Social Capital
And the Significance of Pre-Migration Context among Burmese Refugee Communities In Canada

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

What happens in the case of immigrant groups who have had such pre-migration experiences as to require specialized assistance in the adaptation process, and yet whose population is not substantial enough to convince governmental sources of funding their demands? The wave of Burmese refugees fleeing the 1988 crackdown in their country is one such example. Drawing from perspectives of Participatory Action Research (PAR), this study has several objectives. First, it explores the current settlement needs of the Burmese population by way of relating it to the pre-migration context. By identifying those characteristics which influence the ability of this group to effectively compete for resources among organized ethno-cultural groups in Canada, this study hopes to highlight barriers to full participation. Second, a related objective is the documentation of the settlement and integration issues faced by the Burmese population, namely through an exploratory study of experiences of Burmese communities in Winnipeg and Toronto. Third, it seeks to explore the question of social capital within the Burmese population and its possible implications for resettlement and integration process. Fourth, it will attempt to contribute to the testing of Participatory Action Research as a methodological tool in improving our understanding of refugee resettlement. And fifth, it seeks to generate recommendations that will improve the settlement and integration of this target population within Canadian society. Broadly, it is hoped that this study might demonstrate how the particular needs of immigrant groups, in this case statistically small ethno-cultural groups arriving with traumatic refugee experiences, require careful consideration in seeking to facilitate integration through enhanced social capital and self-help.

Acknowledgments

The development and completion of this thesis would have not been possible without the support of a number of individuals. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Margaret Walton-Roberts, for her patience, in spite of the thesis process spanning her maternity leave. As challenging as the process has been, I can honestly say it has been one of the more productive learning experiences of my life.

I would also like to thank Dr. Trudi Bunting, who, as she has said, devoted as much time to me as to any of her own graduate students (I appreciate the time you have put into helping me understand what is really involved in writing a thesis!)

Thank you as well to my readers, Dr. Robert Sharpe and Dr. Stephanie Scott, for their interest and many helpful comments.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a great 'thank you' to the various Burmese communities with whom I have worked, for their willingness to share their lives, their trials and their wisdom with me. I truly hope that through this research, knowledge, insights and momentum will be gained which will in some way contribute to the improvement of the lives of these and other Burmese refugees.

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Foreword

"We tend to have small circles of family and friends formed to our taste, leaving greater society to look after itself." Alexis de Tocqueville

I would like to present in this foreword, the context and nature of my interest in Burmese communities. In 1996, as an undergraduate student at the University of Winnipeg, I encountered a professor who had arrived in Canada as a refugee from Burma. His visceral passion regarding the injustices committed in Burma deeply impressed itself upon me. Through this professor's encouragement and connections in the Thai-Burma border area, I arranged to spend a few months in a refugee camp. The few months turned to a year, and that year has since been pivotal in charting my future plans, commitments and passions. At the point where I returned to Canada from the camps, I left in despair, feeling powerless and frustrated with my inability to assist the people who had kept me like family. I vowed to return someday, with the skills and/or power to make some form of change and act in their interest. I am still working to fulfill this commitment.

In the time subsequent to returning to Canada, I experienced, predictably, considerable culture shock. The friends and supports that I surrounded myself with at that time were members of the Burmese refugee community in Winnipeg and seemed to me to be the only ones with whom I could identify and share my experiences. This community has continued in the subsequent years to remain as my, and my extended family's, very close friends. The initial selection of this thesis topic was a result of the existing close ties

that I had with the Burmese community in Winnipeg. Developing ties with the Burmese community in Toronto proved a lengthier and more involved process than I had expected. The trust and cooperativeness that had long before been developed organically with the Winnipeg group required a more deliberate and systematic cultivation with the Toronto community. The acquisition of knowledge about the experiences and perspectives of the Toronto Burmese community could not easily be justified, in my opinion, without some suggestion of reciprocal benefit, and the activism and mobilization that flowed from this research in both Winnipeg and Toronto, were natural outcomes of assessing the challenges facing these Burmese communities. My role as 'researcher' was, I feel, one very much blurred by my shared concern and activism in the issues, as well as the central role of the communities in identifying challenges and opportunities. My most pressing hope in writing this thesis is one of it being able to contribute something to the welfare and empowerment of these communities.

As Participatory Action Research (PAR) has been central to the development of this thesis, the position of PAR practioners on the role of the external 'researcher' bears mention. According to the writings of Susan Smith et al.,

> Doing PAR requires a commitment beyond a curiosity about a phenomena or a shared common interest like a hobby or casual pastime. Interpersonal relations and communication are at the crux of PAR; only with love for humanity and the Earth do people create social movement and sustainable ways of living (Smith, 1997:234).

She continues, "Within cultures of oppressive silence or naivete, collective efforts to meet, analyze, and take actions are not likely to happen spontaneously. People's state of powerlessness prevents them from organizing themselves or doing research. Among

disadvantaged populations, an external individual or team generally initiates a PAR process, usually taking on vital, catalytic roles" (Smith, 1997:234).

In retrospect I see myself as having attempted to take on that role, to facilitate change for the better. While I may not have been present enough in Toronto to see through concrete improvements in people's condition, I feel that my interest and solidarity with the community did make a positive contribution.

> The roles of these agents can include becoming grounded in (knowing) the setting, organizing a group, facilitating meetings and events, analyzing information or data for return to the group, documenting processes and events, advising as resource people, training other facilitators, providing moral support, linking local or regional groups, as well as monitoring personal assumptions and behaviour (Smith, 1997:235).

I believe that I played what might be called a catalytic role, particularly with the Winnipeg community, which has since become quite organized with a strong and unified vision of their identity in Canada. I have subsequently continued my self-described 'catalytic' community organizing work with the Burmese community of Ottawa, and am hoping that the by-products of writing and conducting this thesis research will continue to broaden in scope.

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

Canada, along with other refugee receiving countries, has become host to an influx of Burmese migrants over the past decade. Now that many of the Burmese refugees in Thailand have been resettled (specifically those involved with the democracy movement), the UNHCR and receiving countries like Canada are finally turning their attention to the Burmese refugees in India, and the population of Burmese refugees in Canada promises to rise. This thesis argues for the need for greater awareness by immigration and settlement services of the specificities of particular ethno-cultural groups, even, as in this case, where they are relatively statistically insignificant. While Burmese have immigrated in small numbers to Canada sporadically over the past century, the main periods have occurred during the 1960s and 70s with waves of economic immigrants, mainly ethnic Chinese fleeing the military regime's anti-Chinese policies, and most recently, those fleeing the 1988 crackdown and the even more repressive regime that resulted from it. The particular focus of this thesis is the most recent cohort of Burmese migrants, those characterized by their Convention Refugee status and the identification of many of them with the various resistance movements following 1988.

The diaspora of Burmese over the past several decades has not resulted in an arrival of numbers comparable to other Asian groups, particularly the Vietnamese 'boatpeople' of the 1970s, but has led nonetheless to a dispersal of Burmese across the country, and in a pattern not dissimilar to other ethnic groups. Concentrations of Burmese have occurred

primarily in large metropolitan centres, namely Toronto and Vancouver. The Burmese in Canada, unofficially around 5000[1], have been characterized by limited official language skills, lack of education and a clustering at the lower rungs of the employment ladder. I argue through this thesis that the case of Burmese refugees in Canada represents a useful modality to illuminate among other things, the importance of equal opportunity services to small population groups and a consideration of the particular traits, experiences and identities of respective groups. Given the distinct socio-political factors contributing to the Burmese diaspora and compounded by their relatively small numbers, this study questions whether the Burmese, and other small ethno-cultural groups in Canada, might be 'falling through the cracks' of the settlement service structures. I have sought to explore what circumstances and conditions appear favourable to the successful integration of Burmese refugees within Canadian society, and particularly what role social capital and institutional completeness might play in facilitating this process. Throughout this thesis the question is posed as to what value the Participatory Action Research approach might have in stimulating the development of social capital. Finally, I have sought to map out and document the issues facing the Burmese populations in two respective communities and generate recommendations for policy formation, service provision and for the communities themselves. While this study does not intend to be representative and generalizable to the entire Burmese population in the communities studied, it aims to delve into the issues and experiences of the individuals interviewed and to provide some overview of the differences encountered by the respective communities in attempting integration within Canadian society.

Based on assessment of Canadian Immigration and Citizenship officer specializing in Burmese refugees.

This research project attempts to depict a constellation of issues illustrated by the case of Burmese immigrants in Canada. Central to this exploration is how the characteristics of this particular ethno-cultural group interact with their ability to develop social capital and establish either the supports necessary to their successful adaptation, or effectively access those of mainstream providers. The target population represents a group with some degree of heterogeneity, in the form of rather strictly defined subgroups (along ethnic and religious lines), but interwoven nonetheless with certain weighted common threads of experience and shared characteristics. These shared strands might be loosely seen to include; status (as refugees), age (predominantly within their thirties), gender (predominantly male) in concert with limited education and language skills, and pre-migration experiences of trauma. As noted at the beginning of this introduction, while the flow of Burmese refugees into Canada has continued, their composition is beginning to shift, with increased entry of Burmese refugees from India. Initial observations would suggest that this new group is increasingly composed of women and ethnic minority groups without the same latent involvement in political opposition as the prior 'student' group. While there may be a corresponding shift in needs, the basic challenges and dimensions of the resettlement process that this thesis explores are anticipated to continue to be relevant.

Specifically the objectives that this thesis seeks to address are:

- to document the settlement and integration experiences of the Burmese population, particularly as a statistically small immigrant (refugee) group
- to gain greater insight into the settlement needs of the Burmese population and how these have been shaped by pre-migration context

- to explore the question of social capital within the Burmese population and its possible consequences for resettlement and integration

- to contribute to the testing of the applicability of PAR methodology in the study of refugee groups

- to generate recommendations that will facilitate the settlement and integration of the target population in Canadian society

Justification

The justification for choice in subject and choice in methodology are interrelated. The subject matter was informed and validated by several factors. First, a pre-existing knowledge of, and experience on my part with, people from Burma. Second, the salience of immigration and the changing composition of immigrants in Canada as exigent issues. And thirdly, the dearth of research on *smaller*, as opposed to statistically significant, immigrant groups. A significant component of the conceptual framework for this study was the application of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as methodology to the problem of immigrant adaptation. Given the concerns of the Burmese community in Winnipeg that had become apparent through my ongoing relationship with this community, I was interested in how PAR might be applied to deepen their, and my own, understanding of the challenges they were facing. The concerns that emerged from my research and dialogues with both the Winnipeg and Toronto communities earmarked for me institutional completeness and overall capacity development as some of the key areas in need of attention. Given the growing interest in PAR as a methodology, I felt that it would be interesting to examine it from the perspective of immigrant adaptation, and specifically, a small, little known ethno-cultural group with considerable pre-migration

‘baggage’. Finally, and most importantly to myself, the selection of PAR was intended to yield research not simply for the sake of research, but for the ultimate purpose of contributing to those concerns deemed significant by the participants themselves.

Methodology

This thesis is intended to be descriptive, exploratory and analytic in nature. Through it I have sought to describe the characteristics and experiences of the target groups, reveal dynamics and relationships, and to a lesser degree, comparatively assess the communities in Winnipeg and Toronto. This thesis maintains that the resettlement process is complex and determined by a number of factors including but not limited to; pre-migration context, statistical significance or otherwise of the ethnic groups’ population in the country of resettlement, and the processes by which social capital is generated and influenced in the research sites. The above aims are attempted through the use of PAR as methodological tool. Indirectly, the relevance of PAR in application to the subject of immigrant/ refugee resettlement and integration will be considered.

Qualitative methods have been employed to collect data for this research. The use of PAR as methodology for this research has in turn informed research design, selection of data collection techniques and the interpretation and analysis of the data. Among the data collection methods used were; semi-structured individual interviews, group interviews, direct observation and use of secondary data sources. The semi-structured interviews and group interviews included 20 individuals from Burma in each Winnipeg and Toronto, resulting in a total of 40 individuals from the Burmese communities. In addition to this key informants from settlement agencies and other communities were also

interviewed. These methods were used to; identify areas of critical concern to the respective communities and thus to inform the research design, to sketch the characteristics of the populations including their social structures and organizations, to develop a sense of common experiences and repeating themes in their resettlement experiences, and to actively improve their ability to redress some of the expressed concerns. The assessments drawn of the communities' concerns, attitudes, experiences and recommendations are primarily exploratory, and are not intended for any inferential statistical purposes.

Limitations of the Study

This research project is not without limitations. One of the potential limitations of the study relates to the fact that the findings, in particular the qualitative methodology, cannot be generalized to the entirety of the Burmese populations in Toronto and Winnipeg, much less of Canada. As the subjects were selected non-randomly and represented only a sample of the total population, inferences cannot be made. This is less the case in Winnipeg where the sample contained the majority of members of the Burmese population. As the intent of this research was to provide an exploratory mapping of the issues and needs encountered by the Burmese individuals interviewed and individuals similar to them (ie. sharing characteristics common to the post-1988 generation), the lack of broader representativeness is not expected to null the value of the findings.

The number of participants was limited due to the time and funds needed for travel. As has been noted in studies of other (mainly) refugee populations (Osmun and Allen, 2001), it is often difficult in cases without financial reward to ensure the participation of interviewees. This difficulty was encountered in this research project and led to informal focus groups as a means to facilitate participation, particularly in Toronto where I did not have pre-existing relationships with the community. Additionally, given the often limited English language skills of participants, and my own inability to speak Burmese, voluntary translators from the community were occasionally relied upon, or conversations pursued through broken dialogues. Again, given the lack of funds, the reliable participation of participants much less translators, could not be ensured.

Finally, a consideration that must be addressed as having possible impacts on the findings is the pre-existing relationships between the Burmese community in Winnipeg and myself. While I would continue to argue that the Winnipeg community is indeed more successfully integrated, and with greater institutional capacity than the Toronto community, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential bias. As well, it could be argued that my personal involvement in and commitment to Burmese issues generally might serve to reduce the rigour and professionalism of the research. I argue that given the prerequisite of a commitment to empowerment and well-being of participants associated with PAR, my own personal interests and loyalties, contribute to, rather than hinder this research. These considerations will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. In Chapter One, a literature review sketching the body of voluntary and involuntary migration literature provides a cursory background. An overview of integration related material is undertaken and finally, a review of the literature on ethnic organizations, institutional completeness and community organizing surveys in a general sense theoretical frameworks of relevance to this thesis. A brief history of Canadian immigration and its practice, refugee policy and the particular settlement service structures in Winnipeg and Toronto are considered in Chapter Two. Chapter Three conducts an overview of the socio-political backdrop to the influx of Burmese refugees, their common experiences, including ethnic identity and those relating to militarization in their homeland. Chapter Four, is devoted to a discussion of methodology, philosophical traditions and the role of PAR in the design of this research project. Chapter Five explores the findings of the research, including; demographics, education, skills and employment, integration, social capital and community organizations. Finally, Chapter Six concludes with a discussion of PAR and its impacts on the research, lessons learned and a series of recommendations for those involved in policy formation, service provision, and for the Burmese communities in general.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

1.1

Introduction

This chapter seeks to broadly map the literature surrounding this thesis. Specifically, it provides an overview of key concepts in the areas of migration literature, refugee studies, integration, social capital, institutional completeness and the situation of these concepts within the discipline of geography. There has been an overwhelming body of literature produced surrounding issues of immigration. There has been less so regarding refugees until recently, and the body of specifically Canadian refugee literature has only within the past decade begun to truly come unto its own. The following chapter provides a summary of the literature on immigration in Canada, and particularly refugees. Integration, the proclaimed end goal of Canadian immigration policy, is reviewed along with the discourse surrounding this social ideal, as well of critiques of 'integration' as intolerance in guise. Social capital, as the undergirding framework for this study, is examined together with a review of its evolution and its relevance for geographers. Finally, institutional completeness and ethnic organization formation are considered, and are distinguished from the concept of social capital.

