

Immigrant Women Organizing for Change: Integration and Community Development by Immigrant Women in the Maritimes

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ABSTRACT

The processes of immigration and integration are fraught with hardship for the majority of immigrants from non-English speaking countries or immigrant visible minorities, but in particular for immigrant women, who often come as dependent immigrants. Institutional, social and even cultural barriers render integration for immigrant women slow and difficult to achieve, or even unattainable. Based on statistical information, we know that immigrant women are not well integrated even though they often have higher levels of education than Canadian-born women, their average earnings are less, they are over-represented in the lower status jobs and they are often underemployed. Using a qualitative approach, namely forty semi-structured interviews, this research project examines the integration process of immigrant women in two major urban centres in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and to document the organizational activities of immigrant women assessing their significance in the integration process. The major questions addressed by this study include how immigrant women are integrated; what integration means to them; what barriers to equitable integration they face; what activities facilitate immigrant women's integration in Canadian society, including labour market integration in particular; and what role immigrant women's organizations play in the integration process.

Executive Summary

The processes of immigration and integration are fraught with hardship for the majority of immigrants from non-English speaking countries or immigrant visible minorities, but in particular for immigrant women, who often come as dependent immigrants. Institutional, social and cultural barriers render integration for immigrant women slow and difficult to achieve, or even unattainable. Immigrant women are not well integrated; even though they often have higher levels of education than Canadian-born women, their average earnings are less, they are over-represented in lower status jobs and they are often un- or underemployed.

This research project examines the integration process of immigrant women in two major urban centres in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and documents the organizational activities of immigrant women, assessing their significance in the integration process. The study examines how immigrant women are integrated; what integration means to them; what barriers to equitable integration they face; what activities facilitate immigrant women's integration in Canadian society, including labour market integration in particular; and what role immigrant women's organizations play in the integration process.

Forty immigrant and refugee women were interviewed in Fredericton and Halifax. The semi-structured and in-depth interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed by using the qualitative software NUD*IST. A snowball technique was utilized for indentifying eligible participants, though efforts were made to include women from as many diverse cultural backgrounds and origins as possible. The criteria utilized for selecting participants were immigrant or refugee women who are visible minorities or who do not speak English well or

speak it with an accent other than British, American or Australian and living in Canada for at least five years.

The research participants were involved in the following types of organizations: ethnic-specific, religious; multi-ethnic and multicultural, “panethnic,” political, cultural, women’s, and other civic organizations. Immigrant women have also been involved in organizing for specific issues without being connected to a particular organization.

The two major categories of organizations where the participants were mostly active are multicultural and “other civic.” The finding indicates that immigrant women are involved in not only narrowly defined immigrant and ethnic-specific issues and organizations but in wider social and political issues. In so doing they define their relevant “community” as the wider social milieu of the country where they live.

While the nature and extent of immigrant women’s organizational participation ranged from leadership or highly committed roles to being mere members, the majority of the research participants were involved in at least one leadership role (and frequently multiple such roles) and several simple memberships in many organizations. It was rare for the women of this study not to ‘participate’ in any organization.

Reasons for organizing included social, religious, “ethnic,” political, expanding employment opportunities, choosing to represent the interests of immigrant women in mainstream groups, broadening personal interests, and activating citizenship. Immigrant women have often started volunteering with ethnic-specific organizations and, as time goes by, have developed interests outside their ethnic community. As a result, they have been involved in varied broader civic organizations and contributed to community development and enhancing the quality of life in

Canadian society.

The major aspects and meanings of integration, from the participants' standpoint, are economic integration, breaking the isolation and making friends, activism to bring about social change, and a sense of gratitude and obligation to give back to Canadian-born citizens. Immigrant women's organizing provides newcomers with a vehicle to integration. Volunteer involvement and volunteer organizations provide immigrant women with a safe opportunity and place to explore, train and get familiar with Canadian society. Volunteer organizations are an excellent place to provide immigrant women, who often are not involved in paid work, with opportunities to both meet new friends and acquire Canadian work experience.

The women in the study were highly educated, with highly educated spouses and a higher than average family income. Their labour force participation rate is higher than that for the general Canadian female population. The general educational attainment is also much higher than for the general population. Nevertheless, the research data also show that even though many immigrant women are employed, their employment is often not commensurate with their educational and prior professional background.

Barriers to labour force integration faced by immigrant women included language and accent, racism and sexism, non-recognition of foreign credentials, age, traditional gender roles and patriarchy, lack of confidence, isolation and culture shock, and limited education. These barriers are not specific to a workplace, industry or ethnic or class-defined category of immigrant women; rather they refer to generalized, systemic obstacles.

The women used different strategies to improve their success in labour force integration. These included obtaining Canadian qualifications, whether Canadian university degrees or

certification of degrees acquired elsewhere; obtaining Canadian experience, through volunteer work, working for multicultural organizations and by working for minimum wage at any job; by working much harder, and making an enormous effort and personal sacrifices; and by organizing for social change.

These findings have three key policy implications. Immigrant women can be important contributors to “community development” in Canada, and should be encouraged and promoted.

Volunteer involvement and organizations can be considered a vehicle to integration, and, as such, should be encouraged and promoted. The identification of the systemic barriers to integration faced by immigrant women in the Maritimes calls for their alleviation through public policy initiatives.

Statement of Problem

Introduction

Research indicates that immigrant women of various socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds have been instrumental, historically and currently, in community organizing — including involvement and leadership in the social construction of ethnic community institutions — in order to overcome barriers of participation and to improve their lives, and those of others in society (Burnet, 1986; Das Gupta, 1986; Gabaccia, 1994; Schwarz Seller, 1994). **Research Question 1** explores (i) how immigrant women are involved in various types of organizations in the urban structures of the Maritime region of Canada (i.e., diverse issues and organizational forms, nature and extent of participation), and (ii) why immigrant women are involved in organizing (i.e., motives / goals for organizing) from their own perspective. Although immigrant women sometimes shift back and forth between unpaid and various arrangements of paid work in community organizations or get involved as volunteers in order to expand their employment options by acquiring “Canadian experience,” “organizing” here refers to strictly unpaid community work.

Canada’s population is largely immigrant based. The majority of Canada's immigrants came after World War Two (Kubat 1993). Until 1962 Canadian immigration policies were racist, and favoured European groups by systematically creating barriers for non-European immigrants (Kubat 1993; Agnew 1996). In 1967 immigration policy-makers removed these overt racial biases and established more equitable criteria that permitted potential immigrants who met the admission requirements "regardless of nationality and country of origin" to enter the country (Agnew 1996,

113). As a result, many people from non-European countries have immigrated to Canada. But although racial barriers have been removed, the current immigration point system, created in the 1960s, contains an inherent class bias that favours middle and upper-middle class immigrants.

Regardless of class or ethnic background, all immigrants undergo a process of settlement and integration. Although often taken for granted, integration is a complex and multi-faceted process. For example, while the host society expects newcomers to "integrate," newcomers often resist total integration and seek to preserve aspects of the "old culture," thereby creating new ethnicities (Tastsoglou 1997). Such efforts and resistance can create tension and conflict in immigrant families as well as between immigrants and society at large (Miedema and Wachholz 1998; James 1995; Ng 1990; Nyakbwa and Harvey 1990; Miedema and Nason-Clark 1989).

Research Question 2 examines the importance of community involvement in the integration process from the women's standpoint.

Traditionally, regardless of country of origin, immigration has occurred in "waves."¹ The first "waves" of mostly European immigration occurred between 1881 and 1892. The second waves of mostly European immigrants occurred between 1905 and 1915. During the 20th century, many more waves of immigration occurred, with 1957, 1966 and 1974 being peak years with more than 200,000 immigrant annually moving to Canada. In the last decades the immigration levels have steadily increased to a stable level of roughly a quarter of million people moving to Canada annually. In the decade of 1990 to 1999, the total number of immigrants that moved to Canada was slightly less than two million people. In the meantime, the

¹ In some years more people immigrate than other years to Canada. This phenomenon creates the image of waves on charts.

countries of origin of the immigrants have changed. While in the first part of the 20th century most immigrants came from Europe, in the later part of this century, the majority of immigrants have come from Asia (*Immigrants in Canada*, 1990).

Based on the percentage of immigrants as a total of the population, the Maritime provinces of Canada, i.e. Nova Scotia (with a total population of 950,000), New Brunswick (with 755,000), and Prince Edward Island (with 138,000), are not a preferred destination. In 1991, 4.5 percent of the Nova Scotia and 3.5 percent of the New Brunswick population indicated that they were foreign born; the rate for Canada was 16 percent, for Ontario it was 24 percent, and for British Columbia 22 percent (Badets and Chui, 1996). The Maritime provinces have been among the poorest regions of Canada, with higher unemployment rates than the Canadian average. In 1998, for example, while the latter stood at 8.3%, Nova Scotia had an unemployment rate of 10.7% and New Brunswick a rate of 12.1%. As a result, historically, a lot of outmigration has been taking place toward Central and Western Canada.

Research Question 3 examines labour force integration for immigrant women in the Maritime provinces. Labour force integration in ways commensurate with one's prior qualifications is by far an ideal for immigrant women, unlike for many native born. The barriers that the visible minority and immigrant women themselves identify in the labour force are systemic in nature; for example, racism, sexism, language barriers, accent discrimination, age discrimination, non-recognition of foreign credentials. Furthermore, traditional gender roles enforced through the patriarchal family and a society that does not provide adequate support for women's paid work, and immigrant women's lack of confidence in a foreign environment that

does not provide them with sufficient mechanisms for adjustment, constitute systemic barriers to labour force integration as well. Such barriers marginalize the women regardless of personal effort and hard work. While the more collective strategy of approaching the ideal of labour force integration for some of the immigrant women of this study consists in organizing to overcome systemic obstacles, the most common personal strategies are: (i) obtaining Canadian university degrees, or repeating in Canada degrees already acquired elsewhere; (ii) seeking the so-called “Canadian experience” by volunteering, working in multicultural organizations, or taking on jobs at minimum wage; (iii) working harder than their Canadian-born co-workers in order to “prove” themselves; (iv) and making a hard personal effort, even involving sacrifice, to succeed professionally in Canada.

Conceptual Framework

IMMIGRANT WOMEN

The term “immigrant women” is a bifurcated one as it describes a legal as well as a social status. An immigrant woman is a person who has acquired permanent residency status in Canada. This status provides her with many of the same rights as Canadian citizens. However, the social status of being an immigrant woman is different. According to Ng and Estable (1987), the term immigrant woman is socially constructed and rooted in the economic and legal processes of our society, containing sexist, racist and class biases. The “common sense usage” of ‘immigrant women’ generally refers to women of colour, including women from southern Europe and the Third World, women who do not speak English well or who speak it with an accent (other than

British or American), and women who occupy lower positions in the occupational hierarchy (Ng and Estable, 1987: 29 and 1990: 185; Szekely 1990: 127). We concur with them that the social term “immigrant woman” is often interpreted as described. It is important to note however that in the Maritimes many immigrant women are white, and many, regardless of their ethnic background, have a good mastery of the English language. For this study, we also include women who, strictly speaking, are not immigrants but are accepted as refugees into Canada. “Immigrant woman” in this study combines technical-legal criteria and social ones, and refers therefore to women who meet the following two requirements: (a) have permanent resident or refugee status and (b) are visible minorities, or do not speak English well² or speak it with an accent other than British, American or Australian.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the diverse issues and forms of immigrant women’s organizational participation for community development and their goals for their organizing?

Community, Development, Community Development

Although both concepts of “community” and “development” are rather old in social science literature, the concept of community development is a more recent one, about which there is less written (Cary, 1986: 32). Although immigrant and ethnic minority women’s ethnic-specific activities have often been the focus of research (Polyzoi, 1986; Swyripa, 1993; Tastsoglou, 1997), immigrant women’s activities in the construction of communities (ethnic and other) are rarely

² Lack of a translation budget as well as the exploratory nature of this study did not allow us to specifically seek and interview immigrant women who did not speak any English at all. For similar reasons, we had no access to immigrant women who are exclusively French speakers. Our intuitive sense however is that the number of this second group is rather small in the Maritimes.

conceptualized as community development.³ In this section we draw the links between the concepts of “community,” “development,” and “community development” and theorize about immigrant women’s diverse activities to overcome barriers of participation and to improve their lives in Canadian society as community development.

