational mobility and real loss of economic capital experienced by most of the women in this study. They arrived in Canada under the impression that their education and work experience would be, although not immediately transferable, an invaluable resource for reconstructing their



lives here. But most of the women are not working in the jobs or professional careers for which they were trained and have experience. Their status as part-time, on-call or unemployed workers has affected their family's income, their own career trajectory and with it, a part of their identities. Three intersecting factors influenced this trend: the requirements of the different regulated professions, the need for English language skills, and the demands of fulfilling day to day responsibilities with less family and social support than they had before immigrating to Canada. It is not any one factor that produces this downward occupational mobility but a combination of factors functioning together that have so far limited the ability of these women to obtain economic capital.

### *Regulated Professions*

Approximately one fifth of the Canadian work force is employed in regulated professions (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003d). Immigrants, among others, must be able to substantiate their eligibility to work in these professions and this typically occurs through a credential evaluation service (International Credential Evaluation Service, 2003). In British Columbia a service called the International Credential Evaluation Service was created in 1995 under the auspices of The Open Learning Agency. For a fee, this agency evaluates foreign credentials (diplomas, degrees, licences and other documents) and provides reports for immigrants to use with applications to their profession's regulatory agency. The professions that eight women in this study had prior to immigration included teaching, engineering, social work, psychology and architecture. These are among the regulated professions in which eligibility to practice is the jurisdiction of provinces and territories.

It is not uncommon for immigrants who are skilled workers to experience delays and sometimes even insurmountable obstacles in the process of obtaining employment in their fields (Mojab, 1999). A federal government report recently identified the difficulties that immigrant women have in obtaining access to accreditation in nursing, teaching and social work (National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, 1999). Half of the women in my research were teachers and social workers before coming to Canada. Issues related to language were foremost among the findings of the report and included problems passing examinations, discrimination based on speaking accented English and barriers to learning the language due to the high cost of the Test of Spoken English and English as a Foreign Language test. The issue of discrimination based on the way one speaks English was found as an employment barrier in other research, which implicated “the lens of color” in women’s negative responses from others (Hiebert et al., 1998, p. 23).

Findings from Hiebert et al. research on immigrants identified the *Catch-22* situation of being unable to find work without Canadian experience, a phenomenon noted in other research as well (Elabor-Idemudia, 1999; Man, 1995; Mojab, 1999). There is a need for cultural capital as well, which refers to the information and experience that enables people to understand the labor market, know how to handle interview situations and develop networks to even find out about some positions. Hiebert et al. (1998) contend that immigrants fall short of these necessary resources. Preston and Man (1999) offer further evidence of the difficulties that women have negotiating job interviews. Some women had the legitimacy of their letters of reference questioned while other women were unable to accurately read the message behind seemingly positive interview experiences that did not result in job offers. The lack of

this kind of cultural capital interacts negatively with limited English skills and problems with accreditation processes.

Among the other frustrations immigrants experienced in their efforts to meet regulatory standards in these professions were “no national body responsible for the recognition of foreign degrees, professional accreditation and licensing...[and] discrimination related to gender and race” (Canadian Heritage, 2003). Finally, the report recognized the related costs of not being able to work in one’s chosen career: financial, social and emotional problems. Immigrant women experience disproportionately more problems than men do in meeting accreditation requirements and the authors of this report specifically identify difficulties “with respect to child care, work experience, language training, and obtaining information” (Canadian Heritage, 2003). What this report identifies clearly is the intersection of different types of capital and how they seem to work against some immigrant women achieving recognition for their education and professional work experience. The quest for economic capital, in the form of income from paid work, is thwarted by the very cultural capital that women should reasonably expect to be traded for access to jobs that is, knowledge arising from education, work experience, and professional qualifications.

The federal government recognizes that gender differences contribute to unequal employment outcomes for immigrants. Since the new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* was proclaimed in 2002, the government instituted a Gender-Based Analysis (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003b). One of the aims of this on-going project is to determine how policies and immigration practices affect men and women differently with the goal of reducing inequalities. With regard to skilled workers, the government chart outlines its plan

to consider evaluating various forms of capital more broadly, with a particular focus on what attributes are deemed “human capital” and how gender differences affect the outcome of an immigrant’s application. Unlike the aforementioned report (Canadian Heritage, 2003) there is no explicit recognition of visible minority immigrant women or women of Colour in the government’s on-going analysis.

Hiebert et al. (1998) identify a disjuncture between the de facto social contract that the Canadian government forms with immigrants and outcome of searches for employment that reflects their skills and education. The Citizenship and Immigration Canada system of points towards acceptance of an immigrant’s application puts considerable emphasis on work experience, credentials and education while at the same time stating that these may not translate to an appropriate job (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003d). Many immigrants are then in the confusing position of having proved their worth, only to be thwarted in their job search by non-recognition of credentials, the expectation of Canadian work experience and a high level of English required for the kinds of employment that they seek. On September 18, 2003, Minister Coderre announced changes in the selection system that included a decrease from 75 to 67 in the points ‘pass-mark’ for current applicants in the skilled worker category (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003e). It is too early to speculate on the outcome of this change.