1.2

Migration Literature – Voluntary and Involuntary

There is a large body of literature on the direction and composition of population movements across international boundaries, the factors determining movement and destination, and the modes of integration in the receiving society (Richmond, 1988). One of the most significant distinctions made in this field has been that of voluntary versus involuntary migration and their respective characteristics. The early general descriptions encompassing each gave as examples of voluntary movement ; nomadic, seasonal and various economic migrations, while the involuntary refers to political, military and slavery related pressures (Price, 1969). Theories of migration have further been divided into the categories of macro and micro levels of analysis (Richmond, 1988). The macro level encompasses theories of immigrant adaptation processes, as well as economic and social integration. A brief overview of the theories that constitute this type of analysis include; Ravenstein's 'laws of migration' characterised by such empirical observations as the prevalence of short distance migrations and the relation of technological innovations to migration (1885, 1889), Stouffer's theory of 'intervening opportunities' (1940, 1960) and Mobogunge' s 'systems model' of migration recognizing the interdependence of sending and receiving areas (1970). A more recent version of this model is the 'ecological approach' to refugee integration and the importance of considering not only individual characteristics of refugee groups, but also the context and dynamics of receiving communities (Goodkind and Foster-Fishman, 2002). The second distinguishable area of analysis, that of micro level analysis, relates to studies of the

socio-psychological factors characterizing migrants, with subsets of such themes as ethnic identification, motivation and satisfaction embodied within this rubric (Richmond, 1988).

While the majority of research conducted on migration analysis has been directed towards *voluntary* migration, a body of migration research has nonetheless emerged devoted to examining involuntary migration . This includes the work of Kuntz (1973, 1981) on 'kinetic' models in which he distinguishes between 'acute' and 'anticipatory' movements. Keller (1975) identified certain repetitive, long-term characteristics in the refugees of the India / Pakistan partition including aggression, feelings of guilt and invulnerability. Lam's (1983) study of Vietnamese Canadian refugees outlines the prevalence of fatalistic attitudes, preoccupation with family reunification, downward occupational mobility and a profound desire for independence. In terms of the psychological aspects of resettlement trauma, a 'social displacement syndrome' has been identified with accompanying experiences of paranoia, hypochondria, anxiety and depression (Tyhurst, 1977). Giddens (1984) details how any sustained attack on the routines of social life produces high degrees of anxiety as well as an erosion of socialized response, and suggests that while adaptive coping mechanisms may be developed, external support may be necessary to do so. The common denominators emerging in Kuntz' and other's analyses of involuntary migration have been the effective loss of control over one's own life, and tendencies towards 'myths of return' or the 'liberation' of the former country (Stein, 1981; Luciuc, 1986). These are all proclivities and experiences that resonate with the Burmese communities studied.

The choice of wording with respect to ‘immigrants’ and ‘refugees’ in this study warrants explanation. As Abu-Lughod states, for idiosyncratic reasons, individuals leaving their ‘native place’—such as their home or village—do not generally qualify as refugees. Collective status is required for classification as ‘refugee’, and requires the dislocation to result from causes ‘not of their own making’ (1988:62), and must involve movement across a political border. The difficulties with the process of categorizing and typologizing migrants are addressed by Hyndman and Walton-Roberts,

> Concepts of ‘immigrant’ and ‘refugee’ for example, are defined by juridical and political apparati of national governments, premised upon the territoriality of nations, and predicated on the political borders of individual states. They are pure categories of migrant status which do not always capture the contradictions and politics of historical and geographical experience. Whereas a refugee is seen in the eyes of international law to be outside the borders of his or her nation-state as a result of violence and/ or persecution, an immigrant is seen as replacing one nationalist identification with another (Hyndman and Walton-Roberts, 2000:247).

The term ‘refugee’ is used in the title of this study in the interest of spotlighting the concerns particular to this group. While not all of the Burmese interviewed were officially ‘refugees’, their experiences were by and large congruent with those generally accepted as life and safety threatening. The majority had, however, arrived in Canada as Convention Refugees, meeting the requirements of the UN definition of a refugee.

1.3
Refugee Studies

Refugee studies, as an academic discipline, is a relatively recent phenomenon with the establishment of the University of Oxford’s influential Refugee Studies Programme in

1982 as one of the field's defining moments. The discursive domain of Refugee Studies has been characterized by a conflation of multiple disciplines to the point where the existence of an overarching theme and approach has been questioned (Mallki 1995, Hein 1993, Zolberg et al 1989). The breadth of the issues which it attempts to tackle are wide; nationalism, xenophobia, human rights, immigration policy, censorship, warfare, humanitarian intervention, development discourse, citizenship, cultural identity and diaspora are just some of the areas falling within the rubric of Refugee Studies. At the time of Hein's writing on the literature surrounding refugees a decade ago, he noted the earliness of its stage of development, "Research on refugees accumulated with minimal conceptual elaboration: Immigrants constituted an economic form of migration, refugees a political form" (1993: 43-44).

In the Canadian setting, the study of refugees has had a key focal area, economic integration, but broader issues have often suffered aggregation within the category of immigrants generally. This includes the considerable work on barriers to achieving economic parity with the Canadian born population (Haines, 1996; Pendakur and Pendakur, 1997; Piché et al, 1997). Research demonstrates the reliance of newcomers on family and co-ethnic support networks (Hein, 1997; Gold and Kibria, 1993), and the role of ethnic enclaves as a source of enabling social capital (Pendakur and Pendakur, 1996). There has been nonetheless an increasing insertion of social capital within works related to refugees especially in relation to the role of ethnic self-help organizations in promoting adaptation and integration.   A critical moment in the evolution of the study of refugees was the arrival of Southeast Asian refugees beginning in 1976. In the United States particularly, local civil society organizations and refugee leaders maintained that the

services being provided to the new arrivals could be better met by the refugee groups themselves through the use of their own organizations. This argument informed the resettlement of the Southeast Asian refugees through extensive investment in mutual assistance associations (Majka and Mullen, 2002). This paper argues that greater attention needs to be directed at the intersection of refugee studies and social capital. “[There exists] a critical gap in the current literature on refugee resettlement. That is, while many researchers acknowledge the influential role of network formation in refugee resettlement, most research does not specify the constraining or enabling impacts of these ties in the resettlement process” (Lamba, 2003: 48). Using the lens of social capital to examine refugee resettlement in Canada encourages research that will examine the constraining or enabling impact of such ties.

1.4
Integration

The desired outcome of the resettlement process for refugees in Canada is generally considered to be full integration. A variety of terms have been used to capture the concept of integration - assimilation, incorporation, adaptation, settlement and adjustment among others. Ideally integration involves both those doing the moving (immigrants) and those doing the receiving (host communities). The above terms refer to a process of change between both the receiving and immigrating groups at both the individual and structural levels. Whereas ‘assimilation’ infers the abandonment of ethnic attachments, language and culture in exchange for those of the dominant culture, the term ‘integration’ would

appear to evoke a more reciprocal process of inserting an individual within an existing structure and entailing changes to the structure itself (Breton, 1990).

General trends in the stages of integration can be identified and described as loosely connected transitions toward the eventual goal of economic and personal well-being. The more basic requirements of the integration process include personal needs such as housing, emergency health care, food, financial support and freedom from danger. As the initial trauma of the resettlement process is surpassed, further integration stages are encountered that transcend the solely biological needs of survival. These incorporate migrants' satisfaction with their present state, their acceptance into their new communities and their objective success in such goals as economic independence, employment equivalent to their qualifications and official language competence (Potter, 2001).

This description of integration might be seen as not simply characterized by abandonment of ethnic identity and participation in mainstream institutions – gauges of direct individual integration, or perhaps more accurately, assimilation. Rather, a more appropriate measure of success in integration is that occurring when ethnic communities in their entireties reach certain parities and inclusions within broader society (Breton, 1991). In contrast to earlier assimilationist interpretations of integration, more recent concepts have envisioned integration as "the objective experience of achieving parity on a variety of levels with the native born population, in addition to the subjective dimensions of perceived acceptance and satisfaction with this objective experience" (Potter, 2001:22).

Goldlust and Richmond viewed integration as a multidimensional process in which there were both subjective and objective factors (Goldlust and Richmond, 1974*).* *Objective integration* includes indicators of political, social, cultural and economic integration, all of which were considered by the authors to be directly linked to the immigrant's length of stay in the host country. *Subjective integration* was perceived as being composed of three aspects: identification (with the new country), internalization (of values and norms), and satisfaction with the immigration and integration process (Goldlust et al., 1974). These subjective factors are clearly related to the experiences of the migrants prior to arrival, their expectations prior to migration and their quality of interaction with others in the host society. The research of Goldlust and Richmond suggested that there was considerable commonality in the explanatory variables related to each. Among the objective set of factors, variables such as social network composition, and human capital resources like education and income, were found to be integral. Of subjective factors, it seemed that length of stay in Canada was the primary influencing factor in such subjective variables as satisfaction (general and relative gratification with life in Canada), cognitive acculturation (English ability) and motility (neighbourhood integration). Goldlust and Richmond's work stressed the need to accommodate objective and subjective factors in developing a comprehensive understanding of the migration process and integration experience (Goldlust et al., 1974). With respect to the Burmese communities studied for this thesis, one of the key questions regarding their integration has been to what degree have objective and subjective values been met, and what is the nature of the relationship that exists between the two dynamics.

Integration invariably takes on a variety of aspects nested in economic, socio-political, cultural and spatial dimensions (Breton et al., 1990) and of these, three domains of integration in particular have been considered central; *economic, social/ cultural* and *political* integration. Immigration literature has long stressed the need for economic independence in achieving broader integration. Without the associated access to labour markets, immigrants become marginalized at all levels of society (Abella, 1984). There has also been a strong suggestion that those who are successful in economic integration are also more able to integrate successfully at the social and cultural levels (Neuwirth, 1997). An individual immigrant's success in accessing the labour market has typically been assessed relative to members of other immigrant groups and the native born population. It in not surprising that those immigrants with high levels of human capital investment in the form of education and skills tend to adjust more quickly (Reitz, 1990). However, despite earlier conjecture that immigrants would, over an extended period of time, experience equivalent or superior achievements in the labour force (Porter 1965), more recent findings document the apparent inability for most immigrant groups, particularly visible minorities, to match the incomes of Canadian born whites, regardless of skills and education. "We find that even Canadian-born visible minorities suffer large earnings gaps; these differentials cannot easily be shrugged off on cultural differences, language skills and education quality" (Pendakur and Pendakur, 1996:3). In Canada warnings are increasingly being made against aggregating either all categories of immigrant or all ethnic groups, as differences are emerging between specific ethno-linguistic groups as more detailed research suggests (Kazemipur and Halli, 2003).

At the level of the ethno-cultural group, successful economic integration has long been argued to be primarily dependent on the characteristics of the ethnic community and the role of ethnic networks. More recent work, however, has been suggesting that the role of the state and the communities into which integration is being attempted are equally significant (Goodkind and Foster-Fishman 2002; Hein 1997). There continues to be considerable debate as to the exact role of ethnic networks in either promoting or hindering economic integration. Earlier authors tended to view ethnicity as a mobility trap (Porter 1965; Gordon 1964), while in later writings it was seen as a focal point for collective action (Reitz, 1980). The debate has been more recently reincarnated through the arguments of researchers such as Kazemipur and Halli (2000), who claim that poverty has been concentrated in selected, ethnically segregated neighbourhoods. Contradictorily, others such as Ley and Smith (2000) find few places where immigrant enclaves and poverty coalesce. Authors such as Daniel Hiebert conclude that while 'ghettoization' cannot convincingly be argued to occur in Canada, the answer to whether or not immigrants are helped by in-group solidarity, is, after nearly a century of research, still unknown (Hiebert, 2003).

The second significant integration domain is that of *social/ cultural integration,* and in Canada with its policy of multiculturalism, immigrants have, in official rhetoric, been encouraged to retain as much or as little of their ethnic identity as is desired. Thus, while cultural integration has become less of an immigration policy issue than it once was, resulting from Canada's official denunciation of any exclusion on the basis of race or ethnic affiliation, cultural retention continues to be a topic of considerable interest to researchers and immigrant groups. Of the many studies on cultural retention among

immigrants after subsequent generations in the country of immigration, the primary finding is that the significance of ethnic identity decreases the longer immigrants or their descendents have been in the country of immigration. Essentially, a high degree of behavioural and cultural assimilation occurs over time (Breton et al., 1990). It is agued by Reitz that a pivotal determinant of cultural integration is that of increasing connections to non-co-ethnic Canadians, and thus increased contact with dominant Canadian values and culture, leading to, among other things, improved access to information about mainstream occupations. He argues that for the first generation ethnic identity and resulting ethnic solidarity and economic security is a necessary survival mechanism, whereas for second and third generations, ethnic identity serves as a personal characteristic that is situational, i.e., evident at certain times but not others (Reitz, 1980).

Finally, the third domain of integration, that of the *political*, is demonstrative of success in the integration process. Political participation is highly related to spatial concentration and serves as an important form of collective action. Indicators of political integration include involvement in the educational system, the use of community services and participation in community organizations. Increasing numbers and concentrations of ethnic groups has led to their increased political sway, particularly with the Federal government's efforts to nurture such collective, ethnic-based actions (Breton, 1991). Breton argues that the degrees of integration experienced by an individual are a function of the degree to which the individual's ethnic group has paralleled the social structures of the mainstream society – the degree of its institutional completeness (Breton, 1991), which will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter. A relationship exists, therefore, between integration, institutional completeness and social capital in that

networks of trust have considerable implications for the ability of groups to organize, develop their institutional capacity and completeness and, following Breton (1991), achieve levels of satisfactory integration as a wider collective. An example of indicators drawn up for a basic assessment of degrees of integration in the settlement process is included below.

Figure 1:
Possible indicators of Settlement and Integration

Dimension	Short-term (settlement)	Longer term (integration)
Economic	• entering job market • financial independence	• career advancement • income parity • entry into field of prior employment
Social	• established social network • diversity within social network	• accessing institutions • engaging in efforts to change institutions
Cultural	• adaptation of various aspects of lifestyle (eg. diet, family relationships)	• engaging in efforts to redefine cultural identity • adapting or reassessing values
Political	• citizenship • voting	• participation in political parties • participation in socio-political movements

Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998

While models of assimilation have transformed into that of integration, research continues to critically examine the processes of adaptation, particularly in respect to what is upheld as the ideal of a society. Recent work by Peter Li (2003) critically examines the underlying assumptions of 'integration' as promoted by Canadian policy makers, academics and society at large. The crux of Li's argument lies in the contradiction of the Canadian government's ascribed commitment to diversity and tolerance, but in practice and reality, its intolerance of cultural specificities considered outside of the mainstream. As Li states, the assessment of integration,

> is often based on a narrow understanding and a rigid expectation that treat integration solely in terms of the degree to which immigrants converge to the average performance of native-born Canadians and their normative and behavioural standards (2003: 1).

While the term 'integration' is used extensively in this paper, both as a concept and as a goal, the view of 'integration' taken, resonates more closely with that promoted by Li. Insights into facilitating improved integration is a desired outcome of this research project, particularly where 'integration' is understood as the responsiveness and ability of Canadian society as a part of a reciprocal exchange been newcomers and host society. Li's view of successful integration involves the degree to which "institutions were open or closed to immigrants, communities were welcoming or shunning newcomers, and individual Canadians are treating newcomers as equal partners or intruders" (2003:12).

1.5
Social Capital

An *Economist* reviewer of Robert Putnam's 1993 book, *Making democracy work*, in which he first expounded his framework of social capital, claimed it to be the most important book in political economy since Pareto and Weber (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). But, the writing that truly catapulted the concept of social capital onto scholarly as well as broader stages was that of Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (1995). Putnam described social capital as, "refer(ing) to features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (1995: 65). His exploration of the concept drew upon 'civic engagement', which he viewed as a precursor to social capital. Civic engagement as conceptualized involves such activities as voter turnout, religious institution membership, newspaper reading, participation in public forums and in private organizations such as choral societies and bowling leagues (1995). Prior to Putnam, however, social capital both as a concept and as a term had a long history of use.