As Lotz (1998) argues, “community” is “one of the most elusive and vague [terms] in sociology and is by now largely without specific meaning.” Although there are many definitions of community, we have identified five broad approaches in the social science literature. Community in the classical sociological tradition is taken in the pastoral conception of a small town or village where a traditional society is still to be found (Chekki, 1986). This conception is epitomized in Ferdinand Toennies’ *Gemeinschaft*, the communal society, small in size and intricately connected by non-contractual social bonds, mutual obligations and common social identity among individual members. According to this tradition, community, is conceived as both a locality and a form of solidarity among individuals. According to a second sociological conception, community is primarily a symbolic and social construction (though it may have a spatial aspect too) that serves as a referent of people’s identity (Cohen, 1985). In this second conception, community includes experiences, spaces, rituals and all that is meaningful to a group of people. The experience of community is where, one learns and continues to practice how to be ‘social’, that is where one learns “how things are done around here and becomes part of the system that ensures that things are done that way. It is where one acquires culture” (Cohen, 1985).

A third approach to community comes from a network perspective. In their study of East

³ Tania Das Gupta’s study (1986) of community development by immigrant women in Ontario is rather exceptional. Moving in a similar direction but less explicit is Mary Pardo’s study of Mexican American women (1991).

York in the late 1960s, Wellman, Carrington and Hall (1988) conceptualized East Yorkers' networks as personal communities. According to them, the social essence of community lies in neither locality nor solidarity, but in the ways in which networks of informal relations fit persons and households into social structures. Their approach focuses attention on the characteristics of 'community ties', i.e., informal links of companionship and mutual aid and patterns formed thereupon (1988: 131). Adjusting our lens on immigrant women networks, we might say that such networks constitute their communities. In the case of immigrant women, networks (i) provide "havens" (i.e., a sense of belonging); (ii) they provide "band-aids," that is emotional aid and small services to help immigrant women cope with the stresses and strains of their current structural locations; and (iii) the outward linkages of networks provide immigrant women with ladders to change their situations (i.e., jobs, houses) and levers (politics, lobbying instruments) to change their social locations (Wellman, Carrington and Hall, 1988: 175). In terms of the social composition of networks then, they may start from immigrant core groups and extend all the way to the surrounding and mainstream society.

Yet a fourth conception of community derives from the development literature and treats community as an indispensable social condition of development. According to this approach, development cannot take place unless people mobilize themselves, inquire, decide and take initiatives on their own to meet their needs. For some, such mobilization is even an end in itself for development to be achieved (Rahman, 1993; Martinussen, 1997). This perspective on development comes mainly from alternative theories of development, which place the issue of development squarely in the people's hands as opposed to mainstream theories that put it in the hands of the bureaucratic and technocratic planners of the state or other development agencies.

Development is thus conceptualized as that which the people (i.e. the community) feel as their need, which they mobilize around, and take action to address that need (McMichael, 1996; Sachs; 1993). An entire stream of theoretical literature and empirical studies on alternative Third World development actually adopts this perspective. Although in this fourth conception, community and development are obviously linked, and community constitutes a major centre of reference in the search for alternative development, the concept of community has persisted as a sideshow, not explicitly defined but simply taken unproblematically in the sense of ‘people’ living in a certain locality and mobilizing themselves.

The last stream of literature that makes use of the concept of “community” lies in the literature on co-operatives and community-based economic development. The idea of cooperation can be traced to ancient societies (the Babylonian era, ancient China, and so forth), the European Middle Ages, the early Industrial Revolution, early North American co-operative societies, and the Chartist and socialist movements, as well as various cooperative experiments throughout the contemporary world (Dreyfuss, 1973: 2-8). George Melnyk (1985) identifies four ideal types of co-operatives, historically and in the contemporary world: those following the “liberal democratic” (or social democratic) tradition, the “Marxist,” the “Socialist” and finally the “communalist” tradition. Such experiences and experiments are based on a different combination of the principles of economic survival and social idealism⁴ and have had historically varying degrees of economic success and social relevance (ranging from human service oriented utopian communities, to large, financially successful, market-driven cooperatives). Depending on that combination, co-operative experiments have had differing conceptions of community, ranging

⁴ Social idealism refers to mutuality, cooperation, vision of a humane society and so forth.

from a simple locality, where people organize themselves for economic success and are led by capitalist business sense, to a group of people living in a certain area (i.e. locality), owning together, working together, and, in addition, tied together by all sorts of freely chosen and philosophically-based social bonds, mutuality and caring for one another, i.e. “community” in the sense of solidarity (Digby, 1965; Infield, 1971; Casselman, 1952).

Drawing largely upon the last two perspectives Chekki (1986) argues that community development evolved from economic, social and political development theorizing, with the objective of initiating, giving direction to and sustaining community action. Community action here is seen as a riposte by members to a felt need that affects community life in its entirety. Community development therefore, seems to entail “efforts to mobilize the people who are directly affected by a common condition...into groups and organizations to enable them to take action on social problems and issues that affect them” (Cary, 1986: 39). In the case of immigrant women, community development means “specific efforts in community work, which are aimed at enabling immigrant women to bring about change in their lives, as women, as immigrants, ... not individually, but as community” (Das Gupta, 1986: 12). Thus the central ethos of community development is to facilitate the process of a community’s acquisition of expertise and resourcefulness to solve its own problems in the short and long term. Through acquisition of the necessary expertise and inventiveness, members take part in community development activities, thereby bringing in a set of conditions for change (Cohen, 1985; Rahman, 1993; Chekki, 1986).

It is important to note at the outset that most of the literature on community

development presents a “gender-neutral”⁵ and culturally homogeneous picture of community,⁶ and this is quite problematic when dealing with immigrant women where diversity is a given. The major theoretical challenge in community development and immigrant women then becomes which “community” are we talking about? Who defines such a community? Does it include immigrant women only, immigrants, ethnic-specific communities or local Canadian communities where immigrants live and participate in various degrees as outsiders within? Our approach in this project on community is rather empirical, that is instead of starting with an *a priori* definition, we understand what “community” is for immigrant women from the issues they embrace and the organizations they get involved in order to take action with like-minded others on these issues.⁷

⁵ Community work is also conceived as gender-neutral despite being deeply gendered (Callahan, 1997). Most of the theorizing and research on community development has been done by men using gendered and racialized lenses. For a critique of such androcentric tendencies, see Patricia Maguire (1987). For an exception to the rule of male and androcentric scholarship on the community development literature in Canada, see Rusty Neal’s *Brotherhood Economics* (1998), exploring the fascinating history of women’s substantial contributions to the co-operative movement in Nova Scotia. Feminist community organizing has remained on the periphery of community development theory as well, either because those who do it, do not have the time to write about it, or the feminist academics who write about it find a better reception in the feminist and social movement literature (Callahan, 1997). We argue that the case is even worse when it comes to immigrant women’s organizing and the community development literature.

⁶ The Antigonish Movement of the 1930s and 1940s in Nova Scotia was perhaps an exception, in that it recognized the power of ethnic identities and encouraged the formation of co-operatives around long standing ethnic (but also occupational) loyalties (MacInnes, 1997).

⁷ We agree however with Wharf’s (Wharf and Clague, 1997:7) broad definition of community as including both communities of interest as well as geographic areas.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What does “integration” mean from the immigrant women’s perspective and how are they integrated in the Maritimes’ urban centres?

Integration

Taking into account previous theoretical debates and empirical findings, Driedger and Halli (1996), and Driedger (1996), attempted to develop an integration model that is not linear and static and that takes into account circumstances of individuals, the role of ethnic groups and the demands of the larger society. By combining a "conformity-pluralism continuum with a voluntary-involuntary continuum," Driedger and Halli's model for examining race and conflict allows for various degrees of integration among people from divergent ethnic groups.

Michel Page (1992) describes three types of (primarily cultural) integration: the multiple-cultural areas, the common-cultural areas and the private-public areas. In the first instance, various ethnic groups "occupy a suitable portion of the cultural area left vacant by the majority ethnic culture" (37-38). In the case of "common-cultural areas," minority ethnic groups do not occupy separate areas; rather, the minority and majority groups occupy the entire space. Regarding "private-public areas," Page argues that no particular ethnic group can enjoy protection or autonomy.

By way of illustration, Page considers language instruction among newcomers. In a society based on "multiple-cultural areas," he suggests, ancestral languages would be taught as an extra-curricular subject and used largely to foster identity among the members of the ethnic group. In a society based on "common-cultural areas," Page argues, ethnic groups would still be taught their mother tongue but the purpose of the program would be not to create identity but to affirm the values of the group in question. Other students would be encouraged to learn the ethnic

language in order to help bridge the cultural gaps. In a society based on "private-public areas," ancestral languages are seen as a private issue and can only be used as a facilitator to increase access to the educational system for minority children. As Page's development of these three models suggests, integration is not a linear process and it is greatly influenced by the position of various ethnic groups in society, the location and wishes of individuals, and the structure of institutions.

Nevertheless, Page and Driedger and Halli (1996) fall into a reductionist trap by ignoring gender. Problems of integration encountered by male immigrants are assumed to represent universal problems of immigrants. Yet significant evidence exists to suggest that the integration process is considerably different for women than for men. Immigrant women frequently have to overcome particularly formidable barriers that men do not. Ralston's (1988) exploratory study focuses on the lived experience of South Asian immigrant women in Halifax. Many of these women worked at home looking after their families, felt isolated, and had few friends. Those in the paid workforce experienced a "double burden" of work and family. Besides traditional family responsibilities, these women were also responsible for the retention of ethnic identity within their families.

Nyakbwa and Harvey (1990) support Ralston's findings regarding the enormous stress that immigrant women endure. For example, while appropriate employment is often key to being a successful immigrant, many immigrant women are not able to secure that type of employment (Ng 1981; Barndt et al 1982; Miedema and Nason-Clark 1989; Miedema and Wachholz 1998). Furthermore, changing family dynamics and familial conflicts regarding values occasioned by the migration experience can create much stress. In addition, many non-white immigrants in Canada

experience systemic racism (Bolaria and Li 1988; Calliste 1989; Henry 1994; James 1995; Miedema and Nason-Clark 1989; Satzewich 1992). While white immigrant women are doubly disadvantaged because of their gender and status, black immigrant women suffer triple jeopardy since they must also face the pervasive racism of Canadian society. In terms of adaptation, "their social networks are deficient, their life satisfaction is low, and they suffer from emotional isolation" (Nyakbwa and Harvey 1990, 138).

Rublee and Shaw's (1991) study suggests that the lack of English/French language skills, day-care and social mobility hinder immigrant women's integration into Canadian society. Their social and leisure activities were also negatively affected, thereby compromising the women's overall well-being. As a result, many immigrant women become isolated.

Djao and Ng (1987) argue that immigrant women's isolation, although frequently constructed as a psychological problem, is a sociological one. They argue that isolation is structurally created by such factors as the organization of neighbourhoods, the nature of housework, the climate, centralized conditions of shopping and the gender segregation of the labour market. In addition, they argue, governmental policies exacerbate the isolation of immigrant women by rendering them legally dependent on their spouses.

While empirical and feminist studies successfully avoid the reductionist trap, they either do not engage the discourse of integration or they take "integration" for granted. While the anti-racist literature better addresses the concept of integration, the gender dimension is absent. Small (1994), for example, recognizes the importance of various kinds of integration (for example, non-segregation, interaction, harmony), but he conceives of integration primarily as "racialized parity;" that is, a process of access to and/or ownership of resources. In an effort to integrate

feminist and anti-racist perspectives, we suggest there is value in seeing integration as a process of acquiring "racialized and gender parity." Such a yardstick helps us assess the integration process of the women in our study.

While integration thus conceived operates clearly on a group or macrosociological level, we have adopted in our research project³ a methodologically individualist approach which focuses on individual immigrant women's experiences, because it is on that level that we can gain an understanding of the concrete processes and barriers to integration as they are identified by the individual immigrant women, as well as their resistances or strategies in overcoming them, both as individuals and in groups. In examining our subjects' perceptions and experiences of integration, we avoided on purpose asking our participants what integration meant to them, asking instead about "adjustments" to Canadian society. The participants readily discussed their experiences creating a "home" for themselves in Canada, what helped them, what did not, and why. Rather than attempt to generalize about all immigrant women in the Maritimes, here we merely aim to explore the key themes that immigrant women themselves identified while speaking of integration through community involvement. We focus on community involvement because the immigrant women themselves emphasize its importance to their resettlement in Canada.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What barriers face immigrant women in terms of integrating into the labour force in the Maritimes and what strategies are employed to overcome them?