In addition to limited English skills, the demands of fulfilling family responsibilities with less support than before also contribute to the difficulties that women experience finding work in their professions. While none of the women in my study lived in extended family households in their home countries, the loss of family and close friends that they enjoyed

there has impeded their career opportunities in Canada. Research with Chinese women from Hong Kong and mainland China identifies the higher costs of day-care and domestic help in Canada as obstacles to women obtaining employment here (Preston & Man, 1999). Man (1995) identifies the extended family structure that exists for some Hong Kong families as assisting with home and child care work that women are expected to do. In nuclear family living situations, this on-site support may be unavailable but due to easy accessibility within Hong Kong, different forms of social support may be offered.

Half a world away, Latin American immigrants living in Halifax talked about the loss of extended family support and the need to care for children at home as two obstacles to employment and mobility (Ruble & Shaw, 1991). The lack of childcare prevented some women from attending English classes, which in turn increased their social isolation. These factors then lessened their chances of obtaining the kinds of higher paying jobs where English language skills are required. It is apparent from the literature that immigrant women face different barriers to achieving the economic capital than men do, in part because of their responsibilities for children and the home. These barriers affect the extent to which immigrant women participate in leisure activities and with whom because economic capital can buy household and child care assistance, and thus increase women's time for other activities.

### **The Role of Capital in Socializing is the Key to Leisure**

This theme reflects two important findings from my research that may be examined through the lens of capital. The first is contained in Graciela's definition of leisure, "to socialize and to share with our friends is our leisure," which resonated with many of the

women I interviewed. There is extensive research about the social nature of leisure and for many immigrants socializing is the main form of their leisure because it is potentially inexpensive and enjoyed with people who speak one's own language. There are practical as well as emotional reasons why socializing constitutes leisure. One interpretation is that while the process of acquiring linguistic capital to engage with English speakers is ongoing, socializing with people from one's own language group is a way to use their existing linguistic capital.

The second finding directs the researcher or practitioner to examine socializing as a means by which to understand what leisure is and its meaning for immigrant women. Both aspects of this theme point to language as the primary mediator of non-solitary leisure activities. Simply put, many immigrants do not have sufficient English language skills to enjoy leisure activities with English-speaking people. The participants in my research preferred socializing in their first language and this typically involved family leisure activities. Even the contacts that women had with family through e-mail, telephone calls and visits took on different meanings and were often described as leisure.

In contrast, Tirone and Shaw (1997) identify Indian cultural traditions rather than English skills as a major influence on women's preference to situate leisure activities at home and with family members. The implication of their findings is that even though their research participants spoke English well and could have used this linguistic capital differently, they "tended to be group oriented and the group they were most inclined to be with was their family" (Tirone & Shaw, 1997, p. 242). Their cultural analysis helped to critique the notion of individual leisure time, which is so prevalent in North American leisure discourse. I do not

dispute these findings but am concerned that culture was not problematized but identified as a reason for the leisure choices of immigrant women. As a part of life that is influenced by various forms of capital, leisure participation requires more extensive analysis. Otherwise culture may be understood as the primary reason why immigrants are likely to 'stick with their own.'

Juniu's (2000) study of South American immigrants' leisure after moving to the United States shows that immigrants who spoke English well had better paying jobs than the working class research subjects whose English was limited. Juniu operationalized class as income and education. Her findings showed that English language ability and material wealth, what I am calling linguistic and economic capital, were the arbitrators of the subjects' leisure participation with English-speaking people. She links these factors with participants' greater integration into 'mainstream' American society. Conversely those immigrants lacking these advantages are less likely to use leisure activities as one means of achieving integration. How integration is defined and whether all immigrants strive for it are different issues.

### **Conclusion**

I have used various concepts of capital in this analysis to show how resettlement influences the ways that immigrant women participate in leisure and ultimately, what meaning it has for them. I structured the analysis to address the themes that emerged from the everyday activities of a small group of immigrant women, including enjoyable activities that they described as leisure. A policy is in place that offer immigrants access to free English language training through a variety of organizations such as post-secondary institutions and community organizations (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003f). Despite this, some

participants perceived that they had fewer opportunities to access English language training. The barriers to recognition of educational and work credentials necessary for employment also involve the need for English language skills. The impact of language skills on social life is significant. On this topic Bourdieu (1991) writes: "Social acceptability is not reducible to mere grammaticality. Speakers lacking the legitimate competence are de facto excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence" (p. 55).

With downward occupational mobility a likely occurrence for many immigrant women like those described, it is not surprising that they have less time and fewer economic resources for leisure activities. There is no one factor that alone changes leisure participation and its meaning during resettlement. Nor are these changes based on rigid notions of culture or on personality. Instead the economic, cultural and linguistic capital that women enjoyed in their home countries (jobs, education, knowledge of how life worked, language skills) functions together with policies (immigration, credentialing) and expectations here (English proficiency, Canadian work experience) to limit leisure participation and alter its meaning in their lives. The implications of this analysis for occupational education are discussed in Chapter Eight.



## CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this final chapter I offer a brief summary of my research through a review of the purpose, the questions, my choice of methodology and the key findings. The Conclusions section of this chapter comprises further reflection on and discussion of the research questions. In the final section of Chapter Eight I focus on the implications that this research has for occupational therapy theory, education, and practice.