References to phenomena resembling our understanding of social capital were called 'guanxi' by Chinese thinkers several centuries ago (Light and Gold, 2000). During this century, Hanifan (1920) initiated the use of the term 'social capital' to refer to enabling integrity underlying community centers. Subsequently, it was Jane Jacobs (1961) who brought the contemporary concept and term 'social capital' more fully to the fore. Jacob's concept of social capital, however, was more spontaneous than more modern instrumental understandings, and it was not until Coleman in the late 1980s that the concept in its current Massey, Doreen. *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures*

and the Geography of Production. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984.form achieved widespread usage (Light, 2004). In addition to social capital, several other types of capital were similarly described in the twentieth century. *Human capital* as defined by Becker involves investment in training, education, or work experience, all of which ultimately increase one's potential for financial compensation (Becker, 1993). *Cultural capital*, developed extensively by Bourdieu, is defined as high cultural knowledge that ultimately contributes to the owner's socio-economic advantage (Bourdieu, 1979). Social capital is distinguished from these other forms of capital in that it refers specifically to relationships of trust embedded in social networks (Light, 2004). Gittel and Vidal (1998) conducted important work in developing typologies of social capital. They described *bonding* and *bridging* as key forms of social capital. *Bonding* capital is understood as bringing closer together people who already know and have some affinity with each other. Conversely, *bridging* capital denotes the connecting of people or groups not previously interacting. Encapsulated within this concept of bridging capital are several possible modalities. The first is that of bridging *within* a community of people with diverse interests (Gittell and Vidal, 1998). The second, more broadly used concept of bridging involves the building of links between the particular community and *mainstream society* (Briggs 2004; Gress 2004; Vidal 2004). Work related to the bridging of 'disinvested' communities and the mainstream have included that of Wilson (1987) and Fernandez and Harris (1992), in which the high unemployment of impoverished communities was linked to an absence of ties between community members and working, middle-class individuals. Broader ranges of acquaintances have been correlated with relative wealth, with those in higher income level brackets generally possessing a more

dispersed range of contacts (Fischer 1982; Wellman 1988). Light (2004) argued that as social capital was potentially transmuted into economic capital, the development of social capital was particularly pertinent in economically depressed areas. Thus, the role potentially played by social capital in alleviating poverty and associated isolation, leads to a discussion of how such social capital might be built.

1.5.1
Social Capital and Community Organizing

In 1961 Jane Jacobs argued that even ties as apparently insignificant as knowing a name or recognizing a face were important in facilitating a sense of community. According to the work of Granovetter (1973), many of the benefits of social networks were associated with connections to the 'friend of a friend'. Given the positive benefits of social capital, particularly with respect to impoverished communities, how might it be deliberately built? A body of literature exists identifying participation in community activities as both a measure of social capital, and a means of building it (Briggs and Mueller 1997; Gittell and Vidal 1998). Hyman (1995) developed a framework for community development leading to social capital. The main challenges to community building as viewed by Hyman, are the initiation and maintenance of 'community conversations' which lead to collective efforts. He identified five main 'clusters' of activity that make up community action. These are; first, *resident engagement,* the exchange of information and facilitation of relationships. Second, *agenda building,* in which community members must find or create forums for sharing and prioritizing their concerns and aspirations for the community. Third, *community organizing,* in which

community members organize around trusted and capable leadership and assess their social capital and other assets. Fourth**,** *community action*, where residents pool their assets into an action strategy and build bridges to other resources needed for success. Finally, *communication and message development***,** in which community builders are required to maintain open lines of communication with members and other partners about all aspects of the effort. Of particular interest to this study and the potential uses of PAR, is the role of a catalyst in the process of community organizing. Hyman makes specific note of this in suggesting the possibility of converting civic engagement to social capital *as a deliberate response to some catalyst* (1995). This has been corroborated by work such as that of Daubon and Saunders (2002), in which they comment on the role of outsiders in building social capital.

> The outside agent can be the initial investigator or catalyst spark of the process that conducts background fact-finding and maps the community, identifies the leavening agents, and injects ideas about the process and its relationship to economic development (2002: 183).

They identify the roles that can be played by the external catalyst as; *a connector*, that helps to create the space for ongoing interaction, *a legitimizer* of the process and its actors, a *continuing trainer* for developing necessary skills, and *a procurer of funding* (Daubon and Saunders, 2002).

1.5.2
Critiques: the Negative Potential of Social Capital

More recently a literature has formed that examines the potentially *negative* effects of social capital, particularly where ethnic diversity is involved (Aizlewood and Pendakur,

2004; Saguaro Seminar, 2000; Marschall and Stolle, 2002). One of the hypotheses relating to this is the differing levels of 'civic-ness' exhibited by particular ethnic groups (Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995). Yet another maintains that the source of the negative relationship is embedded in the dynamics of majority-minority societal interaction (Uslaner, 2002; Miller, 1995). The work of Aizlewood and Pendakur is relevant to this study with its examination of two different urban communities. Their findings suggest that "larger community size is a consistent predictor of lower interpersonal trust, lower propensity to join organizations, and less time spent with friends" (2004:4). The research for this thesis was inconclusive in supporting this, as, while the smaller Burmese community of Winnipeg did in fact appear to have operationalized greater social capital for the purposes of organization, the Toronto community as a larger and less well integrated ethnic enclave, depended more immediately on networks of co-ethnics for day-to-day survival. Nevertheless the linkage between social capital formation and spatial differences in immigrant and refugee settlement patterns is an important element of this research.

Despite the increasing interest in promoting social capital development, experiences in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have been found in some cases to be counter to general findings. Judy Hutchinson describes the disconnect between the literature and findings in inner city environments,

> Common indicators of social capital (length of residence, range of acquaintances, reciprocity, trust and information sharing) worked inversely in this inner-city neighbourhood, in contrast to the outcomes expected from reviewing the literature. Even results related to involvement had unexpected differences from those reported in the literature, and results that appeared to be similar had unforeseen outcomes. These findings suggest that current measures of social capital

> may not apply in such neighbourhoods, and we may need to rethink their meaning (Hutchinson, 2004: 174).

Hutchinson concludes that social capital and community building in inner city and disadvantaged communities are not mutually exclusive but rather function and relate differently in these areas. The role of those attempting community development in these areas therefore must be approached differently than what the literature would seem to suggest. She suggests collaborative, community-based action research groups as a means to discover more effective community building models. As becomes evident through this thesis, the Burmese communities studied exhibit similar geographical settlement patterns as those described by Hutchinson, since they tend to live clustered in economically depressed neighbourhoods. Therefore an action research approach has been used here in the hope of contributing both to the Burmese communities studied as well as to the literature more broadly.

1.6
Institutional Completeness and Ethnic Organizations

In 1964 Raymond Breton published a seminal work on the 'institutional completeness' of ethnic communities. His premise was essentially that 'parallel institutions' based on ethnicity or national origin were the basis by which participation in the institutions of the 'broader' society are either inhibited or substituted (Breton, 1964). Where an ethnic group is well integrated within the host society, the use by individuals of its institutional structures can also be a measure of integration. However, where access and quality of services provided by ethno-specific structures is not equal to that of the mainstream, then

exclusive use of co-ethnic institutions may indicate difficulties in integrating (Potter, 2001). Several areas of investigation have emerged from this body of literature. These include greater attention to the actual patterns of relationships between ethnic groups and the broader society (Rosenberg and Jedwab, 1992), and the effect of state policies, regulations and actions upon the development of institutional completeness by ethnic groups (Breton 1984, Turner 1988, Hein 1997).

Breton's original conception of institutional completeness implied that full institutional completeness of an ethnic group would result in 'members never having to make use of native institutions for the satisfaction of any of their needs' (Breton, 1964:194). Of the current North American context, Breton noted that few if any, and in which case the francophones of Quebec might serve as a singular example, demonstrated full institutional completeness. The work of Breton refers to the degree of institutional development of ethnic groups rather than the type or direction of development. A complementary contribution to the institutional completeness literature is the consideration of 'organizational style' promoted by Rosenberg and Jedwab (1992). By organizational style, they refer to the "typical structures, practices, and strategies used by ethnic community members as they organize to act on their interests" (Rosenberg and Jedwab, 1992: 268). They note that while this organizational style is determined in large part by the internal resources, demographic profile, interests, culture and traditions of the group, it is also a consequence of the political, social and economic context within which it is situated. The argument made by Rosenberg and Jedwab, with implications for this study, is that institutional completeness will take on different forms based on the different organizational styles and socio-political contexts in which the communities are found.

One of the first social scientists to write about the relationship between ethnic organizations and integration strategies was Robert E. Park (1920). While Park suggested that the cause for the development of ethnic organizations in the early 20th century was related to the rise of urbanization and industrialisation, other contemporary writers argued that it was ethnic competition for resources which led to organization formation (Olzak and West, 1991). Another argued determinant of ethnic organization development, which has more recently found support, is that of state intervention and influence in the development of ethnic identity. As See and Wilson state in reference to the United States, "Because of its explicit concern with social cohesion, the state is a crucial determinant of ethnic boundaries and rivalries, and of resources and interests" (1988:234). Breton once again, was instrumental in addressing the role of the state. He claimed that in addition to managing the national economy, the state is engaged similarly in the management of what he calls a 'symbolic system'. The case of Canada, he argues, is one in which the state "has intervened substantially to restructure and reorient the symbolic order" (1984: 129). Others argue that even Breton's redefinition of the role of the state is insufficient in recognizing complex interrelationships among material, symbolic and state interests. The state goes beyond mediating among different segments of society, it not only distributes material and symbolic resources; it distributes politico-legal entitlements as well (Turner, 1988).

Jeremy Hein has written extensively on the resettlement of Indochinese, and has devoted study to variation in ethnic organizations corresponding to state policy and funding (1997). He finds that there is a correlation between the policy and financial support context, and the development of ethnic organizations. The relationship is not

simple however, and Hein suggests that certain welfare state policies, including public assistance, can reduce the institutional completeness of ethnic communities, thereby reducing the development of ethnic organizations. He claims however, that policies that privatize the welfare state contribute to institutional completeness and therefore an increase in ethnic organizations by funding community non-profit organizations (Hein, 1997). A notable finding of Hein's with respect to the Southeast Asian refugees related to the need for systematic capacity building in order for ethnic organizations to flourish:

> Federal funds were established to help Southeast Asian refugees integrate into American communities and to ameliorate the potential welfare burden to the states. However, the existing Cambodian, Hmong, and Vietnamese organizations had to be sought out and nurtured for several years to help them build the capacity to work effectively with significant numbers of newcomers (Smith and Lipsky, 1993: 222).

The theory surrounding the development of ethnic organizations relates it to the establishment of ethnic boundary indicators. Current perspectives emphasize the fluid and dynamic nature of ethnic identity (Nagel, 1994), and as one of the originators of this line of thought has stated, ethnic groups are maintained "not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation…by ways of signalling membership and exclusion" (Barth, 1969:15).

Useful to this study of Burmese refugee experiences and community formation, are the findings of Olzak and West which suggest that ethnic groups create organizations, or in the case of their study, newspapers, as a result of ethnic or racial attacks (1991). According to Olzak and West, "ethnic conflict intensifies ethnic solidarity, which in turn encourages foundings of organizations" (1992:465). This statement resonates with the considerable body of literature surrounding small organizational structures as a source of

powerful interpersonal relationships. While the heyday of this current of study ran from the 1930s to the 1950s (Simon 1947; Homans 1950), the prototypical pattern of the bounded, inwardly-focused group demonstrating solidarity and conformity, continues to underlie contemporary theories in sociology, and among other fields (Collins, 2001).

A further theoretical development, and once again with implications for the Burmese communities targeted in this study, is that of resource mobilization. This theory posits that collective action is determined by a group's ability to secure the resources required for formal organization formation (Jenkins, 1983). It is, however, apparent that resource competition as an explanation for community development is incomplete. Ethnic communities are not "simply a type of interest group seeking resources in and from the modern state [because] ethnic groups are centrally concerned with cultural matters, symbols, and values and with issues of self-identification" (Brass, 1985:10-11). Breton (1964), in his early work on institutional completeness claimed that inherently, ethnic communities seek to meet their own needs through ethnic institutions. This would include education, work, medical care or social assistance. This has continued to be reaffirmed in more recent work, with arguments that ethnic community organizations form as a mechanism to cope with the hardships of migration and life in a new society (Hein, 1997) and that while welfare state systems supplement ethnic community institutions, where duplication occurs, can act to diminish the functions of ethnic organizations. Hein argues in his work that neither the ethnic competition model nor the resource mobilization model adequately incorporates the significance of state spending in the formation of ethnic communities. This then begs the question of the process by which refugee or ethnic communities might develop *the capacity in order to identify and access* state funding.

Throughout this thesis I explore social capital development as an explicit strategy in the attainment of institutional completeness and the overall welfare of refugee communities.

1.6.1
Differentiating Social Capital and Institutional Completeness

It is useful at this juncture to differentiate how social capital and institutional completeness as conceived in this thesis are differentiated. Social capital, as "features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1995: 65), relates to institutional completeness on multiple levels. While there is substantial conceptual overlap, the terms refer to distinctive phenomena. I suggest here that social capital can be thought of as an informal process of trust-building that may or may not exist within formal structures. Institutional completeness may or may not be infused with social capital, but represents an externalized and organizationally visible manifestation of an ethnic group. Presumably, social capital, as with other forms of capital (ie. cultural, human and financial) will strengthen the ability for institutional completeness to be developed and operationalized. There is clear resonance between the concepts with institutional completeness potentially, but not necessarily, serving as an operationalization of an ethnic group's social capital. Institutional completeness conversely, if initiated in the absence of strong social capital, may contribute to the development of it, but equally it may retard the development of certain forms of social capital that depend upon building bridges with wider 'mainstream' society, a process that may be curtailed by the development of strong inter-ethnic institutional completeness. In sum, while this thesis

treats these as related and often parallel phenomena, they are not the same and represent distinct processes.

1.7
Geography and Migration

Social geography has been the site of a lively debate in recent years with calls for a greater integration of population geography, migration research and social theory (Lawson 2000; Findlay and Graham 1991; McKendrick 1999). Transnationalism has become an increasingly significant area of this terrain for social geographers (Clifford 1988; Cheah 1998; Smith and Guernize 1998), with an interest in the problems it raises for identities and cultures in *multiple sites* (Lawson 2000). The study of 'migrancy' along with processes of belonging and identity are particularly relevant for geography given their context in scalar, physical environments. The complex questions raised by the subjectivity and identity of migrants have been argued to require a re-centering of the investigation on the stories of migrants themselves (Lawson, 2000). Some of the work by social geographers has been directed towards a consideration of the social constructedness of social categories and immigration data (White and Jackson, 1995), in some cases leading to a suggestion that studies of 'race' are in themselves 'racist' (Peach, 1999). This has led to a distancing of cultural geographers who have been reluctant to see differences among ethnic groups attributed to culture (Mitchell 1995; Cosgrove 1996; Jackson 1996). Increasingly feminist theories in social geography are playing an important role with arguments that gender-blind analyses of migrant experiences mislead our understandings (Radcliffe, 1991, 1992; Lawson 2000). Others such as Graham

(1995) have pressed the need for population geography to embrace a broader agenda, thereby incorporating both cultural and political aspects alongside economic. She argues for greater attention to difference and diversity and a movement away from grand narratives. Hesse (2000) and Abu-Laban (2000) have contributed considerably to the Canadian literature on spatial issues and migration. Region has been an important theme in Canadian geographic studies, and geographers like Manuel Castells (1996) contributed to the approach of contrasting established nation 'space of places' with emerging global 'space of flows'. Shields (2003) outlines the intersection of region, socioeconomic status and ethnicity, and uses the North End of Winnipeg as an example of an early ethnic enclave.