Integration

While Small's definition of integration is a useful starting point, his concept of "integration" as racialized parity operates on the group (macrosociological) level and lends itself

more to quantitative studies, assessing, for instance, immigrant integration using quantitative indicators, such as income, employment status, education and occupational achievement.⁸ There are important studies about immigrant women in Canada which demonstrate that foreign-born women (especially visible minority) stand worse off as far as earnings are concerned, compared to Canadian-born women or to immigrant men, even with adjustments made for socio-economic differences between groups defined by gender, visible minority status and birthplace (Boyd, 1992: 307). Such studies, however, do not reveal much about immigrant women's experiences of the content and context of barriers to integration or their strategies to overcome such barriers. In order to be able to understand these, we need to take a qualitative, methodologically individualist approach, utilizing as a starting point the women's experiences and assessments of their own situation. As a result we have redefined the concept of economic integration on the individual level, and devised an operational definition of economic integration in our study as the ability to find work (or, more accurately, the process of finding work) in Canada in a capacity commensurate to one's educational qualifications and prior work experience.

The added bonus of a qualitative study is that it analytically transforms integration from a simple dichotomy into a process, or a continuum. By doing so, attention is shifted toward discussing the barriers as well as the factors, steps, or strategies facilitating immigrant women's labour force integration. The barriers and strategies which we have identified in our study are

⁸Hou and Balakrishnan's study (1996), though not about immigrants specifically, has revealed different employment integration processes for visible and non-visible minorities. Visible minorities, compared with non-visible, tend to have a higher level of education, yet they are more under-represented in high status occupations and have incomes lower than what their educational and occupational achievements would merit. It is possible that such differences exist between immigrant visible and non-visible (yet distinguishable by accent) minorities, and the question merits further research (Badets and Howatson-Leo, 1999:19).

not statistically representative, yet they are sociologically significant because they represent the nuances of immigrant women's experiences of the integration process. While each of the factors that we identify in this paper is a step in the direction of integration, it may in itself not be sufficient or guarantee a "successful" outcome. Immigrant women often combine in unique ways several of these strategies over a long period of time.

A final word of caution is that even "successful" labour force integration does not necessarily mean contentment for immigrant women. First, it is one aspect only in the process of establishing a life in a new society. Second, there is no "final point" in the process, since human beings - immigrant women included - always strive to better their situation and experience the anxieties and uncertainties of change and risk-taking. Third, we found that even the "successfully integrated" immigrant women, besides the sense of personal accomplishment, often experience tiredness and/or resentment for having to undergo all that struggle in the process of adjusting. Thus, even work integration is a multi-dimensional experience.

We attempt an assessment of the labour force integration of the women in this study specifically, starting from their own perspective, for the following reasons: (i) family income is not a valid indicator because by that criterion most immigrant women are well integrated economically in the Maritimes since their average family income is quite high, yet immigrant women do not always have independent access to such income; (ii) even personal income is not a valid indicator, though its lack most likely signifies absence of work integration. Immigrant women with high educational credentials and work experience from their countries of origin often find themselves underemployed and marginalized. Far from making a judgement ourselves of such immigrant women's work integration, we let them speak for themselves while we lay out the

context of their decisions.

Because of the immigrant selection process, immigrants tend to have a higher level of education than Canadian-born citizens (Akbari, 1999). In 1991, of the immigrants 15 years and older, 14 % had a university degree, while this was the case for 11 % of Canadian-born people. Twelve % of immigrant women had a university degree, while for Canadian-born women the number was nine % (Badets & Chui, 1996). Nevertheless, these numbers do not translate into higher work-force participation rates for immigrant women. Although fewer Canadian-born women had university degrees, their labour force participation rates were higher, 85 % versus 80 % for immigrant women. For women who had less than a grade nine education the numbers were reversed. Of the Canadian-born women with less than a grade nine education, 22 % participated in the work force while this figure was 30 % for immigrant women (Badets and Chui, 1996). The type of jobs women do in Canada are also unevenly distributed between immigrant and non-immigrant women. More immigrant women work in service, processing and manufacturing jobs than non-immigrant women. However, more Canadian-born women work in managerial, professional and clerical jobs than immigrant women.

Overall, the employment rate for recent immigrants (i.e. those who have been in Canada less than five years) has been declining both in absolute terms and relative to the Canadian-born. Immigrant women seem to be at a greater disadvantage than immigrant men. Of all recent immigrant women in Canada in 1986, 58% were in the labour force. This number dropped to 51% in 1996. At the same time Canadian-born women's employment rate continued its upward climb, from 65% in 1986 to 73% in 1996. Although the unemployment rate for Canadian-born women with a university degree in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver is low (4%), for recent

immigrant women this number ranged from 15 % in Vancouver, to 18 % in Toronto, to 21 % in Montreal (Badets & Howaston-Leo, 1999). Overall, while for Canadian-born women employment rates climbed from 52% for those with less than high school education to 86% for the university educated, the employment rates of recent immigrant women with a university degree was just 58%. Badets and Howaston-Leo conclude that “education doesn’t pay off for recent immigrants” (Badets & Howaston-Leo, 1999:18). The greatest numbers of recent immigrant women are employed in “sales and service jobs” (38%), while the occupational category with the largest congregation of Canadian-born women is that of “business, finance and administrative” jobs (33%). In conclusion, neither earlier immigrants, nor more recent ones are well integrated in the Canadian labour force.

As studies have shown (e.g. Das Gupta, 1996; Arat-Koc, 1992; Frager, 1992; Calliste, 1996 and 1989) a major reason for this lack of integration in the labour market has been racism, intertwined with sexism and class exploitation. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the various explanations of racism. Regardless of whether we adopt a classical Marxist, structuralist or agency-oriented Marxist theory of racism (e.g. Cox, Bolaria and Li, and Bonacich respectively, in Satzewich, 1990), or even a “semi-autonomy” (of race from class) position involving a re-worked Marxist notion of “class” (West, Creese, Ng and others in Stasiulis, 1990), discrimination (racism) in the labour market, as Das Gupta states (1994 and 1996) serves the capitalist economy well by keeping a pool of highly qualified women in low paying and low status jobs:

As industrial capitalism developed, the drive to increase profits and thus future investments led entrepreneurs and managers to seek out “cheaper” forms of labour. As mentioned, the ideology of racism has, in post-slavery and post-colonial days, still resulted in the over-representation of Black workers and workers of color in the least desirable, least

secure, poorest paid segments of the workforce. Simultaneously, they have been excluded from better paid, secure, more desirable jobs through systemic practices in the labour market and in other related institutions, such as the educational system (Das Gupta, 1996:14-15).

Why do immigrant women work and what is the meaning of work for them? Several studies that examined the relationship between immigrant women and the labour market looked at ethnic specific groups and focused on women in large urban centres (Das Gupta, 1994 & 1996; Pessar, 1995; Menjivar, 1999). Others have examined the relationship between immigrant women and the labour market for non-ethnic specific groups (Sorensen, 1995). All these studies indicated that the reasons why immigrant women want to enter the labour market are varied (as the category of “immigrant women” is not homogeneous); however, the most important reason is that they have to support themselves and/or their families (Das Gupta, 1994; Pessar, 1995; Menjivar, 1999). Nevertheless this is not the only reason. Many immigrant women live in a patriarchal family structure (Miedema & Wachholz, 1998). Financial earnings provide some⁹ women with a degree of freedom in the family (Pessar, 1995; Menjivar, 1999). “Employment has been seen as source of women’s increased bargaining power and control over resources, which, in turn, is believed to be the basis for personal liberty and more egalitarian relationship within the home” (Menjivar, 1999:6). Thus work for some immigrant women is more than making a wage; it increases these women’s bargaining power in the family.

⁹Ethnicity plays an important role in this regard, as Menjivar has shown (1999).

Methodology

The study was carried out during the winter and spring of 1998 in two Maritime capitals. The research location is significant in the sense of allowing some preliminary assessment of the effects of a rather homogeneous population (with small numbers of immigrants) and more limited resources in the Maritime provinces on immigrant women's organizational participation for community development.¹⁰ Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with forty immigrant and refugee women by two research assistants. Interviews were taped, transcribed verbatim and the qualitative analysis programme NUD*IST was used to assist in the later phase of the data analysis. Coding was carried out by one researcher and a research assistant in parallel. Although a list of definitions was utilized, as it often happens in qualitative research, cases do not fit neatly and discrepancies in categorizing often occur. Such discrepancies were discussed and adjudicated ad hoc. Although we as researchers tried to stay as close to the participants' voices as possible, the analysis is ours.

Participants were identified through a snowball sampling method. Two screening devices were used to generate our sample. First, in order to ensure that we were making appropriate comparisons, we set certain criteria that our participants had to meet, mainly that such candidates should be immigrant (as we defined the term above) women, having migrated to Canada after the age of sixteen and lived in Canada for at least five years. Second, in order to capture all the variations of the same phenomenon (i.e. the immigrant experience), we aimed to select as a

¹⁰ Research has shown that immigrant women in the Maritimes are faced with increased problems of adjustment (Miedema and Nason-Clark, 1989; Miedema and Wachholz, 1998; Ralston, 1988, 1991, 1996).

geographically heterogeneous group of individuals as possible. In addition, we aimed at heterogeneity in terms of the extent of organizational participation but we had great difficulty in finding individuals who were “non-involved.”

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Participants in the sample generally met our criteria¹¹. Although the women were not selected based on their socio-demographic characteristics, overall they were highly educated, with highly educated spouses and with a higher than average family income. More specifically, their profile was as follows: The average age of the women who participated in this research was forty six years. Twenty nine (73%) out of forty women were married, seven (17%) were divorced, two (0.5%) were widowed, two (0.5%) were single. The average duration of the marriage of the married women was nineteen years. Five (12%) women did not have children. For the women who did, the average number of children was three. The mean age of the children was 19 years.

Out of the forty women, seventeen (42%) worked full-time and ten (28%) part-time. Thirteen women (30%) did not work outside the home. Of the spouses, nineteen (65%) worked full-time, three (10%) worked part-time and seven (24%) of the spouses did not work outside the home (the majority of these was retired). The average family income of the thirty seven participants, who reported their annual income was \$58,000. Seven (19%) women had family incomes under \$20,000 while eleven (30%) of the women reported family incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000 annually. Five (14%) women had family incomes between \$40,000 and \$60,000 annually. Seven (19%) women reported a family income under \$80,000 and seven others (19%) reported a family income over \$80,000 per year.

¹¹ With the exception of one participant who had been in Canada for a shorter period of time. We decided in favour of including her because of the significance of her testimony in terms of adding important dimensions to our understanding of immigrant women's organizational participation.

The majority (70% = n 28) of the women indicated that they had a religious affiliation (no questions about religiosity were asked). The women and their spouses had an high overall educational attainment. Eleven (28%) of the women had a high school diploma or less, fifteen (37%) had finished an undergraduate degree, ten, (25%) had completed a post graduate degree and four (10%) women had completed a medical degree or a PhD. The spouses' educational attainment was even higher. Of the spouses only five (17%) had a high school or less education. Five (17%) spouses had completed an undergraduate degree, and six (21%) completed a Master's degree. Thirteen (or 45%) of the spouses had a PhD or medical degree.

On average, the women came to Canada sixteen years ago. Of the forty women, twenty nine (73%) indicated that they spoke English adequately or fluently, only two (5%) indicated that their English language skills were non existent upon arrival. Only two (5%) women were fluent in French upon arrival and six (15%) women were able to speak some French upon arrival. Of the forty women, thirteen (35%) were Caucasian women, and twenty-seven (65%) belonged to visible minority groups. We do not discuss their ethnic backgrounds in greater detail in order to protect their identities.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the diverse issues and forms of immigrant women's organizational participation for community development and their goals for their organizing?

Organizational Forms and Issues

Immigrant women have been involved in a number of different types of organizing, ranging from formal organizations to taking on specific political, civic, cultural and other issues on behalf of others not necessarily originating in the same ethnic group. More than one fourth

(n14) of the immigrant women of this study are involved in various degrees of activity, ranging from leadership roles to mere membership and occasional participation, in ethnic-specific organizations. Such organizations may be of three general types, that is (i) mixed-gender, cultural-social organizations; (ii) women's auxiliaries of ethnic-specific organizations; (iii) ethnic-specific organizations with explicit political aims in the country of origin, i.e. doing what Stasiulis (1997) has termed "homeland politics." A couple of women are even involved in ethnic-specific organizations without being members of that particular ethnic group themselves. The majority of the women involved in ethnic organizing have been in Canada for over ten years, with only four of them having lived in Canada a little less than ten years.