### Summary of Research

The purpose of my research was to understand better how the seemingly simple concept of leisure actually fits into the lives of women who are immigrants in Canada. The concept of leisure is prominent in occupational therapy but, prior to my study, a lack of empirical evidence had left unexamined the influence of the larger environment on people's lives. My analysis of the various environments in which immigrant women function reflects the newest occupational therapy definition of leisure that now includes "context" (Primeau, (2003a). The research question that formed the basis for my study was: *How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate in leisure activities?* Seeking answers to the secondary research questions listed below enabled me to fulfill the purpose of the study.

1. What activities make up the daily life of immigrant women?
2. How do their daily activities shape the meaning of leisure that women create?
3. How do women think that their leisure experiences affect their health?
4. What activities do they enjoy and describe as leisure?

Concepts from critical perspectives contributed theoretically and practically in forming the methodology that guided this study. The focus of critical perspectives on issues of language, economics, power and justice fit well with the social relations approach I used in analyzing the data and presenting my findings. The values that underlie critical theories influenced the role that I took as a researcher and encouraged me to take a reflexive stance towards my actions and beliefs vis-a-vis the research relationships. The use of in-depth interviews and the choice to make the women's voices prominent in this research fit well with critical theory methodology, and the research questions that I addressed.

The key findings from this study arise from an analysis of three themes: *orchestrating the day*, *compromised careers* and, *socializing is the key to leisure*. An analysis of the themes using Bourdieu's concept of capital revealed how various forms of capital intersected and influenced women's ability to participate in leisure activities. The acquisition and negotiation of linguistic capital identified ways in which social relations shaped leisure participation and the meaning it had for women. The larger environment and circumstances related to resettlement had a considerable impact on women's leisure participation and the subsequent meaning arising from it. The findings reveal that far from being an unproblematic and uncomplicated concept, leisure is complex and embedded in the social relations of women's lives.

### **Critique of the Research Design**

There are aspects of the research design and its implementation that might have been improved and also features that worked well. Here I will address three issues: the interviews, data analysis and reciprocity. Multiple interviews with each participant would have been

desirable and some discussion about why I chose not to do these is warranted. After the majority of the interviews were completed, there were several months of uncertainty about the viability of the participant sample and the direction of my research that I was unable to resolve. As I did not wish to risk losing the hard-won sample altogether, I resolved these issues and worked with the data gathered. To engage in second interviews after more than two years would have changed the research design to be more longitudinal in nature. The purpose of the research study was to gather data at a specific time in these women's lives and to make some sense of it in that temporal context. The later chapters of this thesis reveal that data from the interviews and field notes were sufficient to answer the research questions and therefore contribute some knowledge to an area where little exists.

Ideally data analysis in qualitative research is done throughout the data collection period so that the insights a researcher develops may be incorporated into future interviews. For example, the particular focus on work and its importance to the women in this study suggests that I might have developed additional questions to use with each participant. The immersion in the data that occurred was several weeks long with few distractions. Reading the literature again and anew during this engagement with the data provided the necessary focus to nurture an emergent analysis.

If the circumstances of this research had been different, I would have asked selected participants to read my preliminary data analysis. Rather than meeting the goal of member checking for accuracy, I would have used this strategy to incorporate the women's voices further into the research. Presently I plan to return the findings of this research to some of the

participants through a verbal report and a written executive summary. I hope to arrange verbal presentations through the Pacific Immigrant Resources Society in 2004.

### **Limitations of the Research and Suggestions for Future Study**

The critique of the research design highlights some weaknesses that affect the strengths of the claims I make. Here I will identify other limitations of the research that should be accounted for when considering the extent to which the findings may be generalized. The limitations include the size of the research sample, the geographic location, the use of single interviews, and the lack of input that participants had to the analysis and eventual findings. A sample of 14 women is considered small for any style of research except phenomenological studies where a sample of 10 or fewer is acceptable (Sandelowski, 1995). The small sample size limits the variation among participants that could elicit different experiences, and therefore influence the themes that were recognized. Variation could have been along the lines of geographic location, length of time in Canada, employment status, and age range. For example, most participants were in their 30's or 40's and sampling younger women who met the other criteria would have broadened the scope of data collected.

All of the participants were from the metropolitan Vancouver area known as the lower mainland. The accessibility of services that most families might use, such as schools, libraries, and recreational areas, is considerably greater than in rural or remote areas of the province. A great number and variety of immigrant programs and language training services are offered in the lower mainland that may affect the experiences that women in this sample talked about. The distances that people traveled to access services sometimes required use of

a car or public transportation but the relatively mild Vancouver weather could encourage more use of services than locations where inclement weather is common.

Triangulation of data methods contributes to the plausibility of the findings and the use of single interviews is one fault of this research (Carpenter & Hammell, 2000). Attempts to triangulate data sources, in the form of activity logs, were less successful than hoped. Conducting focus groups could have been implemented to address the issue of limited data collection methods and sources. Focus groups may have facilitated some kind of dialogue with participants about the data analysis and findings. The lack of an ongoing relationship with participants decreases my confidence somewhat that they could indeed recognize their experiences and something of their story in the research findings. Future research about the process of resettlement and leisure participation should first avoid the aforementioned limitations. Meadows, Thurston and Melton (2001) suggest that although most immigrants arrive in Canada in good health, the process of immigration and resettlement puts their health at risk due to stresses resulting from changes in employment and income, as well as social isolation. It would be worthwhile to determine the extent to which leisure participation could have a positive impact on immigrants' health and lessen the negative effects of resettlement.