These developments in social and population geography have included an expanding toolbox of methodologies. Biographical approaches have begun to play an increasingly important role, and have been added to mainstays of migration studies such as indigenous epistemologies and ethnographic approaches (Halfacree and Boyle 1993; Skeldon 1995). While there has been significant work done on critical ethnographies of development, there has been less done on critical ethnographies of migration, although there are some notable exceptions (Skeldon 1995; Massey 1984). Another exception is that of Silvey's (1997, 2000) work examining imposed western understandings and meanings of migration processes. Rouse (1991) additionally calls for ethnographies of migration to be developed that allow us to theorize space, belonging and connectivity in evolving forms. The use of migrant narratives again plays a pivotal role in the reframing of these processes.

1.8
Geography and Social Capital

Mohan and Mohan (2002) devoted an article to the situating of social capital within the field of geography. They find that there are a number of factors which make social capital a topic of particular interest for geographers. Not only as a result of the pervasiveness of the concept throughout various disciplines, but particularly due to its concern with different spatial patterns. As Mohan and Mohan note, "If social capital is created through interactions between individuals, it would seem reasonable to argue that the quality of relationships between individuals is shaped by, and itself shapes the character of, the contexts in which they live" (2002: 193). There are multiple geographic theories that intersect with social capital. Among these, the localities debate of the 1980s in which the social complexion of places was related to forms of economic restructuring (Massey, 1984). Writers such as Savage et al (1987), Urry (1987) and Lovering, (1989) implied the relationship between locality and 'emergent causal powers' – a phenomenon that can be related to social capital. A second juncture of social capital and geographic theory is that of 'structuration theory' which posits that the reproduction of social structure may or may not be related to the actions of individual agents (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). Structure and action are linked by 'continually reproduced medium through which action is enabled' (Murdoch, 1997: 324), and it is suggested that social capital might be considered as inherent in these continually reproduced media (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). Finally, parallels are claimed between actor-network theory (ANT) and its utility for overcoming gaps between the natural and the social. ANT is proceeding towards an

‘associationalist’ thinking with an emphasis on networks and associations (Murdoch, 1997).

Geographers working with the concept of social capital struggle with the same problem of calibration experienced by scholars in other fields. The crux of the problem lies in connecting patterns of associational activity to social capital and subsequently demonstrating positive outcomes. It remains unclear exactly how social capital is formed through participation in associational activities (Levi, 1996). Further, it has been particularly difficult to geographically disaggregate measures of social capital, given that traditional sources of data such as censuses do not provide indicators for it. Nevertheless, a variety of measures for calibrating social capital have been developed. Membership statistics for organizations are in some studies used, but give little insight into the meaning of membership for individuals Mohan and Mohan, (2002). Trust has likewise been identified as a key criterion in assessing social capital (Halpern, 1999). However, trust is highly ambiguous and produces an ‘elastic’ measure of social capital. Finally, more complex instruments such as the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT) of Krishna and Shrader (1999) have attempted to account for the complexity and subjectivity of social capital.

1.9 Conclusion

This section has provided an overview of relevant literatures, including migration, refugee studies, integration, social capital and institutional completeness, that serve as the background to the following discussion of Burmese communities in Winnipeg and

Toronto. It will be argued that the dynamics of involuntary migration, compounded by limitations in social capital and institutional completeness, pose particular challenges to the successful integration of these Burmese within their respective Canadian contexts. Regardless of whether Canada's vision of 'integration' is viewed to be intolerant and conformist (Li, 2003), the following chapters will demonstrate that the conditions facing the Burmese interviewed cannot be claimed to be ideal by the standards of either the Burmese newcomers or the Canadian host societies. Hence, while Canada's brand of integration may pose its own set of problems, it presents a more desirable alternative to the current situation faced those interviewed for this research. This thesis suggests that the development of social capital, and community organizing as a means by which to operationalize it, offers an important stepping-stone for this particular group to engage with Canadian society as fully participating members.

Chapter 2

Canadian Immigration Practice

2.1
Introduction

This chapter builds on the brief literature review of the past chapter, which outlined work in the fields of migration, refugee studies, integration, social capital and its relationship to institutional completeness. It will introduce issues surrounding the policy and practice of immigration in Canada, with particular attention to the formulation of refugee policy. A discussion is provided of the resettlement service provision structures that new immigrants and particularly refugees find themselves within, and the resettlement contexts in the two urban centers of Winnipeg and Toronto. Finally, these Canadian resettlement contexts are analyzed through the lens of Burmese pre-migration experience and identity, and related to current dimensions of institutional completeness and successful integration.

2.2
Immigration in Canada

Immigration continues to be a compelling issue for Canadians. As David Ley notes, in Vancouver the major daily newspaper have identified immigration as the topic of greatest interest to readers (Ley, 2000). Immigration lies at the core of a heated, perennial debate in political and academic fields. Canada admits one of the highest percentages of

immigrants per capita in the world; in 2001 250,346 immigrants were admitted[2], and the proportion of foreign born in the 2001 census was the highest that it has been in 70 years at 18%.[3] The composition of immigrants entering Canada has altered considerably over the country's history. These have occurred in accordance with changes in the relative importance of each of the three components of Canadian immigration; economic, political and demographic, as well as global contexts. Despite fluctuations, immigration to Canada has remained relatively stable over the last ten years as a proportion of the Canadian population and more recently in absolute numbers (Potter, 2001).

Traditionally Canada's main sources of immigrants were European countries, with a strong preference for those from Britain and the United States, although even early on in Canada's history there were restricted numbers of immigrants from China, India and Eastern Europe, albeit admitted amidst considerable controversy. The role of the state in providing settlement services for immigrants has changed and evolved over the country's history. Prior to the World Wars government involvement in immigration practices was limited to agents promoting agricultural expansion. There was little government involvement in the settlement process and support was left primarily to family, community or shared faith members. Subsequent to World War II, along with changes in the Canadian attitudes to social assistance, came developments in national views on citizenship and integration. Canada's evolution to an officially multiculturalism-celebrating liberal state has hardly been linear, with a pattern of flux between excluding various groups on the basis of their 'undesirability', and allowing admittance to these same groups based on their reputations for hard work and economic success (Avery,

[2] 2001 Census, Statistics Canada, Immigration and Citizenship
[3] 2001 Census, Statistics Canada, Immigration and Citizenship

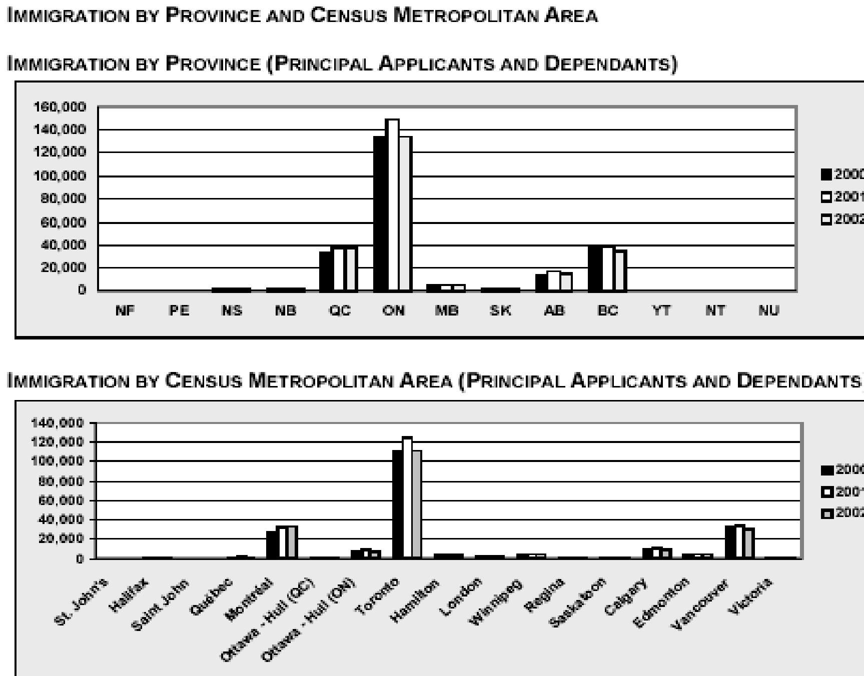
1994). The basis for the modern Canadian immigration policy is the 1966 *White Paper* which calls for "the recruitment of workers with a relatively high level of education and training" regardless of race and ethnicity and thus setting the stage for the current 'points system'. With the establishment of the points system in 1967 came the three categories of immigrants used by Canadian Immigration today; family, economic and refugee. Changes in immigration policy were accompanied by a number of coinciding factors, some of them global. Kobayashi notes that along with the 'world revolution' in human rights eroding the assumption of Anglo-conformity, certain ethnic groups within Canada, such as the Jewish and Ukrainian communities, began to reach social maturity and begin to develop an explicitly 'ethnic' political base (1993). The racial preferences of the Canadian immigration system began to change with the introduction of the points system, so that by 2002 the top five source countries of immigration were; China, India, Pakistan, Philippines and Iran.[4] As part of Canada's more inclusive approach to demographic and economic policies, a focus has emerged on such human resources as education, and occupational and language skills designed to fill skill gaps in the Canadian labour market, with an explicit goal of providing Canada with a competitive international edge.

A significant development with respect to immigration in Canada has included the decision by the government to end the 'tap on, tap off' approach to accepting immigrants. Rather, while low economic growth and high unemployment occurred during the late '80s and early 1990s, immigrant landings not only continued, but also rose steadily (Ley and Smith, 2000). Predictably, given the economic environment, concerns began to be expressed of the 'diminishing returns' of immigration policy and more darkly, of the

[4] Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002

'declining quality' of the immigrants (DeVoretz, 1995). But, as Ley and Smith (2000) argue, sweeping statements regarding immigrants are not justified. Rather, their diverse national origins and varying classes of entry; refugee (humanitarian), family reunification and economic, defy attempts to generalize immigrants' economic and adaptive success. An important aspect of immigration in Canada has involved geographic patterns of dispersal and attempts at multiple levels of government to achieve more balanced distribution of newcomers. These have included efforts at the federal level to place refugees away from centers of immigrant concentration, and efforts by provinces and cities (such as those outlined below in Winnipeg) to provide incentives for refugee and immigrant sponsorship to lesser-populated regions. The settling of immigrants disproportionately in the three primary provinces and their 'gateway' cities (Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal) has not proven malleable to the intentions of policy makers and the growth of geographic concentrations have continued to accelerate. The chart below presents an overview of the dispersal of immigrants throughout Canada by province, and displays the lack of balanced nation-wide distribution.

Figure 2:
Immigration by Province



(**Citizenship and Immigration Canada Facts and Figures – 2002)**

2.3

Refugee Policy in Canada

Convention refugees are persons who:

> have a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinions or membership in a particular social group;
> are outside the country of their nationality and are unable or, by reason of that fear, are unwilling to be protected by that country; or not having a country of nationality, are outside the country of their former habitual residence and are unable or, by reason of that fear, are unwilling to return to that country.
>
> 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

For most of Canada's history, an explicit policy towards refugees has not existed. It was not until 1978 that refugees were formally recognized. Canada's position regarding refugees has been ambivalent. It is not that refugees were not recognized in principle, but that Canadian policy makers were reluctant to make formal the rights of the refugee and thus be obliged to accept a prescribed number and character of refugee. Following the Second World War and an international interest in ensuring the future protection of refugees, the United Nations in 1950 established a committee to draft conventions on the "Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons" (Fine-Meyer, 2002). Canada chaired the sub-committee charged with the creation of a clear refugee protection structure. A result of the discussions stemming from this sub-committee's draft convention was the establishment of an Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1951. Canada, despite its leading role in the construction of refugee protection institutions, resisted signing the UN Convention until some 18 years after its initiation (Dirks, 1977). In the time leading up to Canada's eventual signing of the Convention, Canada nonetheless remained a major financial contributor to the administrative expenditures of the UNHCR and made a policy of respecting the Convention's principles.[5] Prime Minister Lester Pearson, who had acted as President of the United Nations' General Assembly, began to seek an international role for Canadians as peacekeepers. In keeping with his desire for Canadian leadership on the international stage, Pearson initiated the process of incorporating the UN Refugee Convention into Canadian law.

Several policy papers emerged through this period with profound impacts on the evolution of Canadian immigration policy. The first, a *White Paper*, provided the government's statement of position, and the second, a *Green Paper*, was the source of

[5] Report of the Department of Manpower and Immigration on Refugees, 1976, 102.

factual background on the issues (Richmond, 1975). The *White Paper*, which involved several years of consultation, did not produce specific policy recommendations; it concluded that more formal refugee legislation was needed in order to address their unique challenges. It took nearly a decade for the *White Paper* recommendations to be incorporated, but one of the *Paper*'s primary contributions to refugee policy was its promotion of a "non-discriminatory refugee sponsorship system."[6] The second significant immigration publication to emerge from this period was the *Green Paper* presented by the Trudeau government in 1974. Based on the *Green Paper*, a committee was established and public hearings held across Canada, with the result being the government's announcement the following year of its intention to create a new Immigration Act.[7] The report produced by the Joint Committee was seminal. It declared that immigrants were in no way to blame for urban problems, calling for an increase in the numbers of immigrants being admitted and finally proposed a separate classification for refugees[8]. The eventual outcome of the Joint Committee's report was the formal adoption of the UN Convention on Refugees. This was, however, not without opposition as many feared loss of authority in the admittance of refugees. As one official stated,

> We have an excellent record in accepting refugees, oppressed minorities and victims of natural disaster, but do we want to be *forced* to do so? I submit that aside from the carefully defined responsibilities in the UN Convention and Protocol, our acceptance of these people should be a matter of discretion.[9]

[6] Canadian Government, *White Paper,* 41-42.
[7] Canadian Government, *Special Joint Senate-House of Commons Committee: Final Report*, Fall 1975, 4.
[8] Canadian Government, *Special Joint Senate-House of Commons Committee: Final Report*, Fall 1975, 21-22.
[9] Department of Manpower and Immigration: Memorandum to R.D. Jackson, Chief of Policy Analysis Group from J.L.Manion, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, 19 June, 1975, as cited in Hathaway, "The Conundrum", 1992, 75.

The 1976 Immigration Act distanced itself from the UN Convention in at least one significant aspect; the exclusion of economic refugees. The UNHCR used five categories for the grouping of refugees, one of these pertained to those 'denied economic freedoms.' Rather, Canada's definition assumed that as a result of physical threat people were willing to flee their homes in search of asylum in foreign states. As the Act outlines;

> Any person who is a member of a class designated by the Governor in Council as a class, the admission of members of which would be in accordance with Canada's humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted, may be granted admission subject to such regulations as may be established with respect thereto and notwithstanding any other regulations made under this Act.[10]

Another fundamental development in the Immigration Act was a provision allowing for the private sponsorship of refugees. A result of the input by ethnic, religious and community groups in the consultation process, it is suggested by some commentators that the Liberal government did not anticipate broad use of this provision by the Canadian public (Fine-Meyer, 2002). Even as the Act was being legislated, an event was occurring which would dramatically re-shape the attitudes and practices of Canadians to the plight of refugees. The arrival of 70,000 Vietnamese 'Boat People' during the late 1970s and early 1980s profoundly affected the involvement of the Canadian public in the resettlement of refugees. Approximately 7000 private sponsor groups were formed in order to undertake the sponsorship and support of individuals and groups of Vietnamese refugees between the years 1979-80 (Fine-Meyer, 2002). The resulting scale of public organization and private sponsorship was unprecedented and has since to be re-matched.