A second type of organizations that immigrant women are involved in are mainstream¹² religious organizations. About one-fourth of women (n12) in our study are involved in such organizations or communities of faith. All of them take active roles of various kinds in the congregations, ranging from organizing singing performances or guide groups for children, to branching off into working for various social issues. One woman is a volunteer in both an Anglican and a Catholic church. If we include in the religious organizations the ethno-religious ones, then a higher proportion of women (n15) in our study are involved in this category of organizations. Women's educational level as well as years of stay in Canada vary widely within this category of organizing.

Another type of organizations that about three quarters (n28) of this study's participants

¹² For example some Christian denominations, Hinduism, and Judaism. Many of those started as immigrant churches but with increasing numbers of immigrants they have become part of the mainstream. Some of these faith communities have strong ethnic affiliations (e.g. Sikhism, Greek Orthodox Church) in which case they are included in "ethnic-specific" organizations (though participants may, admittedly, have multiple motives for membership).

have been active in are multi-ethnic and multicultural organizations. Here belong three different types of organizations: first, mixed-gender, multicultural or multi-ethnic organizations; second visible minority or immigrant women's organizations; thirdly mixed-gender organizations explicitly fighting racism. In this broad category of organizations we find a mix of older and more recent immigrants.

Another type of formal organizations are the panethnic¹³ ones. A relatively limited number of this study's participants (n6) belong to such organizations (e.g. Asian Women's Support Group, the United African Canadian Women's Association, the African Students' Association). Reasons for that might be the existence of several ethnic-specific ones in Nova Scotia and the great popularity of multicultural, multi-ethnic ones, especially in New Brunswick. With one exception, all of the women in this category are older immigrants, having stayed in Canada for a number of years.

Furthermore, immigrant women are involved in certain other types of organizing that are non-immigrant and non-ethnic (multi-ethnic or panethnic) but rather deal with broader social issues. Such organizations are political, cultural, women's and civic organizations. A working definition, for the purposes of this project, for political organizations (four participants) includes the following specific kinds of organizations: (1) narrowly defined political ones, i.e. organizations connected with the formal (electoral) political process in Canada (e.g. political parties); (2) organizations consisting of Canadian-born citizens working in coalition with others for political

¹³ We borrow the concept of "panethnicity" from Yen Le Espiritu's work on Asian American panethnicity as referring to the development of bridging organizations and solidarities among several ethnic and immigrant groups of Asian ancestry (1992). The term is being adapted to refer here to other groupings along similar lines (i.e. panethnic).

change elsewhere (e.g. an Anti-Apartheid Coalition, or a Latin American Solidarity Group); and (3) peace activism. The category of cultural organizations (four participants), for the purposes of this project, excludes multicultural, panethnic and ethnic-specific organizations that get involved, peripherally or exclusively, in cultural events. It includes all other organizations that deal with, broadly speaking, cultural issues (e.g. an Art Gallery). Women's organizations (eight participants)¹⁴ excludes here immigrant, ethnic, panethnic, and religious women's groups. Civic organizations (twenty-five participants) for the purposes of this project, include non-ethnic (panethnic or multi-ethnic), not exclusively women's organizations (as defined), non-political (as defined above). Civic organizations include, for example, professional associations, parent-teacher associations, neighbourhood groups, the home-schooling association, the YMCA. With three exceptions the women who participate actively in political, cultural, women's or other civic organizations have stayed in Canada for over ten years or have come to Canada from or via other English-speaking countries (white South African women or via the U.S.).

Lastly, immigrant women have been involved in organizing for specific issues without necessarily being members of organizations. Such issues may be volunteering English lessons to other immigrant women, fighting for justice in specific language and other discrimination cases, fund-raising for libraries and for the preservation of an old church, helping with professional accreditation of refugees, giving workshops to the police about racism and so forth. Some other women mentioned that they are afraid of the time commitment involved in membership in

¹⁴ Some of the reasons for the "reluctant participation" of immigrant women in feminist organizations may be similar with those that Almquist mentions for racial-ethnic women's participation in the USA (1986), for example, subordination of the interests of women to those of the ethnic group. The whole issue however merits a separate study.

organizations, but, depending on the cause, they often volunteer for specific issues or events (e.g. cooking to fund-raise for the church).

Thus the two largest categories of organizations where this study's immigrant women are mostly active are (1) the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural and (2) other civic organizations. It is also within these two categories where participants have the highest number of activities¹⁵ and where the higher number of participants with multiple activities can be found. If we lump the category of civic organizations together with women's, political and cultural ones (as defined above), we can safely say that the immigrant women of this study are heavily involved in non-narrowly defined immigrant and ethnic issues and organizations but in wider social and political issues. In so doing immigrant women define their relevant community as the wider social milieu of the country where they live as well.

Nature and Extent of Participation

The nature and extent of immigrant women's organizational "participation" ranges from leadership or highly committed roles, to being mere members and occasionally participating in events and activities that suit both their schedule and interests. A few observations on this: out of a group of forty participants in this study, there is not a single immigrant woman who does not participate in an organization, even on an occasional basis. Although we made efforts to contact "non-involved" women, we were not successful in either city. This simply reflects the fact that totally isolated individual immigrant women cannot be accessed through any of the "normal"

¹⁵ "Activity" here means organizational participation either in a leadership role or highly committed role, or as a simple member occasionally participating in events (or simply receiving services). "Activity" may also signify multiple and diverse tasks that members of a single organization may perform (especially in the case of religious organizations that run social programs and so forth).

recruitment routes in a snowball technique. Thus, from very early on, we had to modify our groups for comparison and look for immigrant women involved in leadership or highly committed roles and immigrant women who were only members and occasional participants in selected events (or recipients of services). Only four women were not “participants” in the following sense: One woman was currently a student doing a very intensive practicum in the community as part of her study. She had been however a teacher in her previous career, spending time advising her students much beyond the call of duty. Another woman was a member of an ethnic organization, occasionally actively involved and helping out selectively with particular events. Another had been a relatively recent refugee, while the last one had been busy working as an independent immigrant to sponsor her fiancé, and later had small children to raise. The latter two were participating in multi-cultural organizations as recipients of services only.

Of the remaining 36 women, two more were involved as occasional participants only in two organizations while three more played leadership roles in a single organization. Finally, the majority of the immigrant women of the in this study (n31) were all involved in at least one activist or highly committed role (and very frequently multiple roles) and various simple memberships in multiple organizations. In sum, not only do immigrant women in this study define their community as the wider Canadian social milieu but they get also involved in organizations, primarily in leadership roles or with high degrees of commitment in order to bring about social change. One of these immigrant women activists (A2) relates her experiences of community work in teaching English as a second language to her own community:

One woman¹⁶ wanted to me to teach her and asked me in class, Mrs. X, can we stop this,

¹⁶ Quotes have been slightly edited for readability.

can you just teach me how to drive. I said no, no I can't teach you to drive. Why don't you go to the driver's school? She said I don't understand them, but you got to teach me to drive, I have to survive. But then, the first day she told me could fill this form for me? I said, why, this is a change address form for the mailman? So I filled it. She thanked me forever. I said, forget it, let's go back to the book. She says, you know, for the past 15 years I had to go back to my old address to collect the mail, because I didn't know how to fill this form. So, so I filled that form for her, it's like life saving for her, and then she wanted me to teach her driving. So I said this is impossible. She said, this class is useless, say John and Mary go to church and get married in the church and all this kind of j-. What has that got to do with me? I've got to learn to drive. Then I realize, that's right, this is ridiculous textbook. This is ridiculous textbook. Then I started changing my content of teaching, I start to teach them how to open bank accounts, how to sign your cheques.

Why Do Immigrant Women Organize?

The goals for immigrant women's organizing are almost as diverse as the women who participated in the research. Nevertheless some general patterns can be discerned from the interview material. Immigrant women organize around religious, political, cultural, ethnic, civic, personal and work-related or professional issues. Motives or reasons for organizing are neither unique nor do they exist in isolation from one another. On the contrary, they are multiple and often intertwined. One of the most frequently mentioned motives for participation, be it in an ethnic-specific, a multicultural or a mainstream setting was to socialize and to meet others. This, of course, is understandable considering the fact that many immigrant women who have moved to the Maritimes do not have an extended family or a circle of non-family support. One of the most important reasons why immigrant women move to the Maritimes is to accompany their husbands or other family members who have secured a job (twenty-eight out of forty in this study)¹⁷. A small group of immigrant women came to the Maritimes as refugees. The choice of

¹⁷ Helen Ralston's research among South Asian women in Metro Halifax supports a similar conclusion (1988).

location, the Maritimes, is often not a preferred one but dictated by the sponsor or the settlement program.

Social Reasons One woman reflects the feelings of many women interviewed. She states that she "got involved" because she wanted *"to meet people...you know"* (A8). Another immigrant woman stated that volunteering has played a very positive role in her life. *"I mean, it's ninety percent of our social life"* (A15). Again another woman, who has been very involved with immigrant women organizing, first as a volunteer and later as a paid employee, got involved with a multicultural organization because she felt lonely and out of place after she had moved. When she moved from a large metropolitan, multicultural area, to a Maritime city, she noticed few visible minority people on the streets. *"I did not see another visible minority person for three days. I thought: 'My god, why did I do this?'"* (A35). On a public bulletin board, she noticed an invitation for a meeting from a multicultural group. She contacted them. The contact person happened to be from the same cultural background as the research participant. She was warmly welcomed and this personal contact and the multicultural group made her feel "connected," and she has been involved in multicultural organizing ever since (A35).

Religious Reasons Another very important issue for organizing among immigrant women was religion. For a number of immigrant women their most significant volunteer work was done through their faith communities. They would bake for the church¹⁸, be lay ministers or be involved in any regular church activity such as attending services and celebrating major religious events. However, many women would not only engage in activities beneficial to their religious

¹⁸ The term church could refer to a place of worship regardless of faith. Thus "church" could mean temple, mosque, etc. in this context.

community, but they would also organize events to help mainstream volunteer organizations such as the Breast Cancer Society or the Alzheimer Association, motivated by their religious beliefs. The women would also mobilize the faith communities to be involved not only in secular activities by helping community based organization, but, in some cases, to also be pro-active in helping certain groups of people. For example, one woman stated that her church sponsored "*boat people*," an initiative "*I spearheaded*" (A18). Thus, faith provided a link between religious and mainstream civic organizing (or activism on specific issues or individuals) in this two-fold manner.

Several Christian faith communities are not ethnic-specific and are established religious institutions; such Christian churches were usually established by the early colonizers. These denominations' member's countries of origin could be in Africa, Europe or Asia. Others however, including some other faith communities, have much closer links to a specific ethnic groups. Sikhism, for example, is almost exclusively practised by members of the Sikh community. The Greek Orthodox church includes primarily (but not exclusively) ethnic Greeks in Canada. Religious reasons for organizing are often intertwined with the "social" and the "ethnic" ones. Although the primary reason for immigrant women to get involved with their faith communities was religious, some other important reasons for involvement with the faith community were to socialize and make friends or to maintain a particular culture.

"Ethnic" Reasons Another important and complex motive for immigrant women's organizing is what we term "ethnic" reasons. More specifically, this motive for organizing encompasses three distinct sub-categories: acceptance, ethnic identity retention and advocacy. Many immigrant women felt that ethnic-specific group members were aware of the issues newcomers face, and

therefore they could expect appropriate assistance. Furthermore, they hoped that these organizations would more easily accept them and see them less as "other."

Second, many immigrant women used the ethnic-specific organizations to affirm their ethnic identity. In addition, these groups played a large role in the (perhaps limited) ethnic retention process for their children. One African woman stated that her volunteer involvement with a cultural group is to help retain cultural characteristic and identities. She states:

we're supposed to be teaching the little, the real young one, who were born here, to learn our alphabet and our own numbers and our own culture so we, we're supposed to kind of, introduce them to our language, perhaps speak our language, and thing like that (A11).

Another immigrant woman was instrumental in setting up various groups with different focuses in her ethnic-specific organization. For example, more than two decades ago she started language classes for children from her language group, because "*everyone should know their mother tongue*" (A36). She also became involved in programs to break immigrant women's isolation and later on she was involved in setting up programs for seniors in her community. In fact, her volunteer work has followed somewhat the life cycle of her community.

Third, many immigrant women used the ethnic-specific groups for advocacy and political activities in a broad sense. Sometimes the "educational" goals of the women focused on their own community, in other cases the focus was on educating the mainstream community. One woman stated that she and her female friends (from the same community) have as their goal to educate other members of their community about equality. She stated that some women in her community fight against "*male dominated society*" (A1).

So in our own way, ...very subtle way, not in a combative way, in a very subtle way, non-assertive, we do not just go there and demand you know. We work and show them that we are capable, we can do it (A1).