### **Conclusions**

This study was prompted by my interest in how people use their non-work time and how the process of resettlement may complicate, in particular, leisure participation. I now return to the research questions and in doing so, identify the new knowledge that has resulted from this study.

*What activities make up the daily life of immigrant women?*

The daily activities that the research participants described helped me understand how and where leisure fit into their lives. Although there is no “typical day” for this group of women, there are some striking similarities apparent as they orchestrate multiple activities for themselves and their families. These activities may be divided into four categories: child rearing activities, household work, resettlement activities, and paid work. The time and effort required to engage in these daily activities varied according to factors specific to each woman such as her children’s ages, the extent to which her husband assists with family responsibilities, and her employment status. Women did the majority of the domestic labour involved in child rearing and household work regardless of some discrete tasks done by a few husbands on a routine basis. Women with young children dressed, bathed and cooked for them and monitored the morning routines to prepare for school or day care. The women helped transport their children to school or day care as well as to social and recreational activities after school and on weekends. They played with their children, supervised play activities in various venues and helped with homework. Some women described providing moral and religious guidance to their children.

Household work may be understood as work that supported the family as a unit. Routine household work took the form of cleaning, shopping, banking, ironing, cooking and completing errands on the family’s behalf. In contrast to paid work but like activities associated with childcare, household work does not have a particular end point. Some of these tasks were shared with their husbands, which was evident in the two situations where both spouses worked full-time. For the majority of these women, there was no extended

family in Canada to ask for help with child rearing activities or household management responsibilities nor did they employ anyone to do these things.

The women's involvement in a constellation of resettlement activities differentiated them from Canadian-born women who have similar roles as wives, mothers and part-time workers. These activities included English classes, immigrant resettlement programs that required some volunteer work and other "homework" between meetings, plus activities designed to help women integrate into Canadian society. For example, the participants sometimes described visiting the library and watching television as tasks necessary to improve their language skills rather than as leisure activities.

With the exception of Anita who does design work at home, women's paid work was located outside their homes. It most often took the form of teaching but also included peer counseling, delivering newspapers and producing self-improvement workshops. As I discussed in Chapters Five and Six these women were more likely to be employed part-time, if at all. Only one participant worked a 40 hour week and most other women worked sporadically and during hours that accommodated their mothering and household responsibilities.

*What activities do they enjoy and describe as leisure?*

The subjective quality of leisure activities highlights the importance of seeking definitions from the research participants rather than presuming that certain activities a priori constitute leisure, regardless of personal circumstances or contexts (Primeau 1996; 2003a). I have divided the activities that this group of immigrant women described enjoying into those they did alone versus those they engaged in with others. Solitary activities included reading

(in English or more likely one's native language), creative writing, using the internet to obtain news, sending and reading email messages, listening to music, taking walks, watching television and having time alone to think. Leisure activities shared with other people were swimming, walking, traveling, having picnics and sharing meals with other families, going out for coffee, riding bicycles and less frequently skiing and attending theatre or concerts. As the theme *socializing is the key to leisure* demonstrated, being with other people offered women numerous opportunities to engage in leisure and most often in their first language. While it is important to identify enjoyable activities that women described as leisure, it is perhaps more important to begin to understand the meaning that leisure has for these women and its affect on their health.

*How do their daily activities shape the meaning of leisure that women create?*

Pierce (2001) proposes that activities differ from occupations because "An occupation is a specific individual's personally constructed, non-repeatable experience. . . . in perceived temporal, spatial, and sociocultural conditions that are unique to that one-time event" (p. 139). These conditions and the individual's subjective view of an occupation contribute to creating personal meanings. As an antidote to the busy lives and stresses that were revealed in recounting their daily activities, many women described leisure as whatever supports their physical, emotional and even spiritual health. The time away from family responsibilities to do various leisure activities may be considered occupations because they contribute to a subjective sense of well-being and therefore are imbued with meaning. This is explored further in my answer to the next question.



*How do women think that their leisure experiences affect their health?*

As I discussed in Chapter Three, this question receded from view over the course of my research, however, participants firmly believed that leisure experiences had a significant influence on their health. In their discussions with me these women most often identified leisure experiences as reducing their stress and making them feel relaxed. For some women stress was described as the uncertainty about their futures in Canada and for others stress was linked to aspects of their work. Some women reported exercising to maintain a certain weight but perceived this as a task or commitment to be fulfilled. In contrast leisure participation helped women put their lives in perspective and also decreased anxiety, loneliness and sad feelings; all of which may diminish one's sense of well-being. Subjective assessments of improved health were evident as women spoke about leisure making them feel more comfortable, energized, satisfied and refreshed. Another important feature of leisure was that it changed the focus to something of their choice that was outside of their routine responsibilities.