Two separate streams of private sponsorship were established. The first allowed respected national organizations such as the YMCA and World Vision to sign formal

[10] Immigration Act of Canada, 1976.

agreements bypassing the regular, lengthy application process requiring special government permission. The second stream allowed groups of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents to sponsor refugees into Canada.[11] In order to qualify as a sponsor, groups were required to demonstrate sufficient financial and human resources to provide support for sponsored refugees for one year.[12] The aim of establishing this private sponsorship regime was "to let interested groups express their concern for refugees in concrete ways.[13]" Studies conducted at the time suggested that particular advantages accrued from private sponsorship of the refugees. The increased personal and group support generally offered by sponsoring groups provided considerably greater emotional support, linked refugees to non-coethnics, including employers, and generally contributed to an overall improvement in community life and well-being.[14]

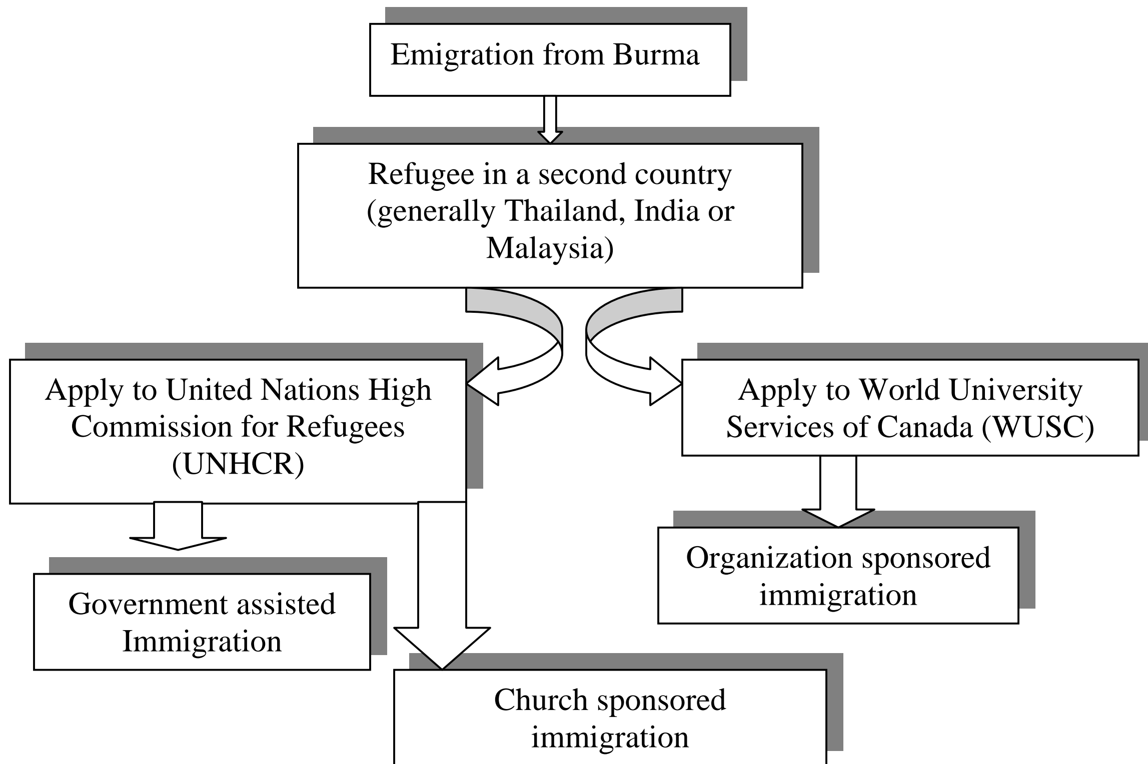
Refugees selected abroad must be eligible in one of three classes: the *Convention refugee abroad* class, the *country of asylum* class or the *source country* class. They should show an ability to eventually re-establish their lives in Canada, unless they are particularly vulnerable or in urgent need of protection. They must also meet medical, security and criminality requirements. Unlike most immigrants, refugees and persons in similar circumstances do not have to meet certain medical requirements designed to prevent excessive demands on Canadian health and social services systems. Members of these classes must be referred to a visa office by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or by a pre-approved private sponsor. If the UNHCR refers them because they urgently need protection, the visa office will speed up processing. When

[11] Government of Canada: Citizenship and Immigration: *Refugee Services Fact Sheet,* 1979.
[12] Employment and Immigration Canada*: The Indochinese Refugees, A Canadian Response,* 1979-80, 6
[13] Employment and Immigration Canada: Discussion Paper*, Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*: Ottawa, 1995.
[14] Employment and Immigration Canada: The Indochinese Refugees, A Canadian Response, 1979-80, 14

family members are separated, they may be included in the application and allowed to come to Canada within one year of the principal applicant. For the various potential paths taken by Burmese refugees in coming to Canada, please refer to Figure 3 below.

Canadian refugee policy continues to come under fire, with vigorous oppostion from refugee advocacy groups on one side, and national security proponents on the other. One of the main sources of concern shared by these disparate groups is the apparent lack of consistency between stated policy and evident practice. Refugee advocacy groups argue that the principal of 'additionality' established by the federal government since the establishment of private refugee sponsorship allows for qualifying Canadian groups to sponsor as many refugees as they are capable of supporting. These groups are arguing however, that a process of undermining this principle has been undertaken by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration in a variety of ways. These are alleged to include irrelevant targets, long waiting lists, low priority status, arbitrary immigration ratios, and restrictive policies for certain signatory countries. The reality of how this is actualized is illustrated by statistics from the MIIC'S *Options* publication, which criticizes the apparent lack of correlation between targets and 'demand'. "On average the visa posts came within 95% of meeting their internal targets but came only within 23% of meeting the private refugee sponsorship 'demand'" (Options, 2004).

Figure 3:
Means by which Burmese have come to Canada (adapted from Osmun and Allen, 2001)



2.4

Resettlement Practice

The underlying approach of Canada to the settlement of new immigrants has traditionally been one of self-sufficiency combined with state support and voluntary community action. According to the Canadian Council for Refugees,

> Individuals are expected to make their own efforts to bridge the gaps between "new" and "old" Canadians. The government is expected to provide basic social services, to offer at least a minimal social safety net and to promote a healthy society. Communities are expected to organize, through volunteer effort, to respond to the priorities they identify" (CCR, 1998:6).

In practice, immigration is jointly managed under the jurisdictions of the provincial and federal governments. While a number of factors affecting immigration are determined at the federal level, the provinces are granted some degree of autonomy in the provision of resettlement services for new immigrants. The involvement of the provincial government in issues of immigration varies according to province, but all seek to assist in the integration of immigrants, individually and as communities. The results however do not produce identical results from province to province. It was part of the intent in conducting this research to contrast, even superficially, the differing policies and structures operating at the provincial level with respect to the experiences of Burmese refugees, specifically in Ontario and Manitoba. An additional point relevant to this analysis is the role of the municipality and city governance structures as not only beneficiaries of the skills and potential brought by new immigrants, but also as significant actors in providing structures for integration both socio-politically and economically. This chapter will outline the differences provincially and at the municipal level for the Burmese communities in Toronto and Winnipeg.

2.4.1

Modern Forms of Resettlement Service Providers

Service provision to immigrants in Canada has been characterized more by coordination than by centralization. A primary source of resources and service provision has come from the local level and this has become increasingly evident over the last quarter century, during which many more resettlement organizations have been created. As a whole, Canada's network of refugee and immigrant-serving organizations provide significant supports, offering resources for education, liaison, expertise, information and assistance to mainstream agencies, governments, business and community organizations (CCR, 1998). Often the work of these local agencies is conducted in partnership with mainstream institutions that cooperate to provide complementary expertise and resources. The Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) funds service provision organizations to deliver direct, essential services to newcomers. These services include reception and orientation, language training through LNC programme (Language for Newcomers to Canada), translation and interpretation, referral to community resources, para-professional counselling, general information and employment-related services.

Settlement services in Canada are delivered for the most part by community-based, not-for-profit agencies with voluntary boards of directors. The size of these organizations varies greatly, ranging from few or no paid staff, to staff numbering in the hundreds. The strength of this network lies in its combined experience and its strong links with communities. While large centres like Toronto may have highly specialized organizations, smaller centres like Winnipeg must be more broadly responsive. The settlement agencies in this network operate in a variety of configurations including: those

that are ethno-specific (created by and for a particular ethnocultural community), those that are multicultural (created to respond to newcomer needs in a specific local area), the faith-based (developed as response of a faith community to community need), those that are specialized (focused on a specific area of need, for example, employment training or serving survivors of torture) and finally those agencies that serve newcomers as one part of their broader mandate (organizations that serve newcomers as part of a wider community response, for example, a women's centre that serves immigrant and non-immigrant women) (CCR, 1998).

2.5

Winnipeg

Table 1:

Winnipeg Population

Data - Winnipeg	
Population 2001	**671,274**
Population 1996	**667,093**
Percentage change	**0.6%**
Canadian-born population 2001	**81.7%**
Foreign-born population 2001	**16.3%**
Immigrated before 1991	**12.4%**
Immigrated between 1991 and 2001	**3.9%**
Visible minority population 2001	**12.3%**
Southeast Asian 2001	**.75%**
2002 numbers of refugee arrivals in Winnipeg:	
Refugees Arrived in 2002[15]	**970**
Refugees Arrived in 2000	**977**
(As Percentage of Total Refugees Arrived in Canada 2002)	**3.86%**

Statistics Canada, 2001 and Canada Immigration and Citizenship, 2002

[15] Canada Immigration and Citizenship: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/facts2002.pdf

Winnipeg has long served as a destination for newcomers to Canada, and as a result of its unique position historically on the rail line going west, Winnipeg has developed its own system of settlement services for its many waves of immigrants. Like the rest of Canada, some of the most important developments in the conception and delivery of services came after the Second World War. Significant arrivals of Displaced Persons, particularly survivors of the Holocaust, focused attention on the needs of the traumatized[16]. In the late 1940s the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council was created in response to the arrival of these displaced persons. Various denominations combined efforts to help members of their own faiths integrate in Canada and cooperated to form this organization.

At the time of the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council's inception, "displaced persons" had to declare their religious affiliation upon entry of the country. Various denominations attempted to provide assistance to newcomers as they arrived at ports of entry. These same common goals and interests united the various church groups at the national level and by 1960 the National Interfaith Immigration Committee was formed. Particularly as a result of the scale of the Indochinese influx, systemic changes began to occur at the various levels of service provision. The services currently being offered have diversified and now rely on funding from the Federal Government, the Provincial Government of Manitoba, private foundations, individual donors and the faith community (Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, 2003).

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[16] http://www.miic.ca/about.htm - Sept. 2004

In 2001 the services offered in Manitoba included paralegal services to refugee claimants, assistance with family sponsorships, information and advice for refugees overseas as well as a broad range of services to various classifications of refugees. Several recent innovative developments in Manitoba's immigration policies have included group processing and the Guarantee Assurance Programme. Group Processing is an approach to identifying refugees abroad and bringing them to Canada. Under this approach, Canada and the UNHCR identify entire refugee populations, as opposed to individuals, and resettle these populations in the same community. Allowing individuals to be resettled together in the same city with the groups that have developed over a period of years in the refugee camps was hoped to create the positive environment necessary to allow them to successfully integrate into various regions across the country (Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, 2003). These initiatives and their underlying interests appear to be producing notable results. According to the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council's monthly publication *Options*, the year 2003 was a banner year, with the province's 556 privately sponsored refugees almost matching the 564 government sponsored refugees for the same year. This is up considerably from the 380 privately sponsored refugees of 2002 (Options, 2004). Situating Manitoba and its sponsorship practices in a national context, it becomes apparent that there are notable differences. In the year 2003 Manitoba sponsored 19% of Canada's group sponsored refugees, far in excess of Manitoba's proportion of the national population, 4%. Further, Manitoba's share of the four western province's group sponsored refugees in 2003 was 45%. Interestingly, Winnipeg had more group sponsored refugees than Montreal and Vancouver combined (Options, 2004).

2.6

Toronto

Table 2:

Toronto Population

Data - Toronto	
Population 2001	4,682,897
Population 1996	4,263,759
Percentage change	9.8%
Canadian-born population 2001	54.6%
Foreign-born population 2001	43.4%
Immigrated before 1991	26.5%
Immigrated between 1991 and 2001	17%
Visible minority population 2001	36.5%
Southeast Asian 2001	1.14%
2002 numbers of refugee arrivals in Toronto:	
Refugees Arrived in 2002[17]	9,271
Refugees Arrived in 2000	10,003
(As Percentage of Total Refugees Arrived in Canada 2002)	36.90%

Statistics Canada, 2001 and Canada Immigration and Citizenship, 2002

Toronto is the first choice for immigrants coming to Canada (Dion and Kawakami, 1996). Toronto has more than 60 ethnocultural communities, and as of the 2001 statistics census, 36.8% of the population were visible minorities.[18] To gain a sense of Toronto's disproportionate numbers of immigrants, one need only look to the 1996 Census data which sees 42% of Torontonians being foreign-born to Canada's overall 17%.[19] A further note to this is that secondary migration, which occurs after the immigrant has arrived in Canada, sees Toronto as a net beneficiary (Ley and Smith, 2000). Additionally significant is the *composition* of the immigrant classes that arrive in Toronto. While

[17] Canada Immigration and Citizenship: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/facts2002.pdf
[18] Statistics Canada. 2001 Census Data - Visible Minority Groups, Percentage Distribution, for Canada,
[19] Statistics Canada. 1996 Census Data

Vancouver has a disproportionately small number of refugees and a particularly high influx of business migrants with respect to the national mean, Toronto considerably exceeds this mean in terms of refugees, and lies substantially below it with respect to business immigrants (Ley and Smith, 2000).

Two trends observed by Ley and Smith in their 2000 study on deprivation of immigrant groups in Canada, bear implications for Toronto specifically. The two trends are the growth in urban populations over the past 10-15 years, with an accompanying polarisation of families in poverty, and the trend in 'visible' immigrants settling disproportionately in Canada's largest urban centres (Ley and Smith, 2000). Ley and Smith suggest that these two dynamics are merged in the mind of most Canadians, and therefore set out to examine the correlation existing between them. Their findings suggest that the 'visibility' of new immigrants is due in part to their spatial concentration and is compounded by their increasing representation from 'non-traditional' source countries, ie. those in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Ley and Smith, 2000). They argue that there is a clear relationship (in Toronto) between visible minorities (men in particular), their concentration in urban centres, and engrained poverty. Such a perception and the cynicism accompanying it are apparent in the writing of Frances Henry on Caribbean communities in Toronto. She notes,

> A growing 'underclass' composed of youth born to (immigrant) working-class parents or single mothers who are increasingly frustrated by the barriers of racism and poverty that they experience in Canada. They feel uncomfortable in the school system…and are easily led to drop out. Some succumb to the easy money and lifestyle of drug dealing and other forms of hustling. They develop a cynical, negative view of Canadian society and feel marginalized (Henry, 1995:269).

These observations have implications for the recent Burmese newcomers to Toronto and perhaps more importantly, saliency for broader Canadian society. The indicators of deprivation mentioned above, and variations on deprivation have been closely linked to criminal activity (Wilson, 1987; Kornblum, 1991). A study of criminal activity in Toronto city tracts generates notable results. There is, unsurprisingly, strong correlation between tracts displaying one or more deprivation indicators, and reported crimes (Ley and Smith, 2000). An interesting finding of Ley and Smith, were changes in Toronto's CMA over time. "Since 1971, the incipient impoverished area east of downtown (and to a lesser extent west of downtown) has been fragmented and massively displaced by gentrification and reinvestment" (2000:45). The relationship between immigrant population and deprivation in city tracts differed between Vancouver and Toronto. While only 2 of the 9 'deprived' tracts in Vancouver had more than 45% foreign-born, in Toronto, virtually all of the multiply deprived tracts had populations of 60% or more foreign-born (Ley and Smith, 2000). In order to assess the immigrant-deprivation correlation, Ley and Smith, developed a set of indicators associated with immigrants as well as expectedly, poverty. These included; a) mother tongue other than English or French, b) traditional vs new countries of origin, and c) period of arrival in Canada (2000). Ley and Smith's study of the three gateway cities (Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal) find that the correlation between these particular immigrant characteristics and those indicators of deprivation are *consistently the strongest in Toronto* (2000).

With Toronto encompassing such an array of ethnic groups, and such a large proportion of visible minorities, the question arises as to the influence of residential segregation on public and immigration policy. Research points to the tendency for people

of colour to be the least well integrated into mainstream, white society, and this is most visible in residential patterns (Henry, 1994). While this is not examined specifically in this study, the question of residential segregation's relationship with broader societal integration bears particular attention in the case of the Burmese of Toronto – a group which this study finds to be highly concentrated in Toronto's Dufferin/ Lansdowne area.