“Ethnic reasons” for organizing are in reality not clear-cut but are intertwined and can lead to other “multicultural” organizing (especially in the latter’s dimension of fighting racism, as defined above). Thus, other immigrant women got politically involved in fighting racism because they perceived a need to educate mainstream Canadians. One woman's children were subjected to racism, and she felt something needed to be done. Reflecting on her past she states:

I realized that my children were having a problem because of other children, they I mean, they could see they were treated differently, because they were darker skinned. Some kids called them chocolate chip cookie (A27).

This, she contends, was a “wake-up call” and she decided to “get involved”. Over the last thirty years, much of her volunteering has sought to bridge the gap between her community and mainstream society.

Political Reasons “Ethnic reasons” for organizing are also intertwined or lead into political organizing as defined above, that is, including traditional party politics. Few immigrant women are involved in traditional political organizations, nevertheless, some have a long history with political involvement in the Maritimes. Sometimes this involvement was motivated by the political situation in the country of origin. The women would bring their beliefs and value systems to Canada and would continue to fight for social justice issues in their country of origin, either through an ethnic organization, involved in “homeland politics” (Stasiulis, 1997), or through a political one. This was particular true for some research participants who had been involved in human rights groups in the country of origin. For example, a woman who was active in her country of origin became active in a number of organizations such as anti-apartheid groups, Amnesty International and Greenpeace, in Canada. Lately, because of her young family, she was not able to contribute as much as she wanted to these causes. As a result, she decided to take a

young South African girl into her home *"as a sort of major contribution"* (A16) to continue her fight for social justice.

Expanding Opportunities for Paid Employment A group of women got involved in organizations in order to increase their chances for paid employment. This turned out to be a useful strategy for several immigrant women. One woman stated that *"I was unemployed for one year, and I tried to do volunteer work with [multicultural organizations] , 'cause I just wanted to get out of the house"* (A3). Her volunteer job was an explicit attempt to secure employment. However, it was also a good place to meet people, *"that was where I met most of the friends"* (A3). One woman got a job as a child care worker for a multicultural association. Interestingly, much of this volunteer activity takes place in multicultural organizations. When it eventually translated into paid employment, it was most often in the multicultural "industry." For example, several of our research participants were settlement workers themselves. Many women liked to work in the multicultural setting because it provides a safe place to work: *"Other people here understand your situations.... They are immigrants that came at a certain point and they really, they understand"* (A38). However, others felt frustrated that they were not easily able to secure jobs outside the multicultural "industry." Ultimately their goal was to obtain a more secure job instead of working as settlement workers on short term contracts.

In one case the above process was reversed and an immigrant woman's employment facilitated the process of her getting involved in a multicultural group. This woman was hired by a multicultural group to do some book-keeping. Normally she does not like to do volunteer work, but after she took on the job she stated: *"I met so many nice and interesting people and I feel so good about being part of this group. I feel so comfortable among them"* (A26). Thus besides

her paid work activities, she also has become a volunteer.

In some cases, limited opportunity for paid employment was due directly to more personal choices rather than structural factors (i.e. limited language ability, racism), though the structural issues were not absent (i.e. gender). For example, a combination of being involved in ethnic-specific organizing and in (mainstream) civic volunteering worked very well for one immigrant woman. Her husband is involved in a job in which he can take regular sabbaticals. Because she wants to accompany her husband on his sabbatical trips, her availability for long term paid employment is limited. Therefore as a substitute for paid employment, she has been helping in a community kitchen for a number of years. She likes doing it because *"I like to help people."* Furthermore, her volunteering has allowed her to make *"lots of friends there and it makes me busy, I like it, yeah"* (A31). Her involvement with her ethnic-specific community is related to retaining some of her cultural activities and identity.

Choosing to Represent the Interests of Immigrant Women in Mainstream Groups This motive for organizing, like the previous ones, does not appear in isolation from other specific interests and involvements. One woman (A12), for example, was actively involved in a group that helps mentally handicapped children. Although she was also involved with ethnic community groups, her involvement with the mainstream organizations was precipitated by the fact that her own son had a mental handicap. Because of her involvement she has made many acquaintances in the larger community, where she brings an immigrant woman's perspective. Another immigrant woman, who had been sexually abused when she was small, got involved with a sexual abuse survivor's group. Based on her volunteer activity, she was awarded a grant that allowed her to work in her country of origin, for a two year period, with survivors of sexual abuse.

Broadening Personal Interests and Activating Citizenship. Immigrant women have often started volunteering with ethnic-specific organizations and, as time goes by, have developed interests outside the ethnic community. As a result, they have often expanded their involvement in professional and other issues arising from the multiple roles and circumstances of their lives as women, immigrants, mothers, paid workers (i.e. larger society issues), through various kinds of civic and other organizations. A2 started from an ethnic-specific organization but expanded in leading roles in several other, especially multicultural and women's organizations. A2 has also enjoyed her organizing because it gives her a sense she provides services that are much needed by the various communities she works for: *"So, I became a Canadian citizen by doing community work. A real Canadian citizen by doing community work"* (A2).

No Volunteer Work. A small group of participants did not want to be involved in volunteer work at all; the most important reasons were not ideological but based on not having enough time. One woman stated that volunteer work would take too much time away from her and her children. She did not want to be put in the position of having to choose between her children and volunteer work. Another woman, who is married to a man who has long working hours, does not want to get involved because *"it would mean baby-sitters all the time"* (A6). Other women also withdrew from volunteering after they had their children. It was just too much to combine volunteering and motherhood. But for some, as soon as their children were going to school, the intention was that they would start volunteering again. One woman had volunteered before she had her children, then when her children were born withdrew from volunteering, but when her children were old enough to attend day care and school she got involved in these activities again (A30). Overall, the group of women who participated in this study and who did not engage in

volunteer work at the moment was small. Their lack of involvement was the result of a particular state in their lives, instead of a principled objection to volunteering.

Another group of women who had volunteered, in both mainstream and multicultural groups decided to draw back and limit their involvement. For example, one immigrant woman had volunteered in many diverse organizations ranging from cultural associations to guiding families in custody battles. She had to draw back from all this because

I did that for close to a year. But it was very, very hard. Mentally it was too... I'm very sensitive, so I found it was just very draining because I also had to write reports... even though I was volunteering but I just found it was too, too hard to be involved with. (A23)

Another woman had scaled down her volunteer work for the moment and was concentrating on her business career:

I come to an age, and I have started this business and I have some ambitious for my business. And I found maybe it's about time that I should concentrate because I keep saying, I'd devoted my best 15 years to immigrant women. I looked after other people's welfare. Eventually, I found I do not even have a pension for myself. I said in the 1990's, I said, I have to stop saying yes to anybody, I'm going to look after my own welfare (A25).

Volunteer groups and especially multicultural ones also encounter strife among their members¹⁹. Many of the problems can be traced to the enormous diversity among members of many multicultural groups. For example, some immigrant women are white and privileged, others are not privileged and may belong to a visible minority group, some come from countries where women are rather independent and others come from countries where women have to be obedient. All this diversity, which, in addition, is often deeply rooted in historical and cultural issues can

¹⁹ Any group experiences strife and conflict at some point and time. However, in some cases the strife in multicultural groups is specific to the nature of a group that tries to work with people from very diverse backgrounds.

create difficulties in organizations. Difficulties in communication can lead to strife and conflict.

This type of strife discouraged one immigrant woman from participating in a multicultural group because it contributing to her feeling of burn-out (A35). Other immigrant women who were involved in mainstream groups, expressed some disappointment with these groups. One immigrant woman, who represented immigrant women at a national level, stated:

There were few Black and even less Indigenous women and so, it was hard. I thought it was it was mostly lip service... here we are women, trying to get together for a cause, but they still ... it almost is a hierarchy that exists between women across, you know, the races (A14).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What does “integration” mean from the immigrant women’s perspective and how are they integrated in the Maritimes’ urban centres?

Community Involvement

The women in this study had very diverse community involvements. Some women were members of only one group, others were involved in multiple groups. Group membership was dynamic not static; it changed depending on the needs of the women. For example, shortly after arrival, some women decided to become involved in ethnic-specific or multicultural groups and once their children entered school, they became involved with organizations such as home and school associations. Some women's children had life-time health or developmental problems and the women got involved with organizations that cater to the needs of these children. In short, group membership was fluid and at times reflected the integration stages the women were at, while at other times it reflected issues in their personal lives.

Breaking the Isolation For many research participants, involvement in community activities had the simple goal of "getting out of the house" and breaking the isolation. As one women put it: "*I*

like to see people and talk to them. It is good to get out of the house too anyway, otherwise, the cooking and cleaning all the time and, especially when the kids were small" (A33). Another woman stated that involvement had "given me a lot of support. Since I am away from my family, I have been isolated. It relieves that isolation" (A1). Involvement has provided her with friends and a "family." Making friends seems to be a very important step towards social integration. Another woman stated that "I know through [volunteering] so many people. I enjoy to know many people" (A8). One woman explained that involvement:

[It] gives you a sense of fulfilment. It is social. Here nobody knew us and I used to feel sort of, kind of lonely and isolated a lot. Meeting people and when people recognize you it gives you a sort to "attached" feeling. (A32)

Organizing and involvement with organizations played an important role in alleviating the inevitable loneliness and isolation that is often part of immigrant women's lives. One woman stated that in order not to be isolated you have to get involved. She felt that integration is "*a process that we have to make ourselves, it does not come to us, we have to go, do it. We have to make it*" (A10).

One woman who was involved with an ethnic-specific cultural group drew strength from that involvement. She was grappling with culture shock. Initially she felt that her problems were personal but because of the interaction with a culturally specific association, she realized that her problems were not personal but "*adjustment problems.*" She stated that integration was a difficult and long process. However, the cultural association with which she was involved allowed her to meet people with similar backgrounds. She felt that making friends made integration more bearable (A23).

One woman referred to her ethnic specific group as her "*comfort zone*": "*I do not have to*

be somebody else. I feel free because it's a familiar area and I am dealing with my own people that have the same background as me and we speak the same language" (A11). Although few women described involvement with ethnic - specific groups in these terms, many seemed to feel that ethnic communities provided comfort and familiarity.

Although the majority of the women seemed to have positive experiences with community involvement, not every participant did. One woman was not comfortable in "mainstream" groups. She enjoyed being involved with her ethnic specific group as well as with multicultural groups. But "*[w]hen you're doing stuff with mainstream it takes a lot of energy just to be there*" (A21). She was involved with a parent teacher group but did not enjoy it because:

[I was] the only [minority] person on the committee...the reception was not great. I tended to feel excluded...I was there, I contributed but I did not feel that I was doing much. Some of those things I did because I knew, I would be the only person there representing my son. (A21)

Activism and Citizenship For some women involvement meant more than breaking the isolation, it was a venue for activism. One woman mentioned that anti-racism work has given her "*a lot of satisfaction [because] you are doing something against it, instead of sitting at home and complaining about it*" (A1). For other immigrant women involvement meant a desire to effect change in society. "*I think personally, [activism] has been fulfilling as well because of other things. It's given me an avenue to channel...the passion that I have for wanting to change and it has given me some wonderful friends*" (A35). Another immigrant woman has been very involved in all kinds of groups to create change in society. Reflecting back, she felt satisfied that her involvement had contributed to making Canadian society more multicultural and more accepting of visible minorities and immigrant women (A25).

Many of these women who organized in order to explicitly bring about social change felt that organizing was a sign of belonging. One woman felt that organizing her cultural community was an indication that *"we are going to stay here, we are not going to go"* (A27). She reflected back on those days as being *"exciting."* Some of the cultural events she organized were attended by hundreds of people. The people came to *"know who we are and we had something to share with them and they appreciated it"* (A27). Later on, however, she realized that cultural events do little to break down stereotypes and racism. Hence, she started to focus her energies on educating the community about systemic racism. Yet another participant felt that being an activist made her *"feel at home because I became part of the community"* (A22).

Activism in a multicultural society has been a very positive experience for several participants. They felt that involvement with multicultural volunteer organizations helped them develop spiritually and intellectually. *"I [had] never met somebody from Kuwait, Korea or Iraq or other countries"* (A5). Others concurred with the idea that being involved in multicultural organizations was a very positive experience. One woman stated that she valued her friends who are *"from places I would never have dreamed of"* (A3). She felt that her exposure to people from many parts of the world was very positive for her and for her child. Another woman made the same comment; she felt that getting involved in multicultural organizations shaped *"the way I think"* and that being involved in many diverse groups had broadened her perspective on life (A35).