*How does the process of resettlement in Canada influence the ways women understand and participate in leisure activities?*

The impact of resettlement on how women understand and participate in leisure is best understood by identifying and examining a number of intersecting realities. Time, language, diminished social support, career changes and gendered domestic activities together contributed to how women perceive and engage in leisure in Canada. As well, these personal realities intersected with environmental constraints that are typically outside of an individual's control or even consciousness. Resettlement activities and ongoing daily routines

often took longer than expected because they were negotiated through speaking English much of day. The potential free time that accompanied being unemployed or working part-time was not always experienced as discretionary nor was it free from stresses.

Language appeared as a significant factor that influenced employment opportunities. It also affected how former leisure activities were considered given the women's changed circumstances. Watching television and reading are good examples of leisure activities that may be considered relaxing and enjoyable, that is, leisurely. Conversely, they may be experienced as hard work in the service of improving one's English skills and not at all relaxing or satisfying. Language ability or lack thereof contributed to downward occupational mobility. Approval to practice in many professions requires recognition of education, evaluation of credentials and the ability to speak and pass exams in English. If these criteria are unmet, previous work experience does little to ensure that women will be employed in professions and jobs suitable to their training. Downward occupational mobility resulted in less money with which to purchase leisure, either in the form of discretionary time or costly activities. The gendered domestic activities, which may have been organized similarly in the women's home countries, unfolded differently in Canada. Here the women have limited family and social support, and the aforementioned changes of language, employment and scarce time have created different pressures.

### **Implications for Occupational Therapy Theory, Education and Practice**

#### *Theory*

In Chapter One I identified the inadequacy of occupational therapy's definition of leisure and the importance of differentiating activity and occupation. I also proposed that the

profession's theoretical development about the environment to date was insufficient and had been hampered by a variety of factors. Among these is an unproblematized use of gender, 'race,' and class in research and education that has implications for practice. The pervasive influence of biomedical models on occupational therapy curricula and the dearth of research that engages with concepts from critical perspectives have also impeded a more rigorous and nuanced understanding of the environment. Here I will discuss how my research contributes to these three theoretical concerns, in order of their importance. The implications for revisions to curricula and how the research findings may shape practice follow.

*Environment.* Jongbloed and Crichton (1990) called for occupational therapists to broaden their focus beyond the individual and his or her immediate milieu, to incorporate an analysis of the economic, social and political environments that shape people's lives. The Canadian Model of Occupational Performance proposes that cultural, institutional, social and physical elements make up the environment (Law, Polatajko, Baptiste & Townsend, 1997). The word 'elements,' however, implies a compartmentalized approach to a complex concept and does little to communicate the interconnectedness of these elements. By taking a social relations approach to the environment I have tried to bring a holistic analysis to the concept, recognizing that for individual participants some elements may have had a greater impact on their leisure participation than others. For ease of reading I will discuss each element in turn and demonstrate that my research findings either further knowledge of the environment or challenge current thinking.

Occupational therapy recognizes that immigration and the subsequent rebuilding of lives in Canada poses challenges for both clinicians and their clients (Dyck, 1993). Despite

this the cultural element of the environment remains largely unexamined. Occupational therapy's interpretation of the multicultural discourse prevalent in Canadian society and mandated through the Multiculturalism Act (Department of Justice Canada, 2004) has led the profession to embrace values of tolerance and respect for diversity (Law, Polatajko, Baptiste & Townsend, 1997). These values support cultural sensitivity as an approach to understanding and working with clients who are, or appear to be, different than clients whose cultural attachments can be traced to western Europe. Underlying cultural sensitivity approaches is the assumption that the identified 'difference' or diversity emanates from the 'culture' of the client. The clinician's own cultural position is seldom examined despite research findings that the occupational therapist is in fact "potentially the most problematic element in intercultural interactions" (Whiteford & Wilcock, 2000, p. 330). A small cadre of international researchers (see Dyck & Kearns, 1995; Jungersen, 2002; Scott, 1997; Whiteford & Wilcock, 2000) continue to critique occupational therapy's notion of culture but as presented in prominent professional practice models, culture tends to reflect the multicultural discourse.

My research findings suggest that a different conceptualization of culture may be useful for occupational therapy, one that is drawn from post-colonial discourse. Bhabha's (1994) concept of a 'third space' helps to describe culture as a process through which people negotiate hybrid or partial cultural forms. He advocates using a 'hybrid strategy' to oppose prevailing ideology, and to negotiate power and facilitate understanding between people of different 'cultures.' Theorizing cultural difference as a process and an enunciative space allows for the creation of new meanings for minority cultures who move to former empires

and settler nations like Canada. This enunciative space addresses the translational and transnational nature of the post-colonial diaspora, and the desire people have to bring past and present together in a way that fosters new meanings.

Bhabha's description of a third space for creating cultural meaning is theoretical but compatible with the emphasis that occupational therapy places on meaning. This third space suggests a fluidity of meanings that "...can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" (1996, p. 208). Bhabha's use of the terms 'cultural forms' and negotiation invokes a temporality that is useful for challenging more static representations of culture.