The primary settlement service provision agency in Toronto, and the sole refugee settlement agency, is COSTI – IIAS Immigrant Services (COSTI). As an amalgamation of the Italian Immigrant Aid Society (founded in 1952) and COSTI (founded in 1962), COSTI is Canada's largest education and social service agency with a specific mandate to provide services to newcomers and their families. COSTI is funded by various levels of government including: federal (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Human Resources Development Canada), provincial, the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the City of Toronto. At the time of this thesis being written, COSTI operates five employment and training centres throughout Metro Toronto and York Region, six E.S.L. Training Centres, a centre for Foreign Trained Professional & Tradespeople, a Rehabilitation Centre for people with disabilities, a Family Counselling Centre and a 100 bed Reception Centre for people who have come to Canada as refugees.

Table 3:Winnipeg and Toronto Settlement Service Provision

	Winnipeg	Toronto
Main settlement service provision agency	Manitoba Interfaith Immigration (the sole settlement service provision agency)	COSTI- IIAS Immigrant Services (the largest settlement service provision agency in Canada, and the only reception centre for Government Assisted Refugees destined to Toronto)
Size of respective Burmese populations	**40**[20]	**995**[21]
Number of clients served annually	**2974**[22]	**20,000**[23]
Funding Arrangements	Federal: Citizenship and Immigration Canada Department of Justice Province: Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration City of Winnipeg Faith Groups	*Federal:* Citizenship and Immigration Canadian Heritage Citizenship and Community Participation Human Resources Development *Province:* Ministry of Community and Social Services Ministry of Education and Training Ministry of Envirnoment and Energy Ministry of Health Ministry of HousingCity of Toronto
Specialized service provision/ ethno-specific self help?	Not yet. Community is seeking to begin meeting needs through community organization	No. One Burmese settlement cousellor at COSTI
Existing Burmese Organizations in respective communities	-BCOM (Burmese Community Organization of Manitoba)	-BSDO (Burmese Students Democratic Organization) – local branch of national organization

[20] Statistics Canada, 2001 Census data
[21] Statistics Canada, 2001 Census data
[22] Manitoba Inerfaith Immigration Councial 2002-03 Annual Report
[23] COSTI website - http://www.costi.org/

2.8
Conclusion

This chapter has sought to delineate the landscape of immigration policy and practice in Canada, with a focus on refugee resettlement practice in the two study sites of Winnipeg and Toronto. . Particularly, an overview has been provided as to how the structures of settlement services differ between Winnipeg and Toronto, and how the target Burmese populations are situated within these frameworks. The following chapter attempts to relate the current state of Burmese refugee community development and integration to pre-existing factors, namely a pre-migration context that includes warfare, intense insecurity and systems of authority, hierarchy and militarization. It finally connects the implications of these factors to the processes of integration and associated normative assumptions.

Chapter 3

Pre-Migration Context of Burmese Diaspora

3.1
Introduction

This chapter attempts to examine several of the threads that form the pre-migration fabric of Burmese populations in Canada. One of the questions asked by this thesis is what role pre-migration context plays in the development of social capital and other attributes argued in this thesis to be critical for the successful integration of immigrants and specifically, refugees, within Canadian society. This thesis draws upon certain strands of the pre-migration context as having particular relevance to the strategies now being employed by the Burmese communities in Canada, some successfully and others less so. Pre-migration context feeds into one of the key dynamics pointed to in this thesis: social capital and its relationship to institutional completeness plays an important role in the health and successful integration of immigrant groups.

Critical elements of the pre-migration context, which this chapter seeks to identify, revolve around the socio-economic environment of Burma. The minority situation in Burma and the layers of meaning associated with ethnicity in that context are unpacked in this study, and the experience of the largest and most visible group of Burmese refugees in Canada, the post-'88 'students' is considered. Finally, the role of militarization, insecurity and normalized obedience are all viewed through the lens of the potential impacts they may now be having on the Burmese population in Canada, namely their relation to the capacity to develop and harness social capital.

3.2
Political and Economic Environment

The modern state of Burma is in deep economic, social and political crisis. It has been ruled by successive military regimes since 1962 and has the dubious distinction of being one of the world's least developed countries. In 1987 Burma's generals "were forced to ask the United Nations to declare Burma a least-developed country, even though it failed to meet the criteria for such a description" (Rotberg, 1998:24). It is however, a land of considerable natural wealth and until the mid twentieth century served as a model for education and human capital development in Southeast Asia. According to the British based *The Economist*, Burma is the world's most needlessly miserable country.[24] The United Nations has labelled it as one of the world's worst human rights violators in its treatment of the democratic opposition movement and its ethnic minorities.[25] As a result of the military regime's severe violations of internationally accepted human rights, there are an estimated one million internally displaced people and refugees in and along the borders of Burma and Bangladesh, India and Thailand.

In 1988, a military coup was staged in Burma, and the name 'State Law and Order Restoration Council' (SLORC) was taken by the newly established military regime, and has since been changed to the 'State Peace and Development Committee' (SPDC) in an effort to soften the military's international image. At the time of the military coup, nation-wide demonstrations for democracy were being held throughout Burma and in the capital city Rangoon alone, it is estimated that thousands of unarmed civilian protesters

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[24] The Economist Magazine, 2000:43
[25] UNGA, 2001

were killed. Although the regime allowed free elections in 1990, the results were dismissed after the National League for Democracy (NLD), the most prominent pro-democracy opposition party, won 82 percent of the parliamentary seats. The NLD leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was put under house arrest and has remained so intermittently since then, despite winning the Nobel Peace Prize during her incarceration.

In August 2001, nine United Nations agencies operating in Burma produced disturbing figures on mother and child health. They placed maternal mortality as high as 580 per 100,000 live births. Only 16 countries, all in Africa, have a higher infant mortality rate. There are 1.1 million pregnant Burmese women in high - risk areas for malaria transmission and less than 2 percent of rural households have access to piped water. More than 40 percent of children under five are chronically malnourished. In addition, HIV/AIDS is rampant, infecting an estimated 500,000 younger people and an estimated 4% of the population (UN, 2000). UN agencies have called for more humanitarian aid, comparing the dearth of assistance being received in Burma to that being received by Laos and Cambodia. The crux of the problem continues to be charged as the SPDC's wilful neglect, extending to direct attacks on the public welfare. In a response to the UN agencies, the Bangkok-based Federation of Trade Unions of Burma showed how SPDC's budget allocations had changed in the dozen years since it took power. Military expenditures had risen from 22.35 percent in 1988 to 49.93 in 2000; health care expenditures had declined from 4.71 to 2.53 percent, and spending on education from 12.9 to 6.98 percent (FTUB, 2001). According to the UN Human Development Report, the growing imbalance between military, and combined health and

education expenditures in Burma, is surpassed only by two other countries, Oman and Syria.[26]

Since students played a prominent role in the 1988 Democracy Movement and many were killed in the uprising, SLORC leaders have treated students as enemies. They determined to tightly control the education system, particularly at the university level. Then Lt. - Gen. Khin Nyunt chaired a national education committee, which transformed the system, downgrading educational levels and violating student rights through the censoring of seminar papers, and directing what courses a high school graduate might follow. Universities were closed intermittently for 9 of the 12 years following the 1988 military take-over. High fences and strong gates have been built to separate different faculties and prevent students from organizing mass meetings. When they re-opened in 2000, undergraduate arts faculties were moved outside Rangoon, a long bus ride away for city dwellers. The new facilities were located near army bases and the campuses were divided into small components. The military, medical and engineering universities have however remained open in the cities, and receive special aid. In ethnic minority areas where SLORC had negotiated cease-fires, local language schools were closed further frustrating an alienated population.

3.3

Refugee Situation

The movement of people out of Burma represents Southeast Asia's current largest migration movement. Thailand alone houses over 2 million Burmese, with only a

[26] UNDP, 2000. *World Report.*

fraction of these allowed into refugee camps. Bangladesh has one quarter of a million Rohingya (Muslim Burmese from Arakan state) with only a small percentage in camps. India has restricted UNHCR assistance to Burmese refugees, of which approximately 50,000 reside in the northeastern province of Mizoram, while others live as urban refugees in New Delhi. Additional Burmese refugees can be found in China and Malaysia. None of the countries bordering Burma, and hosting the majority of its refugees, are party to the 1951 Convention on the Status Relating to Refugees, which would guarantee them basic protection and assistance (CFOB, 2003).

A multiplicity of factors have contributed to a massive outflow of Burmese. These include among others: the ongoing conflict between the SPDC and ethnic groups resulting in human rights abuses, torture, rape and summary executions, destruction of property and food stores, the persistent use of forced labour; confiscation of property for military, 'development' or environmental exploitation, and forced relocation of nearly half of one million people to relocation sites which double as labour camps (CFOB, 2003). While there are increasing numbers of Burmese migrating to neighbouring countries in an effort to escape the devastating inflation and worsening domestic economy, it is estimated that the cause of flight for over half of Burmese is linked to root causes related to abuses by authorities and the military. The estimates of internally displaced persons are only approximate, and these range between 1 and 3 million. Most of these are forcibly relocated rural people who have been moved from their farms and villages to military managed camps. It is in avoidance of such forced practices as military porter duties and 'minesweeping' that many flee to the jungle and are left to forage for food. For most of the duration of the Burmese military's rule, a 'Four Cuts' strategy of

forced relocation has been employed in order to cut off the vital life lines of insurgents - food, finance, intelligence and recruits. This has taken place mainly in ethnic minority areas, and according to some estimates at least 1,300 ethnic minority villages have been forcibly relocated since 1988.

3.4
Minorities in Burma

Burma specialist Martin Smith finds an oft-repeated axiom holds special meaning in reference to Burma, 'the first thing colonial rule denies a people is their history' (Smith, 1991:27). Arguably one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, it is presents an awesome challenge to those interested in categorizing diverse and fluid ethnic identities into discrete units. To date, censuses have consistently failed to provide accurate and comprehensive descriptions of the people living in Burma. Even the choice of such basic questions as, 'What is your mother tongue?' as opposed to 'what is the language most commonly spoken in your home?' provide entirely different results. Whereas the British calculated in the 1931 census that one group, the Karen, numbered around 1 million, a Japanese census 10 years later suggested that there were some 4.5 million Karens (Smith, 1991).

The newly independent Republic of the Union of Burma in 1948 reflected few commonalities with any historic nation or state. Geographically, right down to the location of the capital, and institutionally, the new Burma bore little resemblance to anything that had come before. Moving the capital of Burma from the Avan empire's spiritual centre of Mandalay to the previously malaria infested delta region of Rangoon,

proved only the first step in dissolving the ties between underlying memories of nationhood to a new, deliberately constructed sense of membership. One of the defining moments in this process of colonial remoulding was the transformation of the royal palace in Mandalay, seen by Burmese as the cosmological centre of the universe, into a drinking club for British officers. Smith argues that this deliberately crafted humiliation of the Burmese set the stage for a subsequent chauvinist and brutal national turn (Smith, 1991). In addition to the manufacturing of Burmese identity within broader colonial purlieus, one of the more dramatic colonial projects was the inclusion or the permission of inclusion of previously loosely independent nation-states within Burmese jurisdiction. Devastating to ethnic minority trust and sense of justice was their perceived betrayal by the British at the close of the Second World War, a betrayal made particularly bitter given the role of the ethnic minorities in fighting and subsequently being abandoned to the Japanese occupation by Allied Forces. It was an occupation in which the ethnic minorities were especially singled out for persecution given their continued loyalty to their British allies. Despite assurances that no ratification of the Burmese drafted Constitution would occur in British parliament if such independent states as the Karenni and Shan were included, the war weary British, eager to dispense with haste of their colonial burdens, ratified the constitution, and invasion by Burmese troops of ethnic regions took place within the space of a year. These thousands of square miles of occupied territory now comprise some 40% of the total Burmese land area and include the most resource rich.

Since Burma's independence, almost all of the various ethnic minority groups have sought greater autonomy from the Burman dominated government. Yet, in Burma’s

insurgency ridden recent past, difficulties exist in distinguishing ethnic nationalist movements from broader ideological insurgencies such as that of the powerful, and largely Burman, Communist Party of Burma (CPB). As Martin Smith notes, “In over 40 years of armed conflict, the ethnic and political insurgencies have crossed at so many points that it has become impossible to deal with any of the insurgent movements in complete isolation” (Smith, 1991:28). During the period of turmoil and uprisings following independence, Burma's ethnic minorities gathered with Burman leaders to amend the 1947 Constitution in an attempt to establish a genuine federation of states. These principles were laid out in the Panglong agreement, which was signed by several major ethnic groups. However since General Ne Win’s 1962 coup d'etat, all such initiatives have been disregarded. Most of Burma's refugees come from the ethnic minority groups located near Burma's borders, all of which have been engaged in the struggle for equality and autonomy rights with the central Burmese authorities at various points in time since the country's independence. In a number of cases, the junta has brokered so-called cease-fire agreements with leaders of ethnic minority groups, which, as in the case of the Wa, often allow the military to further protect, exploit and profit from the drug trade. Moreover, these "agreements" have not stopped the repression of Burma's ethnic minorities who continue to suffer the brunt of the regime's tyranny (Smith, 2002).

3.5
Ethnicity through the Eyes of the Regime

Ethnic identity and unity have been the mantras that have preoccupied Burma's successive military regimes. There has been an emphatic denial of ethnic diversity. Encapsulated by Thakin My's presidential address to the Constitutional assembly in 1947, "There is hardly any other nation more homogenous than the people of Burma."[27] The ethnic leaders have long maintained, and with consensus from external human rights groups that the Burmese regime has followed an explicit policy of Burmanizing ethnic minorities (Smith, 1991). This has taken the form of military sanctioned coerced 'marriage' of posted Burmese soldiers with local ethnic women, the rape of ethnic women as means of punishing less accessible male ethnic insurgents (Shan Human Rights Foundation and Shan Women's Action Network, 2002) and the refusal to allow ethnic languages to be taught or used. The fixation with and impact of ethnicity's role in Burma is demonstrated in a deeply ironic statement by the long-time dictator of mixed Chinese heritage, Ne Win,

> Today you can see that even people of pure blood are being disloyal to the race and country but are being loyal to others. If people of pure blood act this way, we must carefully watch people of mixed blood. Some people are of pure blood, pure Burmese heritage and descendants of genuine citizens. Karen, Kachin and so forth, are of genuine pure blood. But we must consider whether these people are completely for our race, our Burmese people: and our country, our Burma.[28]

[27] Min. of Information, Burma's Fight for Freedom (Rangoon, 1948):92
28 Speech of U Ne Win, chm. BSPP, RHS, 11 Dec., in BBC, SWB, 15 Dec. 1979

3.6
The post-88 generation

As mentioned earlier, while this study addresses the experiences of Burmese refugees generally, the most populous and visible of the Burmese refugee groups are the post-1988 student generation. This group can further be divided into several categories although I am aware that many would prefer the post -1988 refugee wave to be presented as a unified whole. However, in the interest of developing a fuller understanding of this group in the Canadian context, it is constructive to distinguish their interests and experiences at the points where they diverge. It must be noted however, that whatever generalizations are drawn are not absolute, particularly where they appear drawn down ethnic lines. There is considerable crossover and blurring of apparent boundaries.