Negative responses also emerged. One participant who was active in a national women's organization felt that her voice was not heard (A14). The local branch of the national group received external funding to carry out activities. However, she felt that the group's mandate and

the conditions for the funding made the group "very academic." It was composed mostly of women working in universities who were able to take advantage of the funds. She noted:

I came from a grassroots background ... and the funding that was given was basically for women who were doing academics. So I did not get to go. Although I was happy to be involved because there were only two immigrant women involved. I felt we needed to have a voice there...Most women that were involved were professors and I was the only student and not even middle class. (A14)

This participant brought the issue of race, class and silencing to the forefront of the group and it was discussed. She had felt marginalized by the experience, but at the same time "enriched" by the subsequent group discussion for which she was the facilitator. She now feels that women's issues are often very diverse and women have "different needs" that ought to be recognized, even though the overall structural problem of being discriminated on the basis of gender is the continuous thread that joins these women together.

A Long and Demanding Process Some women felt that integration through community involvement did consume a large amount of time. One woman got involved with a multicultural organization shortly after her arrival in Canada. But after she had given birth to her children, she moved her volunteer efforts to mainstream groups, that is, schools, so she could be involved in the children's lives. These activities kept her involved with her children yet they also took away time from other interests. She explained: "*it meant I wouldn't be able to study or I won't be able to, you know, it was always sacrificing my time*" (A30). This woman's pattern of volunteering was not uncommon. Several women stated that they had gotten involved in mainstream groups, often school and parent groups, so they could be "on top" of their children's lives.

According to some participants, community involvement is not only a demanding process, it also necessitates a strong personality. One woman felt a positive personal attitude was needed

in order to integrate into Canadian society. When she immigrated to Canada, she knew that she had to spend a lot of time and energy in learning a new language. *"So, my brain was saying, I am going to do in Rome what the Romans do."* She felt that in order to adjust and integrate she had to be self-reliant. *"If I were not independent, I wouldn't dare to come to Canada on my own"* (A5).

Regardless of how integration through community involvement is attempted, regardless of what kind of personal attributes and conscious political choices these women bring to that process, what was clear from the interviews is that community involvement is a long process. Making new friends, learning the language, the idioms and the idiosyncrasies of a new society is a slow, emotional and time-consuming process. When involved in organizations the women felt that they learned to negotiate and understand various aspects of Canadian society. When asked what involvement has meant to them, one participant answered: *"well, I think, basically, you learn, you know, from everything. Sometimes you come home frustrated, but quite often I think, you learn and you learn to get along with people"* (A4).

One woman anticipated that coming to Canada was a *"piece of cake"* because she had been politically active in the country of origin (A3). She quickly realized that it was not a *"piece of cake."* However, being involved in the immigrant women's community helped her feel at home and more adjusted. Another woman felt that political activism in Canada helped her integrate. She stated that she now feels Canadian because *"now I feel, I have learned a lot of skill in this society"* (A2). Thus for many women in the study, community activism was a positive learning experience that aided their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Economic Integration For many immigrant women who participated in this research, economic

integration was achieved to some degree - mainly through their husband's employment (see participant profiles). The average annual family income levels of the research participants was \$57,838. But average incomes skew the picture of reality for many; 18 of the women in our study reported their annual family incomes to be under \$40,000 and out of these, 7 had annual incomes under \$20,000. Furthermore, being economically dependent on a husband may not constitute a real or secure level of economic integration.

For many women who had not reached economic integration or who wanted economic independence from their partners, volunteer activity was seen as a means to economic independence. Several women joined volunteer organizations to secure Canadian work experience so that they would be more marketable when looking for paid employment. In fact, for several women this was a fruitful strategy. Their volunteer work turned into short term employment contracts with the organizations for which they had volunteered. These short term contract jobs were mostly located in the "multicultural industry." Unfortunately, it appeared that such work experience was not easily transferrable to "mainstream" jobs. This difficulty cannot be explained by a lack of education since overall the research participants had high educational attainment. Many participants were frustrated by their inability to move from short term and poorly paid multicultural "industry" contracts to more secure and better paying long term employment.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What barriers face immigrant women in terms of integrating into the labour force in the Maritimes and what strategies are employed to overcome them?

Of the women who participated in this study, 68 % were part-time or full-time involved

in the labour market. This number is slightly lower than the labour force participation rate of 76 % for all Canadian women between the ages of 25 and 54 (*Labour Force Statistics 1976-1996*, 1996). However, if the eleven women in this study who were older than 54 years are removed from the equation, the labour force participation rate for the women between the ages of 25 and 54 moves to 85 %, almost 10 % above the Canadian average. For New Brunswick in particular, the averages are different than the Canadian. In 1996, of all the women in New Brunswick 15 years and older, 48 % were in the work force. For women between 20 and 64 years of age, the labour force participation rate was 59 % in 1996 (*Labour Force Statistics 1976-1996*, 1996). Thus, if we compare the labour force participation rate of the women in this study, to the general female labour force participation rate, immigrant women have a much higher labour force participation rate

The general educational attainment for the women in this study is also much higher than for the average female population. Of the women in this study 75 % had a university degree, while in 1996, fifteen % of Canadian women had completed a university degree and ten % of all New Brunswick women (*CANSIM*, 1996). At first glance, it seems that the immigrant women in this study do very well based on the labour force and educational statistical indicators. But can we make this assumption? The research data show that even though many immigrant women are employed, their employment is often not commensurate with their educational and prior professional background. From the barriers that the women themselves identify in their search for suitable employment and the strategies that they deploy in the hope to achieve labour force integration, we learn about the extent and nuances of the problem from their perspective.

Barriers to Labour Force Integration

The following barriers are not specific to a workplace, industry or ethnic or class-defined category of immigrant women. They rather refer to the generalized, systemic obstacles that the immigrant women of this study identify in their search for suitable employment or in the labour force itself.

Language and Accent Language barriers are among the first adjustment barriers mentioned by immigrant women. As Boyd has shown (1990), the knowledge of one of Canada's official languages has a direct relevance to a foreign-born woman's ability to obtain employment in Canada. Although the relationship of language and especially accent barriers to employment integration is difficult to assess directly, language or accent problems still continue to plague most immigrant women and affect in multiple, sometimes subtle and indirect ways, the quality of their lives in Canada. A7, a visible minority, highly educated, well established professionally immigrant woman explains eloquently how much the accent issue still bothers her because she is treated differently once she starts talking:

Pronunciation is something that still bothers me. But on the other hand, this is a land of immigrants, right? Live and let live. I mean people here, the white people here, also have very different accents, not that I pick them all up, mind you. I do not think it's so important. But if you are treated differently, you ... just because you open your mouth and you know, there I go again.

A14, another visible minority highly educated woman, relates how her inadequate language use affected people's perception of her competence in the workplace:

I found that they wouldn't take me serious. And a lot of the times it was because of the language barriers. You know, when I couldn't really express what I wanted. And sometimes I just needed a word that I was looking for in order to communicate, and people would think it was because I didn't know how to communicate, not because of language but because I was ignorant.

Racism and Sexism Several immigrant women in our study explicitly name racism and sexism as

presenting some of the most serious hindrances to their search for work appropriate with their educational qualifications and prior experience. Interestingly, all of these women are visible minorities. A1 is a highly educated immigrant woman, very active in community organizations who has been unable to find professional employment. This is how she explains her situation:

Being a female has been a hindrance. Especially visible minority female. I think I faced a lot of discrimination here. Job search is very difficult here. You talk to the people on the telephone, you know, they don't see you, they talk to you very nicely. But when you show up there, you know, they just completely, when they see your face, you know.

Some women refer to a particular form of systemic discrimination directed against immigrants from developing countries. The immigrant women identifying this problem are mostly visible minorities from developing countries. A14, Canadian educated, has had a difficult time being “taken seriously” in her work environment. She explains her difficulties by the stereotypes people have of immigrants originating in developing countries specifically:

But, you know, sometimes this idea that if you're coming from a developing country... you are poor immigrant or are very uncivilized and that sort of thing. I think these are the perceptions that people had of someone coming from a developing country. That's what really affected me. Because I find that people always relayed it to me in those terms, in the mentality that, you know, this poor little immigrant woman.

Racism is of course internalized and creating a deep sense of inferiority as well. A10, a Canadian university educated Latin American immigrant woman expresses eloquently her own alienation from herself:

I am of a different race and I did find a lot of racism and a lot of stereotyping of Latin American women. What hindered was also my own lack of awareness of what my rights were, my own lack of my having no sense of who, of what I wanted and standing for my own rights, and for a long time, the way I was brought up, which was thinking that North Americans somehow are superior to Latin Americans.

Non-Recognition of Foreign Credentials While racism and sexism constitute the primary

hindrance to the employment integration of visible minority immigrant women, it is sexism and either accent discrimination or non-recognition of foreign credentials that are most frequently mentioned as obstacles by white immigrant women. Both accent discrimination and non-recognition of foreign credentials constitute, however, specific mechanisms of social closure and gate-keeping in employment and social mobility. As such they are systemic forms of discrimination or racism based on the assumed ethnic inferiority of certain foreign-born Canadians and the assumed inferior quality of educational systems in their countries of origin. Credentialism especially is one type of closure that has been uncovered in the literature as a means of monitoring entrance to key positions (Sorensen, 1995:52-54). In the case of immigrant women, their credentials acquired in non-Western universities are systematically devalued and socially constructed as inadequate or non-existing. In our study, A18, a highly educated white professional woman, eloquently explains the complexity of the situation she faced in Canada, where she was able to come as a landed immigrant because of a job offer but soon found out she was not treated on equal terms with her Canadian colleagues:

My English was as good [when I arrived in Canada] as it is now. I still have strange accents; my granddaughters laugh about me, and my husband does, but my English was good. I had taught English as a Foreign Language when I first got to South America. That's how I survived. My English has a German accent because I first learned it from a German right after the war, in Europe. But apart from them, language was no problem. It wasn't that ethnicity was a problem; the problem was that I was not Canadian. And that my degree wasn't from here, okay. That was the problem.

On the relationship of gender to her employment opportunities and development A18, who eventually had to repeat her foreign-earned medical degree in Canada, comments:

Yes, most of my life I refused to believe that [gender had any negative effect], until finally I had to admit it. Particularly at this [medical faculty]. They were very few women. Now there are more women dental students, but when I came, there were very

few.

Non-recognition of foreign credentials often provides the context of the “choice” to do something else for immigrant women, be it in the form of re-training or raising children as stay-home mothers or some combination. A30 is a white medical doctor who teaches part-time in a university setting and is a student in a related (non-medical) field. She is very active in the community but admits this is the case because she has lacked the opportunity to work for pay. Due to not being able to move outside of the Maritimes because of her husband’s job, she did not seriously consider opportunities to practise medicine elsewhere in Canada. In the early years she had small children and opted to become very involved in their lives as well:

You know, to be quite honest, at the beginning, it was my choice, because I just didn’t know what to do with small children. I didn’t want to bring outside care and so on. So at that point; in fact I even had almost a chance of a couple of jobs, which I don’t know how permanent they would be or what they would turn into. But certainly they would perhaps lead to something or give me some more experience in some fields.... But now lately, it was not by choice anymore, because for the past year I’ve been searching a little bit more intensively around and it’s just kind of hard [finding a job].

A32, a visible minority immigrant physician, unable to obtain a license in Canada, shifted her focus toward part-time university teaching originally, and then obtaining an M.B.A and setting up her own business. For her it was an issue of dignity that made her “choose” not to pursue recognition of her qualifications further:

I came to Canada because of my husband. But I thought that being in the Commonwealth and with my degree from England, it’ll be okay. But then when I came, I just wrote a letter to the Canadian Medical Association, and they wrote back a form letter, you know, we don’t need foreign graduates and that you have to do this, this, this, this, and I said to myself, hell with you, I don’t want to do all this. I have all my full [credentials]. If you want me, I’m here. If you don’t want me, I’ll do something else. So then I started my M.B.A.

Age. One more form of systematic discrimination that is mentioned by some immigrant women is

age. A34, a teacher with twenty six years of experience in her country of origin and several years in public administration, has been unable to find work in Canada despite her obtaining Canadian equivalency for her qualifications. She has been especially disappointed because she has not been able to even secure one interview for all her persistence and many applications. Although she has difficulty with the English language, she feels that her age maybe a contributing factor in not even being short-listed for a job.

Traditional Gender Roles and Patriarchy. The husband's unwillingness or opposition to the wife's employment may also provide the context of the choice to do something different than paid work. This was the case of A27, a faculty wife, an immigrant woman with a B.A. herself from her country of origin who jointly with her husband decided not to work:

Since my husband was [very busy], he wanted me to spend more time with the children. Because after just one year of marriage, I got my first son. And then after the second year I got another son. So my husband, we both decided that children are very important and I should spend more time with my children."