The social element of the environment is defined as "social priorities about all elements of the environment, patterns of relationships of people living in an organized community, social groupings based on common interests, values, attitudes and beliefs" (Law, Polatajko, Baptiste & Townsend, 1997, p. 46). Findings from my research demonstrate how the social element of the environment provides the context for leisure and a way to share common interests within the family. Familial relationships and their responsibilities may also constrain leisure participation. The challenges of orchestrating the family's day and the heightened importance of family as a context for meaningful leisure experiences suggest a tension between fulfilling personal needs and duties to the family. In some ways, leisure is yet another activity to organize. Leisure experiences, however, are not the same for all members of the family, especially mothers (Shaw, 1992). While this tension is not unique to immigrant women, it highlights the often gendered nature of what has been called 'family leisure.'

The physical element of the environment refers to both built and natural features that influence all forms of occupational performance, including leisure activities. Physical aspects of the environment such as weather, transportation and geographic location contributed to answering the research question. The research findings have not challenged or further explained this element of the environment.

The policies in place to regulate entry to practice in many professions highlight the range of organizational practices that formed part of the institutional environment in my research. These kinds of policies and other accessibility issues are important to understanding why many immigrants face challenges re-entering their professions in Canada. In contrast to the majority of occupational therapy research that has focused on individuals in their very immediate contexts, Jongbloed (1998) and Townsend (1998; 2003) have made significant contributions to analyzing the role of the institutional environment. My research findings arise from a study with people who do not have disabilities. The insights I have gained do, however, support a growing body of literature about the social construction of ability and disability. The physical, cognitive and affective realms of an individual may always be the initial site of temporary or permanent impairment. The extent to which impairment results in disability, however, depends in large part on the institutional elements of the environment.

*Definition of leisure.* Based on my research, three of the four definitions of leisure discussed earlier are insufficient for occupational therapy. The definition of leisure put forth in the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance is “enjoying life” (Law, Polatajko, Baptiste & Townsend, 1997, p. 30). It is wholly inclusive but lacks conceptual parameters that would enable empirical research and subsequent theoretical development. Mosey’s (cited

in Reed & Sanderson, 1999) definition adds the dimensions of freedom and self-determination but focuses solely on discretionary time that is unencumbered by “family and other social responsibilities, activities of daily living, and work” (pp. 150-151). The research findings contradict the idea that leisure is necessarily freedom from family. Instead they reveal that socializing is a vehicle for leisure participation and a means through which occupational therapists may understand its meaning for immigrant women. Reid’s (1995) definition explicates the subjective quality of leisure but only alludes to contextual features by comparing work and leisure characteristics.

My research supports the broad but explicit definition of leisure proposed by Primeau (2003a) who adds “context” to the standard features of leisure as time, activity and subjective experience. The notion of context comprises seven sub-concepts that include three features of “environment” approximately as they are theorized in Canadian models of practice but extend the definition to encompass personal, spiritual, temporal and virtual elements. Inclusion of context in the definition of leisure draws attention to the temporal features of leisure participation that include “stages of life, time of day, time of year, duration” (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2002, p. 623). Acknowledgment of leisure’s contextual elements may encourage occupational therapy researchers to reevaluate the relatively low status it occupies within the profession’s conceptual models. Context also differentiates activity and occupation within occupational therapy.

*Differentiating activity and occupation.* Pierce (2001) proposes that subjectivity and context differentiate occupation from activity; the latter which refers to “a culturally defined and general class of human actions” (p. 139). In keeping with Primeau’s (2003a) use of

context, Pierce views context as the spatial, temporal and sociocultural features that separate occupation from activity and contribute to its meaning. My research demonstrates the usefulness of this differentiation. Socializing is an activity that may have agreed-upon qualities and expected outcomes within a culture, and therefore can be discussed with a shared understanding. But the socializing that the research participants engaged in occurred in a certain time, place and stage of their lives and engendered a particular subjective evaluation of its outcome. The meaning and importance of socializing here in Canada is probably different than those same kinds of interactions in their home countries because of the link between socializing and leisure that women made in my research. The differentiation of occupation and activity may help occupational therapy critically examine the usefulness of checklists and other quantitative assessments used in practice.

### *Education*

By 2010 the minimum qualification for graduates starting to practice occupational therapy in Canada will be a professional master's degree instead of the current baccalaureate degree (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 2002). To be eligible for accreditation all university programs must have a professional master's program in place by 2008. The University of British Columbia's School of Rehabilitation Sciences will admit its first Master of Occupational Therapy students in August 2004 (University of British Columbia School of Rehabilitation Sciences, 2002). There has been considerable verbal and published debate about the necessity of this change and the development of new curricula that will ultimately influence practice (Lall, Klein & Brown, 2003).

Within this context, the call for critical inquiry approaches in education has taken on



greater urgency. Occupational therapy is in the process of discarding its historic reliance on biomedical models to provide guidance for understanding occupational performance (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 1997; O'Brien et al., 2002; Townsend, 1998). Townsend (2003) advocates for the use of critical social science as a means of understanding person-environment-occupation transactions and to fulfill the profession's commitment to social justice and empowerment. As stated in *Enabling Occupation*: "Rather than focusing on individuals, critical social science examines how systems shape and are shaped by everyday life, and either support or limit enlightenment, empowerment, and emancipation" (Townsend & Brintnell, 1997, p. 17). This statement exhorts occupational therapy educational programs to emphasize the social and behavioral sciences. Concepts from sociology and anthropology, for example, can provide students with the more sophisticated analytic tools to understand the kinds of environmental influences that impact the lives of their future clients.