The primary distinguishing factor within the post-1988 generation would seem, at least superficially, to be one of class or status, if not of ethnicity. In 1988 the protests that resulted in the military crackdown were initiated by the student unions, an event with precedents in recent Burmese history. These students were largely from Rangoon Institute of Technology, Rangoon University and a number of surrounding secondary schools. Many of the surviving students of the August 8 massacre fled to the border areas, primarily in the east, to form their own armed resistance movement, the All Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF). Shifting alliances transpired between the ABSDF and other armed ethnic insurgent movements, however, a unified opposition to the regime never materialized. A common characteristic of the ABSDF students was often their ethnicity. While there were certainly many ethnic minorities involved in the ABSDF, given its origin in Rangoon academic institutions, it is not surprising that many of the

students were ethnic Burmans and/ or from relatively educated or well-established families. The existing ethnic insurgencies on the border were once again, not absent of an educated elite, but in general their experiences were far removed from the city life of Rangoon. For these and other reasons, the relations between the students and the existing ethnic movements were often strained. As the ABSDF students were designated as 'persons of concern' by the UNHCR and were provided with refugee camps west of Bangkok in Thailand, the process of seeking refugee status and applying for resettlement to a third country was more accessible for the 'students' than it was for those border based ethnic minorities opposing the government. As a result, a large proportion of the Burmese refugees resettled in third countries have been ABSDF students. This is also reflected in their greater representation as Burmese refugees in Canada. With respect to refugees on the borders of Burma, however, they would have been a minority in comparison to the ethnic groups similarly subject to persecution. There are also sizeable ethnic minority populations in Canada, but they have often come through different immigration processes and would perhaps not identify themselves with the experiences of dissidents from lowland Burma.

3.7
Militarization as Way of Life

According to Martin Smith, Burma has a long and proud history of martial power. Even prior to the wars with the British a number of villages were named according to the military duties they performed. In this century, villages in Upper Burma were known by

previous functions such as *myin* (cavalry) or *thenat* (musketeer) villages (Smith, 1999:90). A number of small local armies were well established for centuries throughout central Burma, and according to Smith, village raiding was something of a local sport (Smith, 1999: 90). Martial pride is deeply embedded in Burmese society, filtering down to the educational system where every Burmese school child is taught of the heroic deeds of such military figures as Aung San, the independence hero, and Bo Min Yaung, Aung San's grandfather and the leader of the anti-British resistance movement (Smith, 1990:90). When Britain granted independence to Burma in 1948, within months the country was covered with nationalist and communist movements. The Burma army, or *Tatmadaw*, was thus born into the role of suppressing the disunity of a nation that had never been unified to begin with.

In the time since, Burma's military tradition has gained momentum. The American Embassy in Myanmar (Burma) estimated that defence spending in the country was at least half of total government spending.[29] The Burmese military has grown rapidly in size and expenditure throughout the 1990s; the military grew from 1990 to 1996 from 175,000 men to 350,000. The government's goal is said to be 475,000 troops, making it larger that the U.S. army (Asian Human Rights Commission, 1999). In 1999 the Asian Human Rights Commission published a useful report known as the People's Tribunal on Food Security and Militarization (referred to hereafter as the Tribunal). One of the prima facie points made by the Tribunal was the domination of the military government and army in national affairs. Today, despite decades of armed resistance, the military remains in firm control of Burma's political and economic scene. The *Tatmadaw* has maintained its

[29] According to the People's Tribunal, the American Embassy's statistics are not official but are a compilation of embassy, Mayanmar government and World Bank/ IMF figures.

leading role in Burma's government, impervious to growing international concern for human rights and political freedom. The population, at about 45 million, has virtually no legal options for political opposition, although a number of illegal anti-government groups operate at great risk throughout the country. Burma's *Tatmadaw* continues to pursue its vision of a unified, 'peaceful, modern and developed' nation led by strong and vigilant military heroes (AHRC, 1999).

The Tribunal distinguishes between *militarism* and *militarization,* with the critical difference being the social and ideological force the latter exerts on the normative life of society. Thus, the distinction between militarization and militarism:

> militarization… denote[s] the spread of military values (discipline and conformity, centralization of authority, the predominance of hierarchical structures, etc.) into the mainstream of national economic and socio-political life. Militarism is distinguished as being of a more material, physical quality…while militarization is predominantly an ideological orientation, often leading to military leadership of civilian organizations and institutions (AHRC,1999).[30]

Militarization, as it shapes the current Burmese diaspora, is examined here in its aspects of ideology, values and the structures through which it pervades and dominates the economic, social and political life of the country. The Tribunal argues that what is occurring in Burma is militarization, rather than militarism, for two reasons. First, it is a thorough, systematic and nationwide orientation towards military control, replete with violence, intimidation and military fanfare. Second, is that military structure and ideology take over government, abrogating citizens' self-sufficient way of life. A complete assessment of militarization and its role in society would require a survey of military

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[30] Asian Human Rights Commission known as the People's Tribunal on Food Security and Militarization http://www.hrschool.org/tribunal/report/findings.htm#On%20Militarization)

institutions, including their history, activities, structure and philosophy. This would extend to the social, cultural and psychological effects of the military as well as the propagation of its ideology through folklore, education and mass media (AHRC, 1999).

While it is beyond the scope of this study to conduct the thorough examination required for such a comprehensive survey, several dimensions of Burma's military in the current context will prove useful in demonstrating the extent to which it has shaped the psychology and social aspects of this group and continues to influence interactions in Canada. First, the use of forced labour by the military is a potent example of militarization. The tribunal argues that like the collection of taxes, public works such as building and maintaining roads, dams and canals are routine state functions. Regardless of the Burmese government's argument of traditional precedent, forced labour is resented by the population for the danger and economic burden that it creates. The evidence presented by the Tribunal suggests that the Burmese population is not opposed to the donation of their labour to public works projects *per se,* but rather to the military's management approach. Rural traditions like collective farming are examples of labour use arranged through systems respectful of the rights and interests of the populace. A second example of the reach of the military is in the lives of Burmese farmers, the bulk of the country's largely rural population. The imposition of rice paddy quotas on all farmers has posed a considerable burden on what was historically the 'rice bowl of Asia.' In areas where the army must provide for itself, the quota, which is commonly 1/3 the seasonal harvest, is replaced by arbitrary taxation, often levied with the use of military violence. As the Tribunal notes, the military usurps taxation as a routine and legitimate function of government (AHRC, 1999).

3.8

Conformity, Obedience and Passivity

While it would be deterministic to suggest that factors such as the role of militarization on the collective psyche irrevocably shape the path of Burmese refugee adaptation, neither can its impact be discounted. The potential for genuine citizenship including civic participation are moulded by trans-generational experiences under an oppressive regime. As Burma specialist Christina Fink writes,

> As the military's influence has seeped into virtually every aspect of people's lives, resistance becomes difficult to imagine. Those who do resist and are caught, as so many inevitably are, find that their punishment extends far beyond their jail term…To protect their children from such a bleak future, many parents try to insulate them from political realities and urge them to conform with military rule…Some parents even discourage their children from reading, for fear this will arouse an interest in politics (2000:38).

The implications of such powerful influences on the behaviour of those subject to it more clearly come into focus when translated and viewed in the context of such liberal democracies as that of Canada. Indeed, while democracy is an oft-heard slogan, particularly among the post-1988 student generation for whom it became a rallying cry, understandings of it are often limited and distorted. Passivity with respect to authority is rooted in cultural bedrock extending beyond that of the regime's construction. The so-called Asian values of collectivity and hierarchical obedience are claimed to have roots in Buddhism, among other philosophical systems, and long histories of authoritarian regimes. Within the Burmese tradition, the five pillars of veneration; Buddha, Buddhist doctrine, monks, parents and teachers require unquestioning deference. As Fink points out, the military has surreptitiously penetrated this configuration. "Many army officers

apparently believe that because of the sacrifices they are making on behalf of the country, they have earned a place of esteem equivalent to the traditional five categories of respect" (2000:41). Burmese psychiatrist Raymond Tint Way assesses the psychological impacts,

> People have regressed under military rule. They have become more dependent. They have had to endure so much hardship that they have become 'immunized' to it. They can handle and cope with it. There are positive and negative consequences: they survive, but they don't overthrow the regime. They see no point in resisting (Fink, 2000:40).

As critical as civil society and institutional completeness might be in the adaptation and integration of Burmese diaspora communities, they too have unsurprisingly been co-opted by residual lessons learned under a repressive regime. Trust, the very essence of community, has been corrupted by the belief in Burma that one in every ten urban houses is that of a military informer (Fink, 2000:40). The damaging effects of such fears is clearly not limited to Burma and it was widely asserted among the Burmese communities surveyed for this research, and possibly with reason, that the Burmese regime maintains tabs on the overseas dissident community via infiltrators. This lasting assault on goodwill and trust so essential to the development of social capital is seen in Burmese self-perceptions, "We have no mouths, only ears" (Fink, 2000:40). This deliberate strategy of silencing on the part of the military regime disempowers the populace. The re-construction of a civil society in new countries depends on the ability of these refugees to overcome the suspicion, fear and distrust deeply engrained in their worldviews.

3.9
Implications for Social Capital

Chapter One drew attention to Robert Putnam and his definition of social capital. He described it as, “refer(ing) to features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (1995: 65). If we understand one of the critical elements of this social capital necessary for cooperation to be trust, then it is apparent that the pre-migration context of Burmese will have considerable impacts on their ability to develop social capital. Historically, one of the foremost tools of successive Burmese regimes in maintaining power has been the implementation of ‘divide and conquer’ strategies. These have been exploited to great success. From the formation of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), whose division from other ethnic Karens on the basis of religion (a large number of Karens are Christian) led to the crushing of the regime’s greatest ethnic opposition force, to the infiltration of ‘student’ army groups in the border areas, in countries of temporary asylum and eventually in countries of resettlement, has led to a justified paranoia of spies. Trust, even in its most basic forms has been seriously jeopardized. There exists a pervasive suspicion even, or perhaps, particularly among diaspora communities. The regime has offered amnesty to those of the ’88 generation wishing to return to visit family on tourist visas. The only string attached is the required repudiation of all previous dissenting political activities and the disavowal of all the ‘student’ movement had stood for. While there continue to be stories circulating of student activists that attempted to return and were never heard from again, there are nonetheless a number of past ‘students’ who are believed to have ‘cut deals’ and were allowed in for visits. These individuals are treated

with the greatest disdain and distrust by the community. There are as well a number of international students from Burma with student visas and Myanmar Embassy staff that circulate and appear to be aware of the activities of the refugee groups. This all contributes to a climate of distrust and fear that cannot in any sense be conceived to contribute to the formation of social capital.

In Hyman's framework, social capital is harnessed to promote community building through such activities as; resident engagement, agenda building, community organizing, community action and communication and message development (2002). An observation resulting from my work with the Burmese communities involves the immediate distrust and fear of 'organizations'. During my work in Ottawa, we sought to develop social activities such as New Year celebrations and sports teams, but as I was told, *NO ONE would participate if we affiliate our activities with an organizational name.* Despite the community service organization being entirely apolitical, the suspicion of organizations was such that people would only attend activities that were entirely devoid of formal organization. Again, in another telling incident, subsequent to the Winnipeg community's entirely apolitical Christmas party, an elderly Burmese Chinese gentleman visiting from the Toronto area, raged at his son-in-law (who is involved with the Burmese Community Organization of Manitoba) that my (as well as my family's) involvement with community organizing among local Burmese would ruin our family reputation and would get us in trouble with the Canadian government. He placed a great deal of pressure on his son-in-law to remove himself from any Burmese-related community organizing activities. The strong negative reactions to involvement in ANY form of organization have clear ramifications for the development of self-help initiatives and efforts at institutional

completeness, all of which require minimal levels of social capital and networks of trust. It may be that not until subsequent generations will some of the memories and inhibitions begin to fade, but this thesis suggests that successful, results-oriented community organizations can make considerable strides in alleviating some of the trepidations associated with organizing. It also argues that given the obstacles facing the successful economic and social integration of Burmese within Canadian society, community organizing may be one of the few viable options available for the improvement of their situation.

3.10
Conclusion

This chapter has sought to set the stage for subsequent findings and recommendations related to the Burmese refugee populations. It has attempted to argue that pre-migration context has significant potential impacts that must be taken into account when predicting the success with which new immigrant groups will adapt to Canada. Interlocking dimensions of Burma's socio-political situation, connotations surrounding ethnic identity, the post-'88 generation and the effects of a culture of militarizaton cannot be underestimated when assessing the processes of integration. The development of institutional completeness and its pre-requisite social capital cannot be taken as givens in new groups arriving in Canada. While they may represent necessary mechanisms in accessing opportunities available within the Canadian system, the barriers to developing social capital may run more deeply than superficially assumed. Conversely, deliberate

attempts at developing social capital may strike directly at those barriers limiting the full participation of immigrants such as the Burmese within Canadian society.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1
Introduction

The methodology adopted for this thesis is that of the participatory action research (PAR) approach. I argue that given the strong culturally based elements of the research questions and the target group, standard social science data collection techniques would have been ineffective and inadequate in addressing the questions that this thesis has sought to raise. In the previous chapter, the section on social capital and obstacles to its development such as distrust and suspicion, the groundwork is laid for why traditional interviewing techniques, including the requesting of signatures, tape recording, and the mere presence of and 'interrogation' by an outsider will yield little if any meaningful participation. My experiences with the Burmese community of Toronto, with whom I did not have established relationships, led me to modify my methods such that a climate of trust and 'shared' process could be sufficiently developed. This chapter details the specific methods and techniques through which data was collected. It considers questions of objectivity and what can and should be strived for on the part of the researcher. PAR and the philosophy that underpins it are presented and discussed. Finally, potential limitations of the study, including the possibility of bias stemming from pre-existing relationships with the Winnipeg Burmese community are explored. The iterative nature of this research project's design as a result of the PAR approach is also considered.

4.2
Participatory Action Research

> People in PAR are overtly political, working to change the status quo where unjust social, economic, and decision-making structures exist, to break free of constraints, and to open up possibilities on both inner and outer levels (Smith, 1997:177).

Participatory Action Research or PAR is a sociological qualitative theory that was initially formulated in the 1970s and evolved out of critical theory. It focuses on the coming to consciousness of an exploited group and a social reality with emancipatory possibilities ((Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1998). It is "openly ideological research" (Lather, 1986:63), and is "about personal and social transformation for liberation, that is, the eventual achievement of equitable communities and societies, which are characterized by justice, freedom, and ecological balance" (Smith, 1997:173). PAR, as advocacy tool of the poor and disenfranchised for undertaking their own analysis and action has been particularly promoted throughout the past several decades by a series of researchers (Gaventa 1980; Fals-Borda 1984; and Fals-Borda and Raman 1991). PAR is situated in a framework of three different forms of research approaches (Habermas 1971; Kemmis 1991): positivist (empirical-analytic), interpretive (historical-hermeneutic) and liberatory (critical). Whereas the empirical represents the predominant discourse in natural as well as social sciences, based on a reality of verifiable, distinct facts, interpretive seeks to capture meaning through multiple realities and truths. Liberatory inquiry however is based on the motivation of creating movement for personal and social transformation (Smith, 1997). "'Objectivity,' in the usual sense of detached determination of observations and facts, is not possible. Rather, people are active subjects of the world;

their needs are the point of departure for knowledge production and justification (not knowledge for its own sake). Participatory action-research is a type of liberatory inquiry" (Smith, 1997:181).

It is worthwhile commenting on the contested nature of PAR as methodology. McTaggart identifies key issues concerning the legitimacy of PAR (1998). These are a) the insufficient publication of quality participatory action research, b) the argument that much of so-called 'action research' is in fact the implementation of policy, and c) the tendency to associate PAR as something that practioners do, rather than the 'real' research of academics (McTaggart, 1998). McTaggart presents a series of criteria by which some degree of 'validity' can be established and the conventional critiques of PAR countered. These include; a) the establishing of credibility among participants and informants, b) triangulation of observations and interpretations, c) participant 'confirmation' and 'release' of research 'reporting' of all kinds, d) establishing an 'audit trail' and 'shared archive' of data and interpretations, and e) testing the coherence of arguments, the authenticity of evidence and prudence of action (developing a 'critical community') (Taggart, 1998). I will attempt to demonstrate that these criteriaoffer a methodological structure within which to establish validity, and have been incorporated in varying degrees throughout as standards for this research.