In this case the traditional gender role of the male breadwinner and the female nurturer were implemented through the patriarchal family and in an institutional environment of limited availability of quality child-rearing options.

A15, on the other hand, an engineer and university faculty in her country of origin, reached a similar decision more because of her own discomfort to leave her young children with strangers, instead of the extended family they would be raised by in Africa:

I didn't feel comfortable just handing my kids over to strangers, people I don't know. What they believe, what they do, you know. And I wanted to have some input into their growth. Now if my mother was here, [if] my mother in law was here, it would have been easier to maybe say, okay Grandma will take care of you. And Mommy will go out and look for a job. I tried it, I had my kids in day care for two months but I just couldn't, I couldn't do it. Yeah. I couldn't.

Lack of Confidence. It is not surprising that in an institutional environment that does not recognize immigrant women's abilities and prior achievements and with limited child care options and family support for immigrant women's paid work, some immigrant women feel a lack of confidence in the new environment that may even prevent them from seeking paid employment. For example, in the case of A33, she spoke little English and felt paralyzed by the circumstances of her migration, i.e. the fact that she had followed her husband instead of making such an important decision herself. Despite her B.A and B.Ed from her country of origin, A33 was in fear of trying anything and of talking even on the phone. She stayed outside the labour force for many years and ended up in a totally different line of work without ever using her degrees or even trying to achieve Canadian certification:

Nobody told my husband to come, he came to do a Master's ... but I came and I got married. I just didn't make that choice, I just came, and that I didn't even want to try or that I was so terrifi[ed] of trying.

Isolation and Culture Shock. Some of the other obstacles that immigrant women face in the process of adjustment and making a home in Canada though *indirectly* related to employment can really hamper immigrant women's ability to find appropriate employment and perform well. Among such factors are a sense of isolation (i.e., lacking friends and family, lack of cultural capital necessary to find appropriate employment in Canada) and culture shock.

I guess it's meeting people, feeling alienated and alone. There's nobody when you come here, nobody comes to seek you out. For example, with us we do outreach and you go and if somebody says I have a such and such a person has just arrived and she doesn't have or he doesn't have anything, or friends or whatever, and would like, so here we would provide that kind of thing. But when I came, I never even knew anything about organizations, I didn't know anything. I basically just survived. I don't know how but I survived (A21).

A23, a white well-educated immigrant woman of European background who has had a lot

of difficulty finding work in Canada in non-multicultural settings, describes her experience of culture shock:

In thinking back there were lots of times that I was really angry for no reason. It was maybe one little thing, maybe the supper that was burned and out of that it was just everything that was terrible, how do you say it, just dealing with situations that you know, you could be upset about but not really to that point. And it was just like waking up suddenly in the middle of the night crying, for example, or just, you know, missing home, but not really wanting to tell anybody that type of thing.

Limited Education. Immigrant women with limited educational backgrounds find their chances of securing permanent and decently paying jobs further reduced. Sorensen's findings (1995) of highly educated immigrant women being more likely to be adequately integrated into the Canadian economy, no matter how cautiously interpreted (1995:62), point to the direction of higher education being an asset when it comes to a "successful" education-occupation match. The life history of one participant in our study illustrates this point. A20, now 42 years old, married as a young girl in her country of origin. Her husband was determined to make a better life for himself and his family and wanted to move to Canada. She did not really want to leave her family, friends and country of origin; however, she had little bargaining power and they immigrated, albeit very reluctantly on her part. Once in Canada he found employment but she stayed home and tried to learn the language. *"I only took courses to learn the language. That was my work."* After she felt competent in the English language, she tried clerical and service industry jobs. Because her work was not steady and not really compatible with looking after children, she decided to open her own business. Having her own business would allow her to take care of the children and have a steady work income. Initially, the business went well and her plan seemed to work. The introduction of the value added tax (GST) had a major impact on her service business and eventually she had to close it. She decided to become a full-time

homemaker so she could “*enjoy her [youngest] child ... grow up.*” However, because of these decisions, she was totally dependent on her husband’s income. A number of years later, her marriage was in trouble and she and her husband divorced. As a result, she was forced to return to the work force. With a limited education her employment options were diminished. Thus for the last three years she has been working as a home care giver on a part-time basis.

Strategies Aiming at Labour Force Integration

Obtaining Canadian Qualifications Some of the more successful immigrant women in terms of labour force integration have Canadian university degrees or, at least, Canadian certification of degrees acquired elsewhere. The Canadian degrees may be first degrees or repetitions of degrees earned in the country of origin which have been systemically devalued in Canada, presumably based on assumptions about the quality of higher education especially in non-Western countries (Sorensen, 1995:53). A18, for example, a medical doctor with an unusual specialty acquired outside of Canada, was able to come to Canada as a result of a university teaching post offered to her but not allowed to practise or to advance in her profession until she re-did her professional degree while she was also teaching in the same school.

The Canadian degrees may even be in a totally different field, acquired in addition to degrees from the country of origin. A22 with a Master’s degree from her country of origin did a B.Ed. in Canada in order to be able to land her first professional job and is currently working on a BSW while working full-time in a non-profit organization. Unlike her husband who has been resentful of having to repeat his own medical degree in order to get his license in Canada, she has a different view: “*For me, I don’t feel bitter about it because I felt myself, with my education and background from my country [only] I felt I wouldn’t be able to function here.*” Furthermore, she

is grateful for having the opportunity to change field and explore new employment options in Canada: *“I just feel grateful I am able to do it because, for example, in my country, once you get one degree you have no choice. You have to stay in the field.”*

Recognizing the usefulness of Canadian education in obtaining employment in Canada, several women are in the process of getting a Canadian degree in addition to their first degree acquired in the country of origin. This assumes a certain flexibility and willingness to change one's primary field despite an original heavy investment in it, which in turn presupposes a strong determination and drive to succeed professionally. A32, with a British-acquired medical degree and twenty years of experience in her country of origin, decided to pursue an M.B.A in Canada after she lost hope she could obtain her medical license. She has been teaching in university part-time and has started her own private business at the same time. A32 is a specially interesting case because the value of her British-acquired degree appears to have been negated by her lengthy medical practice in a developing country; in other words, a case where the degree is clearly not the issue. This immigrant woman, who is also a visible minority, has been able to connect her own situation with larger social issues beyond:

I was told that you are studying for M.B.A. You have a medical degree and now you have a business degree. But don't expect too much. For one thing, you are a woman. Second thing, you are a sort of a mature woman. And a third thing, you are not mainstream white person. So you have three drawbacks. And I said no, I don't really believe in it.

Finally, A39, another visible minority with a double major from her country of origin, unable to get her degree recognized in Canada, is planning to go back to school once her husband, who has also switched fields in Canada, finishes his own Canadian degree. A39 has a full-time job in Canada, yet knows that if she wishes to advance professionally she has to obtain a Canadian

degree.

The Elusive “Canadian Experience” Such experience is usually acquired in one of three ways:

(i) through volunteer work, (ii) through working for multicultural organizations, and (iii) starting all over again in Canada at minimum wage and at any job, despite one’s prior qualifications and experience. All three ways can be seen as evidence of considerable determination to succeed professionally in Canada. A5, visible minority, with plenty of prior work experience, worked for at least three organizations as a volunteer, before she landed her current, permanent job for one of the organizations she volunteered for:

I was a volunteer before I started working for the [name of organization]. My volunteer work was focused on special events. When the previous co-ordinator, which is the position I have now, was organizing, she had someone to do brainstorming an idea, so I was part of meetings to give ideas. As well, for special events, just to give a talk for the volunteers or things like that. Or just to do cleaning up, you know. That’s the kind of volunteer work I was doing.

Multicultural organizations, on the other hand, may provide the valuable “Canadian experience” yet the skills acquired seem non-transferrable. A23, a white immigrant of European background, despite her volunteer experience and her Canadian degrees, has been offered work only in multicultural organizations and it is in one of those where she still works:

I found that I had difficulty when I was looking for work and that, I don’t know, nobody said it straightforward that they did not want to hire me but I found, I had a lot of experience, but it still took me two years or over looking for work before I could get a job I wonder if my name had something to do with it.... In these two years the five or three times that I got an interview, it was only times when it was something multicultural.

A3, despite her prior experience as a qualified librarian in her country of origin, had to take on employment at minimum wage when she arrived in Canada. It was a library assistant’s job and she was doing her Master’s, yet she was able to construe this job as a positive, esteem-boosting

experience:

I wasn't as fussy with finding a job, even if it paid minimum. That time it was five dollars an hour and I took it. Other students on my level would not have taken it. Other immigrant women would not take it because it was too low wage. And I said, well, I don't have any experience. This is my first step in that door, I'll take it. I don't care. I don't have any Canadian experience to write on my resume.... I think it gave me more self-esteem that I could do this.

Working Much Harder than Canadian Co-workers and Always Having to Prove Oneself

Sorensen's significant finding (1995) about highly educated immigrant women being able to

"obtain a level of integration that not only matches their male counterparts, but does not appreciatively depart from Canadian-born men, and in some cases, supersedes that of

Canadian-born women" does not reveal much about the hurdles associated with the occupational

attainment of this group of immigrant women. A high level of education may be a necessary

prerequisite but it is not a sufficient one. Some of this study's immigrant women perceive that the

hard work required of them often supersedes that of their Canadian colleagues. In addition, they

feel that, as immigrant women, they are carefully watched and need to always prove themselves.

A3, a successful professional immigrant woman, explains eloquently the mentality and necessity of

immigrant women to "always prove yourself" and the reason behind it:

I also know that, like other minority women in the profession, you tend to work more than you expected to. And you always try to be better than all the rest of them, or even better than what you can do. It's not because you're looking for a promotion, but it's because you're opening other doors for other immigrant women to come in. Or other women of colour. Because if you make a good impression, and they know that you can work as hard, and as good, as anybody else that creates a good impression or will tend to erase stereotypes and make it easier for other women to come into this profession.

Time spent in Canada and professional success in a single place does not alleviate the burden of having to prove oneself again once one's place of residence or work changes. A13

makes this clear: *“Over here [in Canada] you’re constantly proving yourself, and unless you stay in a particular place long enough; each place I’ve gone, I have had to prove that I am good stuff.”* In this woman’s experience, even finding a job requires more effort from immigrant women than from any Canadian-born: *“I find that as immigrants we have to work hard. Harder. You know, twice as much as any other woman. To get a job, to be and feel a part of this society.”*

This woman has no illusions as to why this is the case:

I think it’s the Canadian laws for a multicultural society, and so many things that have developed in order to sort of respond to the needs of people that have been marginalized, are good, but that doesn’t mean it’s changing a lot. Because I think that people are more afraid to really show ... overt discrimination. It’s more hidden.

Making a Personal Effort and Sacrifice Some immigrant women who consider themselves successful professionals have had to actually “beat the odds” by making an enormous personal effort even involving sacrifice to achieve their success. This is illustrated by the life story of A22, an immigrant woman of European background with a Master’s degree from her country of origin. In Canada A22 had to undergo first a lot of upgrading, by taking many computer and English language courses, then taking a Bachelor of Education and eventually a Bachelor of Social Work degree in order to reach what she considers a satisfactory level of employment. She describes the hard labour and persistence on her part that were necessary for her to learn English, upgrade and acquire her Canadian degrees. Although this woman enjoyed her family, she saw herself primarily as a professional and she had always been clear that raising children was not her sole purpose in life, despite other people’s and even the state’s perceptions of her as just a mother of two children:

This [settling in Canada] was very difficult for me because I was a professional when I came here and suddenly I was a mother with two children, you know. Nobody considered

me professional and all the help we got along the settling, it was for my husband, because he's the breadwinner and there is a tendency at least one person should provide and usually it's the father. So it just happened, I was always sidelined. And I feel like [if] it wasn't for my stubbornness, I would still be just sitting somewhere and maybe not even speaking proper English because what I have done, even in the English language training, it was all correspondence courses I was doing on my own. Just bugging people, send me some lessons. I have to do something because I just couldn't, I wasn't the type. I enjoy my children but it's not my goal in life to raise a family.