Critical approaches may help occupational therapy students analyze in a more nuanced way how differences are constructed and whether cultural sensitivity offers the best hope for providing client-centred practice. The cultural sensitivity approach focuses on inclusion and the value of differences but the normative position from which differences are judged remains unexamined. It does not, therefore, provide practitioners with an adequate conceptual framework from which to understand their clients' lives. For example, a cultural sensitivity approach tends to avoid difficult issues such as power and injustice in favor of acceptance and empathy at an interpersonal level. Although this perspective may be welcomed by individual clients, it does little to advance the profession's knowledge about

interaction of environment with occupation. The concept of cultural safety, that was developed in New Zealand, demands that practitioners critically examine how their world view, attitudes and beliefs and forces from the dominant white culture are implicated in the provision of services (Jungersen, 2002). This concept is likely to fit well with the new occupational therapy curriculum.

One of the anticipated advantages of educating occupational therapy students who already have a baccalaureate degree is their greater ability to think critically, and move comfortably between the conceptual and practical aspects of the new curriculum. These skills will be necessary to achieve the learning objectives in the Health, Illness and Occupation course. Examples of these include: 1) Analyze the impact of major determinants of health on the well-being of individuals and populations, and 2) Analyze illness and disability experiences from gender, class, geographic and racialization perspectives, and 3) Describe how space and place shape experiences of illness and disability (University of British Columbia School of Rehabilitation Sciences, 2002).

Occupational therapy students enter the professional program because they want to work with people and, in doing so, enable them to achieve their maximum level of independence. Typically students have a limited understanding of how the environment, broadly defined, affects the abilities of people with disabilities. Prior to entering the program, students are required to complete 70 hours of volunteer work with people who have disabilities. From this early moment, the stage is set to focus on the individual and his or her disability. I suggest that students would be better prepared to understand occupational therapy's concept of environment if they were to volunteer with cultural associations, non-

governmental social service agencies, consumer-run advocacy groups, and similar organizations.

My view of culture is represented in the new curriculum in the School of Rehabilitation Sciences but differs from the implicit multicultural perspective that has guided occupational therapy education. This perspective depicts culture as something that immigrants 'bring with them' and implies that it remains intact but allows people to integrate into Canadian society. In contrast a more fruitful approach to educating future occupational therapists may involve using Bhabha's (1994) concept of a third space in which dynamic cultural forms with the potential for new meanings are created.

### *Practice*

A form of story is offered as one way to translate my research findings to practice. I end this section with two specific implications that my research has for practicing occupational therapists. To appreciate the potential clinical implications of my research findings, it may be helpful to picture a Canadian-born occupational therapist interviewing a woman who is a client at a rehabilitation agency. This client has immigrated to Canada and speaks English as an additional language.

First, the therapist will hear the client describe activities strikingly different from those of Canadian-born women. Women who immigrate from non-English speaking countries may be involved in one or all of the previously described resettlement activities. Second, the client and the therapist may unknowingly attribute different meanings to activities that are identified. Three examples were notable in the data: watching television, reading, and taking classes. Participating in adult education through taking classes may be

considered leisure for many adults as they pursue hobbies and interests or develop new skills. When immigrants take English classes, they may perceive these as work, either towards obtaining employment or integrating into Canadian society.

Third, the therapist will hear a wide variance of leisure time available among women who have immigrated to Canada. This variation is influenced by domestic responsibilities, income level and work status. If a person cannot work because qualifications or experience are not judged equivalent to Canadian standards, time may be spent upgrading through courses or doing pro bono work to gain Canadian experience. Leaving an environment with inexpensive domestic help and extended family assistance, some immigrants find their time in Canada filled with new responsibilities at home.

Having accurately characterized the client's present mix of activities, the therapist needs to explore how resettlement has affected this mix. This is an ambitious task in the present health care climate which seems to be demanding more of therapists but offering fewer resources. The extra time required to begin to understand about the "contexts" of leisure is likely to result in more collaborative rehabilitation planning that is centred on the client's needs rather than the therapist's preconceptions.

Given the impact of the environment on leisure participation for immigrant women it is reasonable to suggest that occupational therapists take a greater advocacy role on behalf of their clients. The shift away from the provision of direct services to clients and toward advocacy would be enhanced by the critical thinking skills to analyze and work to change policies that limit clients' occupational performance. For example, the occupational therapist-as-advocate could join with resettlement agency representatives to request more funding for

longer English language training that is highly accessible to mothers with children. The occupational therapist could liaise with agencies responsible for the evaluation and recognition of professional credentials to find ways to speed up this process. Occupational therapists view themselves as problem-solvers and my suggestion is to put those skills to use in the arenas (environments) from which problems emanate.

The social relations approach I have taken in this research exemplifies the sort of higher order learning that will be required of future occupational therapists. I have confirmed that leisure participation for immigrant women is influenced by the resettlement process. The complex ways that the larger environment interacts with leisure are unlikely to be identified through the current leisure assessments that therapists use. Thus, I support the use of narrative interviews such as the Occupational Performance History Interview (Kielhofner et al., 1998) to gather information about clients. Narrative-style interviews increase the likelihood that occupational therapists will begin to understand the complexity of everyday phenomena that influence leisure participation.

It is my hope that this research advances knowledge about leisure in occupational therapy and that through changed educational strategies and content, practice will reflect this knowledge. In her review of play and leisure assessments Bundy (1993) cautioned occupational therapists that they unwittingly reflect their understanding of leisure through the assessments they use with clients. Without further research, occupational therapists may continue to rely on checklists, quantitative assessments and other approaches that position leisure more as an activity than an occupation with potentially positive influences on people's health. The principles upon which occupational therapy is based demand that we understand meaning as a central and motivating feature of occupation.

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## **APPENDIX B: Consent Form**

Questioning the meanings of leisure within the context of 'race,' gender, and class:  
Challenging occupational therapy education and practice through critical inquiry

### **Principal Investigator/PhD Faculty Advisor:**

Dr. Patricia Vertinsky, Professor and Head  
Department of Educational Studies  
The University of British Columbia  
Telephone:

### **Co-Investigator/Student:**

Melinda Suto, PhD student  
Department of Educational Studies  
The University of British Columbia  
Telephone:

### **Purpose:**

Leisure is defined many ways and is thought to contribute to good health. Words like relaxation and enjoyment are used to describe activities, free time, or one's state of mind. These descriptions may not fit for everyone. The purpose of this study is to discuss what you think about leisure and what meaning it has for you here in Canada. You are being asked to participate in this study to develop knowledge about leisure theory and how it applies in occupational therapy. Knowledge gained from this study is expected to influence occupational therapy education and encourage client-centred practice.

### **Study Procedures:**

Your participation involves two informal interviews/discussions to talk about how leisure fits into your life. You will be asked to keep a brief diary about your daily routines and activities for one to two days. You will be asked open-ended questions during these discussions to allow a thorough exploration of the meaning of leisure in your life. You will be encouraged to talk about any issues that influence your understanding of leisure. The second interview gives you an opportunity to clarify and reflect further on issues raised in the first interview.

The total time commitment will vary between two and three hours. The length of each interview also varies but is likely to be between one, and one and a half hours. The interviews will be held in a place and at a time that is convenient to you. With your permission, I will take written notes and tape record the interview.

**Study Procedures (continued):**

You are free to end the interview at any point. You may choose not to answer questions you do not wish to answer. You may request a written transcript of the interviews. You will be offered a time to discuss the findings of the study when it is completed.

**Confidentiality:**

Any information from these interviews will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be used, nor will the name of anyone you may mention in your interview. Coded data will be stored on computer floppy disks. All data and other 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.

**Remuneration/Compensation:**

There is no money or other form of compensation for your participation in this study.

**Contact:**

If I have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, I may contact Melinda Suto at

If I have any concerns about my treatment or rights as an research participant I may contact the Director of the Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Richard Spratley at

**Consent:**

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without jeopardy.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

I consent to participate in this study.

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 Subject Signature

---

 Date

---

 Signature of a Witness

---

 Date

CF version: January 27, 2000  
January 2001 wpd

**APPENDIX B: Consent Form**

Questioning the meanings of leisure within the context of 'race,' gender, and class:  
Challenging occupational therapy education and practice through critical inquiry

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Department of Educational Studies  
The University of British Columbia  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

**Co-Investigator/Student:**

Melinda Suto, PhD student  
Department of Educational Studies  
The University of British Columbia  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

**Purpose:**

Leisure is defined many ways and is thought to contribute to good health. Words like relaxation and enjoyment are used to describe activities, free time, or one's state of mind. These descriptions may not fit for everyone. The purpose of this study is to discuss what you think about leisure and what meaning it has for you here in Canada. You are being asked to participate in this study to develop knowledge about leisure theory and how it applies in occupational therapy. Knowledge gained from this study is expected to influence occupational therapy education and encourage client-centred practice.

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I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

I consent to participate in this study.

---

Subject Signature

---

Date

---

Signature of a Witness

---

Date

CF version: January 27, 2000  
January 2001 wpd

**APPENDIX C: Sample Interview Questions**

1. Can you describe for me in detail, your typical daily activities on a weekday?
2. From what you have described, which ones would you describe as leisure?
  - a) Can you tell me what qualities the activities have that make them leisure?
  - b) who is involved in these activities with you?
  - c) Is there anything that prevents you from engaging in these activities?
  - d) Can you describe the relative importance these activities have to you? What does it mean when you can't engage in these activities?
  - e) Is there something you'd like to be involved in (leisure-wise) but cannot, due to other constraints?
3. We've been talking about leisure but haven't really defined it much. There's an assumption that how Canadians define leisure is the only way. How would you describe leisure?
4. In what ways, if at all, do you think leisure is related to a person's health?
5. Can you describe how leisure fits into how you assess your own health?
6. Are there differences between the resources that were available to you in your home country, compared to what's available here in Canada? If yes, what impact do these differences make on your daily life now?
7. Are there things about leisure that are important to you, that we haven't talked about yet?