Organizing for Social Change While the previous strategies of employment integration are more individualistic in that they aim at correcting or taking care of individual employment situations, the strategy of organizing for social change aims at a more collective solution of the systemic unemployment or underemployment of immigrant women by addressing systemic barriers to employment integration, i.e those barriers that are based on ascribed qualities of immigrant women as opposed to the lack or insufficiency of human capital. As immigrant women identify factors such as racism, sexism or age discrimination standing in the way of their professional achievement, they are also aware that collective strategies of fighting such barriers are necessary in addition to whatever they do as individuals in order to deal with their own personal situation. In organizing, immigrant women are motivated not only by their labour force needs and interests but by a more general awareness of the systemic nature of racism and sexism and its effects on various aspects of their lives in Canada.

Discrimination is part of the reality of visible minority women. Racism is part of our day, you know. Other people don't realize it. And so, we are working at what we can do as women (A1).

I think this kind of work is a necessity for justice. Start organizing. You're organizing within your own community first. And then you realize other communities, like other visible minority women, have the same problem, then we broaden out to form an organization called a coalition of visible minority women. (A2)

Activists have themselves no qualms about getting involved in organizing. As visible

minority woman and long-time activist A7 states, “*you just live once, and you do what you think is important and useful and good.*” Yet, at the same time, they are realistic about the relationship between organizing and one’s own immediate personal work and life situation, understanding that those most in need will be involved in organizing at any given point.

If they don’t need it and they find jobs, they don’t go back to the association. I say there is nothing wrong with that. Their lives are full now, they can go on, we can’t force them. I mean, we are here because we know what the job entails. I can live without the association. I can survive without it. But think of other women who would find this association a life-line (A3).

Conclusions

Immigrant women make important contributions to community development in the Maritimes through their multiple forms of organizing and diversity of issues they embrace. They often start getting involved in organizations and issues around their “practical” gender and immigrant status needs in the new environment while many immigrant women move beyond them to addressing “strategic” gender and immigrant status needs or simply socially “strategic” needs. Maxine Molyneux (cited in Karl, 1995) coined the terms “practical” and “strategic” gender needs deriving from respectively named “gender interests.” “Gender interests” are those interests that women (or men) may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender attributes (Molyneux, 1985: 62-63). Practical gender needs refer to what women require in order to fulfil their roles and tasks; for example, training and access to childcare services. Strategic gender needs, on the other hand, refer to what women require in order to overcome their subordination. The distinction is not always easy to make (Karl, 1995: 97). An integrated feminist and anti-racist perspective requires that we do not attempt to separate gender from race, ethnicity or migrant status inequalities in the case of immigrant women, therefore to look at their “needs” as originating both from gender and ethnic/race or immigrant status inequalities. Thus, we have expanded the original term “gender needs” to include, on the one hand, intersections of gender and immigrant status needs and, on the other, socially strategic needs that refer to progressive social change.

“Practical” gender and immigrant status interests and needs include obtaining concrete assistance and information in the adjustment process, and making contacts and friends first among their compatriots and in their ethnic groups and later in broader multicultural groups

deemed likely to appreciate the difficulties of immigrant life. Furthermore, immigrant women may start from the desire/need of finding gainful employment through “apprenticing” in Canadian immigrant and multicultural organizations which provide a safe space and excellent opportunity for Canadian work experience to immigrant women. Other such “practical” needs which seem to motivate immigrant women to organize are: the need for religious practice, the need to help their families preserve their heritage language, the need to fight racism from immediately affecting their children and families or the need to lobby for special services for their children. Many immigrant women, however, make connections among issues and move toward other forms of organizing in order to address “strategic” gender and immigrant status needs or simply socially “strategic” needs, for instance women’s equality, the anti-violence movement, systemic racism, refugee resettlement, labour issues, Aboriginal issues, and, less frequently, political parties and formal electoral politics.²⁰ In so doing, they become empowered persons who “are self-consciously aware of their identity, [and] have control over their lives and resources and are self-reliant participants in processes of development and change” (Ralston, 1995: 122). Education, work experience, stage in the life-course and the length of stay in Canada appear to have an effect in that transition, though the issue of who participates in what and when merits a separate study.

While there may be an “immigrant women’s community” (Das Gupta, 1986), acting as a “unit of action” (Chekki, 1986) though neither in consensus nor assuming everybody’s participation (Cary 1986) nor without class, ethnic and racial divisions (Schwarz Seller, 1994;

²⁰ Schwarz Seller (1994) chronicles a similar tendency in the US, where the numbers of immigrant women participating in formal political activity have been limited due to both immigrant women’s social class and having to cope with many oppressive situations, physically, psychologically and socially.

Agnew, 1996), we are more interested in this project in identifying what community means from the perspective of immigrant women. Thus, we chose to arrive at an empirical understanding of “community” for immigrant women from the issues that they embrace and the organizations they join or help found. Such a definition encompasses not only the immigrant women’s community as such, but also the women’s community(-ies), the immigrant community(-ies), ethnic-specific communities, other, specific localities or communities of interest, and the larger Canadian society. Thus immigrant women’s communities of relevant or important others are multiple and shifting during the life-course. Finally, regardless of whether immigrant women organize around “practical” or “strategic” interests or whether they define “community” in broad or more narrow ways, they contribute by their activism to community development and enhancing the quality of life of others in Canadian society.

Many of the women made it very clear that community involvement, and in particular activities in ethnic specific and multicultural groups, provided a degree of comfort, safety, familiarity, and an opportunity to share familiar language and cultural customs. The members of these groups knew from first-hand experience what it meant to move from one country to another, from one culture to another. For example, one may be able to find somebody who can speak the language from the country of origin; certain festivals will be observed. Despite the occasional problem, the immigrant women in this study experienced a positive impact from community involvement on their integration process. In fact, most of the women stated that volunteering, organizing and involvement helped them make a home for themselves in Canadian society. Volunteer community involvement and organizations provide immigrant women with a safe place to explore, make friends, build networks, become politically active and learn how to

navigate Canadian society. In this study, we have demonstrated the significant role community involvement plays in integration, regardless of the level of participation. For immigrant women, socializing in their communities (community involvement) is perhaps the most important avenue towards integration available to them. Ralston (1988), Nyakbwa and Harvey (1990) and Djao and Ng (1987) have accurately recognized the negative consequences that exist when the integration process is hindered. Furthermore, as Djao and Ng (1987) argue, isolation is a sociological problem and not a psychological one. This distinction is important because when isolation is considered to be psychological, federal government funding agencies may feel less responsibility toward immigrant women.

Currently, the federal government is dragging its feet when it comes to addressing the needs of immigrant women in particular, and Canadian women in general. The existence of many community organizations is in jeopardy because of funding cuts to ethnic specific, multicultural and women's groups. This may, in the long run, have severe implications for the integration process of immigrant women into Canadian society. Immigrant women contribute much to Canadian society, and therefore it is important that the Canadian government provide women with services to assist them in that integration process.

In investigating the economic integration of immigrant women in the Maritimes, we have approached integration in a qualitative way and have defined it from a feminist and anti-racist perspective as the ability/process of achieving employment in ways commensurate with one's educational and prior work qualifications (regardless of one's gender, visible minority or immigrant status). Our approach does not commit us to making a definitive statement about immigrant women's integration based on a simple "yes/no" dichotomy. In addition, contrary to

quantitative approaches, we do not engage in our own research in comparing immigrant women's employment integration to that of Canadian-born women and foreign or Canadian-born men. We start instead from the immigrant women's assessments of their own situation. Our approach views labour force integration as a process and explores it through (1) the immigrant women's identification of barriers in obtaining employment they consider appropriate for themselves and (2) the immigrant women's identification of strategies to obtain labour force integration. Our findings from the immigrant women's experiences in the Maritimes reveal the persistence of such well-documented systemic barriers as racism, sexism, age discrimination and so forth. Furthermore, we contend that even the seemingly more personal barriers to individual women's employment integration (such as a husband's opposition to the wife's employment or the immigrant woman's lack of confidence in her abilities in a foreign environment that does not recognize her abilities and achievements, as revealed in our findings) are in fact systemic barriers or systemic absences resulting in barriers. Finally, we argue that all of the immigrant women's strategies to achieve employment integration, for themselves or for all immigrant women, as revealed through our Maritime findings, underscore the systemic nature of the obstacles they face in the labour market.

Policy Implications

1. Immigrant women can be important contributors to “community development” in Canada. Their activities extend most often outside the ethnic community milieu and have important social and possibly economic consequences for Canadian society at large. Even if immigrant women’s activities and initiatives in organizations and groups may start in their own ethnic communities and may be geared to providing for their own practical needs, they have the potential of spinning off to other communities and impact the Canadian society at large. As such, they should be encouraged and promoted.

2. Volunteer involvement and organizations provide immigrant women with a safe opportunity and place to explore, train and get acquainted with Canadian society: Immigrant women acquire much sought-after Canadian work experience and make new friends. Given how important both of these are for immigrant women to feel “at home” in Canada, volunteer involvement and organizations can be considered a vehicle to integration, and, as such, should be encouraged and promoted.

3. An important barrier to integration for immigrant women in the Maritimes appears to be lack of employment, despite educational credentials and prior work experience. Non-recognition of such qualifications is frustrating and seriously threatens building a commitment to stay in Canada. Mechanisms are needed to increase recognition of education obtained outside Canada.

4. Sexism and racism are further barriers to both integration and employment.

Expanding employment equity programs more to the private sector, including in employment equity immigrant women (especially from non-English speaking countries) as well and instituting/reinforcing mechanisms to help the elimination of sexism and racial discrimination are needed.

5. Work experience acquired in multicultural (and ethnic-specific) organizations does not seem to be easily transferrable to jobs outside the “multicultural industry.” Racism and sexism, in combination with the lack of recognition of foreign credentials, do not easily allow immigrant women working within the “multicultural industry” to find employment elsewhere if they so desire. More efficient mechanisms of reducing /eliminating racism and sexism along with mechanisms of increasing recognition of foreign credentials are needed.

6. Language and accent are barriers to many immigrant women both in integrating generally and, in particular, finding employment. The provision of adequate language training together with recommendation #4 are important.

7. Insufficient education is a barrier to employment for some immigrant women. The availability of education, training and upgrading programs for immigrant women would reduce this barrier.

8. Social isolation in the new society and/or lack of employment opportunities can

have serious mental health consequences. Young mothers, with exclusive childcare responsibilities, are especially vulnerable. Provision of adequate and accessible childcare, while important for all Canadian women, is perhaps more critical for immigrant women. Support systems are also important; some of these are provided, as stated above, by community groups.

Dissemination Activities

Conferences

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “Immigrant Women Organizing for Change: Community Development and Integration by Immigrant Women in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick” Paper presented at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Meetings in Ottawa, June 1998.

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “Immigrant Women and Community Development in the Maritimes.” Paper presented at the Atlantic Association of Sociologists and Anthropologists’ International conference in Halifax, October 1998.

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “Working Much Harder and Always Having to Prove Yourself: Immigrant Women and Labour Force Integration in the Canadian Maritimes.” Paper presented at the International Sociotechnics Conference in Athens, Greece, in September 1999.

Baukje Miedema & Evangelia Tastsoglou. “Immigrant Women and work in the Maritimes: Marginalized Workers.” Atlantic Anthropology and Sociology Association meetings. Fredericton, NB. October 21-23, 1999.

Two community sessions for research-finding dissemination and feedback purposes took place, the first in Halifax and the second in Fredericton, in April 1999 . The Halifax session was sponsored by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council for the Status of Women.

This report is posted on the web at <http://www.pcerii.metropolis.net/>. Hard copies are being sent to Halifax and Fredericton based community organizations.

Reports and Publications

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, IMMIGRANT WOMEN ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE: INTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BY IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE MARITIMES. Report for the PCERII, June 2000, 91 pages.

Baukje Miedema and Evangelia Tastsoglou, “‘But Where Are You From, Originally?’ Immigrant Women and Integration in the Maritimes,” ATLANTIS, Spring 2000, pp. 82-91 (Refereed publication).

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “Immigrant Women and Community Development in the Maritimes: Outsiders Within?” Under Journal Review.

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “Working Much Harder and Always Having to

Prove Yourself: Immigrant Women and Labour Force Integration in the Canadian Maritimes.”

Under Journal Review.

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Baukje Miedema, “Immigrant Women and Anti-Racism Activism,”
manuscript in preparation.

Employment of Students

Two graduate students (Ruramisai Charumbira, M.A. in International Development Studies, Saint Mary's University, and Vanessa Crosswell-Klettke, Interuniversity MA in Women's Studies) were trained and employed for the Halifax part of the research. Ruramisai Charumbira also took a directed readings course with the principal investigator in some of the literature engaged in this project. In addition, two recent graduates were also employed as research assistants, in Fredericton (Shannon Lemire, B.A.) and Halifax (Nadia Stuewer, M.A. in International Development Studies, Saint Mary's University).

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