The choice of PAR as the methodological approach for this study is based on three pivotal rationales. The first is that PAR as methodology is gaining momentum in certain fields and appeared to be an interesting approach to attempt to apply to the topic of immigrant adaptation. Given the problems of the Burmese community in Winnipeg that became apparent based on my ongoing relationship with this community, I was interested

in how PAR might be used with respect to their self identified concerns. The concerns that emerged from my research and dialogues with both the Winnipeg and Toronto communities pointed to institutional completeness, social and overall capacity as key areas in need of attention. Second given the distrust and limited social capacity that was apparent among the Burmese populations, the 'mining' of information as an 'outsider' interviewing (or as they might see it, 'interrogating') them did not seem conducive or even possible as a strategy for research. Indeed such problems have been encountered previously in this type of research; "[A] nearly universal distrust of academia among the participants in the PAR projects was sometimes compounded by a lingering political distrust among those who came from countries under a repressive regime" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1998: 659). Since there were already relationships established with the Winnipeg community, and a sense of reciprocity, there were no difficulties in arranging interviews and acquiring participants. I was told though, in no uncertain terms, that if it was not me, but a stranger, there would be no way that they would agree to being interviewed; that they would be 'too busy.' With the Toronto community it was apparent from my first meeting with a key informant that the process of trust building would indeed be involved. This would of course be different than if I had been able to offer financial compensation; there would have been no problems recruiting participants, but the answers that I would receive would risk being superficial and guarded. I was advised to travel from Waterloo to Toronto each weekend to spend time with families and particularly women before even attempting to interview them. I did this, but due to the time constraints of these one-day trips, and most importantly, the lack of long-term relationships and 'ownership' of the process by Burmese participants, I tried to present my intention as identifying challenges

and experiences *with* them. I attempted to present myself as *their* advocate, acting as *their* voice in bringing particular immigration experiences and concerns to policy makers and practitioners. As a result of misgivings many of the Burmese felt towards outsiders, I felt that being unable to offer financial recompense and wishing to obtain the most sincere participation, I could not do other than to involve the 'subjects' in the design and 'ownership' of the research. Finally, and most importantly to myself, the selection of PAR was to yield research intended not simply for the sake of research, but for the ultimate purpose of contributing to concerns deemed significant by the participants themselves, and for active amelioration of their conditions.

4.2.1
Objectivity

Fundamental to this approach is the conviction that values and purpose are made transparent (Smith, 1997). This is in part premised on our lack of infallibility to bias despite our socialization, experience and education in the social sciences. It is precarious to equate objectivity in the natural sciences with that in the social sciences, considering that the latter are often of such complexity that there is an essential element of subjectivity in the inability of all researchers to perceive social reality alike. Nevertheless, this is not to say that some form of objectivity is not possible in social sciences. White suggests that objectivity is a human problem, which is difficult but possible to attain. He argues that in the social sciences "everyone has to make the necessary ascetic effort to see things as they are, to prevent extraneous considerations from interfering with and distorting that conformity of the mind with reality which is what knowledge is"

(1985:19). “Studying" from a position of disimpassioned observer is not a guarantee for a value-free research. In the words of Abu-Lughod, "...the self never simply stands outside" (1991:41). She notes the human proclivity to bias based on our experiences and identity as social animals. However, along with other uniquely human attributes, there is also the possibility for the identification of this tendency and the attempt to avert it if deemed destructive to the research process or, to engage and embrace it where it presents an opportunity for the research process to prove beneficial to the ‘subjects’ as well as the researcher.

Polanyi in a chapter entitled "Objectivity", in his work *Personal Knowledge* talks about the importance of our senses as a necessary corollary for understanding phenomena. He says,

> For, as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a center lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt rigorously to eliminate our perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity"(1958:3).

This thesis is premised upon the idea that there exists no contradiction between an explicit intent to empower, and an ‘effort to see things as they are’. I hoped to involve the participants deeply in the identification of those challenges that prevent their full integration into Canadian society, and the consideration of actions to seek the redress of these concerns. Some of my own personal actions have included arranging meetings for members of Burmese communities and myself with local councillor candidates for wards with sizable Burmese populations. In addition, as will be discussed in a later chapter, the Burmese community of Winnipeg formed an incorporated organization, and has produced a clear mandate involving the improvement of their situations; socially,

economically and emotionally. There have since been a number of developments which I attribute directly or indirectly to the research of this thesis, including the strengthening of regional networks of Burmese communities, the development of a coherent plan for at least one of the communities, and the broadening of awareness to non-co-ethnic Canadians.

4.3 Limitations of the Research

Some of the limitations of this project are:

One, the population surveyed and interviewed is non-randomly selected. Hence, outcomes and findings cannot be generalized to the whole of the Burmese population, particularly in Toronto. One of the more notable features of the Burmese population in Canada is the clear division between the earlier economic immigrants from Burma, many of them ethnic Chinese who arrived in the 1960s and 70s, and the most recent wave of refugees, the post-1988 revolution students and ethnic minorities. The experiences and interests of these two primary groups appear, at least superficially, to have little more overlap than common language. The challenges of Burmese refugees discussed in this study refer primarily to this post-1988 student group. Given the lack of existing records on the different Burmese ethnic groups entering Canada, the most viable approach for conducting surveys was deemed to be through non-random snowball sampling. Given the pre-existing socio-political dynamics, including ethnic and ideological conflicts, it would be very optimistic to assume that the population could be sampled randomly and cooperatively. The realities of this population's dynamics highlight the implausibility of

easily categorizing them as research ‘subjects’. PAR as a methodology is perhaps a very pragmatic approach to engaging these communities within the research process.

Two, the data collection for the research in the two respective cities is characterized by large differences in population size. While this is in part central to the nature of the research – comparing successful integration in a small city, Winnipeg, versus a large one, Toronto, the survey of Toronto Burmese represented a relatively small and potentially biased sample of the total resident population, while the Winnipeg survey included almost the entire population. This aspect of the research design introduces the possibility that differences in findings may result from a lack of representativeness inherent in the snowball sampling technique, but it also begs the question of whether the Winnipeg Burmese population is for whatever reason unrepresentative of the Burmese population nationally.

Three, language did limit the depth and fluency at times of the interviewing process. I do not speak Burmese, and while most people had at least a limited English ability, language prevented as open and detailed an examination as would have otherwise have been possible. Informal interpreters and translators from the respective communities were also used at times, but as they were not specifically trained for these positions, it was understandably difficult at times for their comments to exclusively reflect those of the interviewee.

Four, time and financial constraints made it difficult to conduct the surveys to the extent that would have been ideal. The data collection process consisted of one month of intensive interviewing in Winnipeg (with whom there had previously been considerable time invested in informal relationships), and sporadically over a four-month period in

Toronto. While the actual active data collection process was collected over a period of three months, the ongoing relationships and views expressed throughout the preceding years contributed considerably to the context and relevance of the data collected. In retrospect, having a lack of external funding and ability to remunerate interview participants was arguably a blessing. Had I been able to pay for the time of interviewees without having first developed an open and familial relationship, the views that I would have received would likely have been tailored to accommodate differences in perceived status and power relations. Identifying myself as someone with financial resources, with respect to their relative poverty, and as someone with education in contrast to their lack of it, I expect that I would have been treated to polite and brief responses that may have been unauthentically positive in anticipation of answers being sought by someone affiliated with 'the system'. Having to first develop friendships required spending time at people's homes drinking, eating and generally becoming an 'insider', allowed me to benefit from a frankness that the protocol of Burmese cultural norms would not otherwise have allowed with an 'outsider'. Travelling with members of the community to a Burmese politically related conference, sharing food, funds and sleeping on the same floor allowed for, I believe, a genuine sense of shared interest. In those few times where I have tried to pay for the meals or gas of others, I have been resolutely denied. In the Burmese context in which we were operating, I was a 'student' and younger than them, so custom dictated that as my elders I was to be taken care of by them to some degree. Having experience and understanding of this particular cultural characteristic allowed me to understand it as a fully reciprocal interaction in which inter-generational, inter-communal ties and mutual relationships were developed. I was indebted to them in ways

that were beyond the purely monetary – as my benefactors in some senses; they were owed my loyalty and sense of familial inclusion. Writers on PAR validate this assessment,

> Individuals who freely resolve to participate are likely to desire meaningful actions and dynamic interactions with others. For whatever reasons, they are willing to invest of themselves in the group and are open to challenge and movement…This resolution promotes active learning: the transformative processes that develop people's capabilities as they discover and use new-found abilities (Smith, 1997: 226).

And finally, a fifth potential limitation of this research is the pre-existing biases in the relationships of myself with the Burmese communities – particularly in Winnipeg. I take it as given that my personal and long-term embedment in the Winnipeg community resulted in well-established dimensions of trust, personal history and heightened motivation. The time spent with the Toronto community was relatively short and established with the explicit intent of conducting research. The question inevitably arises; how do my more deeply rooted relationships with the Winnipeg community affect the reliability and validity of the finding vis-à-vis the Toronto community? My response to this would be two-pronged. First and foremost, I would argue that in this form of subjective, participatory research; comparability, replicability and validity, as they are understood in the natural sciences, are not appropriate measures by which to assess the strength of the research. "The conventional understanding of science has been 'valid' but unable to monitor the healthy development of ideas and technology. This non-holistic approach has inflicted much damage by robbing us of liberating confidence, creativity, and a sacred identification with people and nature" (Smith, 1997:244). My second contention would be that although there are clear qualitative differences in my

relationship with the respective communities, this does not necessarily imply a distortion or biasing of data. I would argue that there was a degree of trust established in my interactions with the Toronto community and that genuine friendships were built which have continued well after the data collection period. Perhaps with greater possibility in biasing the 'validity' of the findings would be the greater ethnic, experience and interest representativeness in Winnipeg versus Toronto, where the majority of those interviewed were affiliated with the student movement.

4.4 Modus Operandi for Data Collection:

4.4.1
Research Design

The research design for this project was as follows. There were five inter-related objectives that iteratively emerged through the process of collecting data. PAR as the selected methodological approach required that much of the research direction *emerge during the process* of engaging participants. This was indeed the case and the initial sense of focus was clarified and to some degree shifted by the interests uncovered through data collection. There were several key aims with which this research project was initiated. First, it sought to explore the issues and experiences surrounding resettlement of Burmese refugee communities. Second, it attempted to gain comparative insights by examining two communities; Winnipeg and Toronto. And three, it sought to test the usefulness of PAR methodology in the context of immigration resettlement and refugees.

In order to operationalize these three initial objectives, semi-structured interviews were planned for the two communities, intended to be between a half an hour and an hour

in length. The initial survey questionnaire focused on questions (mainly related to transnationalism) that did not eventually coincide with the concerns and needs presented by the Burmese communities. The questionnaire, thus, while providing a basis for initiating the interview, was allowed to be very much open to the directions taken by participants. While my initial plan was to interview people individually, in a neutral location (such as a coffee shop) at a pre-arranged time, it became clear that community members had other preferences. Demands for signatures, tape recording permission and very direct, 'invasive' questions incrementally increased discomfort for interviewees. I would be overstepping the generosity of my voluntary participants. I discovered through experience that degrees of imposition increasing according to the following variables: a) solitary interviewing (people preferred group settings), b) unfamiliar location (unanimously there were requests for interviews to be held in the homes of interviewees or acquaintances), c) that restrictions were not placed on timeframes or rigid procedures (people were generally not ready at the agreed upon times – often they were out shopping or otherwise busy, also interruption by children, visitors and phone calls were frequent) , d) that questions were not controversial, overly direct or persistent when it was clear they produced discomfort (people were only required to share or expand upon that which they showed interest in doing) and e) that the 'interview' process was clearly understood to be one small dynamic in the interaction (people expected for you to 'spend time' with them, ask questions about their family, eat and drink, so as not to appear 'cold' and impersonal). Given these implicit structures, I adjusted my data collection methods accordingly. I attempted to be available *at their convenience*. I attempted to insert my 'research questions' within a broader dialogue allowing me to get to know people's

personal lives and concerns. Where I had opportunities to compensate them for their participation, ie. information about Canadian legal system, labour issues, domestic rights and entitlements, I sought to do so. If I could not provide them with the requested information at the time, I was careful to follow up by providing them with answers in the future. I made every effort to participate in community events and use these as natural points of entry into asking research-related questions. Where it seemed that I would have little success in making and having interview appointments kept by individuals, I took advantage of impromptu meetings, sometimes in groups, and would ask the most pertinent questions, recording them later. I found that in few cases were tape recording or signatures appropriate. While this may be seen as contradicting my original ethics review application, I feel that by doing so I respected the ethical norms of the community within which I was working. I also feel that using PAR as a means of securing participation was also the most ethically palatable approach by which to engage the Burmese populations.

As a result of PAR's iterative process, the specific objectives of the research remained in flux. Finally, in the process of writing and reflecting on the findings, the research questions began to take on the form of those identified in the introduction of this thesis.

Specifically the objectives that this thesis seeks to address are:

- to document the settlement and integration issues faced by the Burmese population, particularly as a statistically small immigrant group
- to gain greater insight on the settlement needs of the Burmese population and how these have been shaped by pre-migration context

- to explore the question of social capital within the Burmese population and its possible consequences for resettlement and integration
- to test the applicability of PAR methodology in the study of refugee groups
- to generate recommendations that will facilitate the settlement and integration of the target population in Canadian society

4.4.2
The Sample

My aim was to interview twenty individuals in each Winnipeg and Toronto. While this was conducted according to plan in Winnipeg, as I did not live in Toronto at the time of the interviews and was commuting by bus from out of town, I ended up conducting 10 individual interviews and a series of informal group interviews, with a total number of 40 interviewees over a four-month period. In addition to this, service providers from the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) and COSTI, the main settlement service providers in each community, were also interviewed. The Burmese participants from the target populations were people who, when asked individually, due to a multiplicity of issues discussed throughout this thesis, including suspicion, distrust, fear of 'educated' people and intellectuals, lack of confidence in language ability and comfort in group situations, would be difficult to secure for interviews. Having some degree of cultural experience with Burmese, I was able to anticipate these challenges, although certainly not to the extent to which they occurred in the less familiar Toronto community. In this sense, my pre-existing relationships with the Winnipeg community would have served as a bias with my interpreting our long-established mutual trust as the 'normal' openness of all Burmese communities. It is possible that the Toronto community may be more

suspicious, more divided and less easily accessible than other communities (and this was expressed to me by interviewees), but I cannot dismiss their caution about being interviewed as being a causal outcome of their subjection to intimidation, psychological trauma and in some cases war and torture. It is worth noting here that it is not solely the verbal cues of participants that informed this research. As was the case with writings of Hajdukowski-Ahmed, there were multiple layers of meaning, all of which informed the gathering of information.

> In my action/ research, it is not only the voices of immigrant women that become central to the process, but also the culturally informed language of their bodies – their mannerisms – which are transcribed as accurately as possible, since these are also bearers of knowledge, value, and meaning. Vocal modulations, laughter, hesitations, and silences, as well as postures and gestures, are noted and interpreted by the facilitator and participants…It is important for the researcher to be conversant with the culture of the participants in order to understand the signification of their communications, along with whatever values these might embody (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1998:656).

The subjects in both cases were mainly male, reflecting the gender imbalance in the Burmese refugee population (6 females to 14 males in Winnipeg, and 4 females to 16 males in Toronto). A discussion of the accuracy of the statistical demographics regarding the Canadian Burmese populations is provided in the following chapter. Participants in Winnipeg were almost entirely people within whom relationships already existed (other than a number of very recent arrivals). In Toronto, participants were found through snowball sampling, with initial contacts made through a leader in the community. This key informant generously introduced me to a number of people and continued to serve as a conduit to facilitating discussions and social situations. He clearly belonged to a particular group with ethnic and ideological biases. I do not assume that the people to whom I was introduced in Toronto were representative of the entire community. Rather

my findings are limited to the experiences of those individuals interviewed and those with similar experiences. Given the degree to which language and fear of 'outsiders' was a source of stress and insecurity for the Burmese, telephone was almost never used as a means of contact. Far more effective was simply to show up in their Toronto neighbourhood on the weekend and visit to the several Burmese shops in the area, focal points of the community, and informally 'bump into' people to whom I had already initiated some social contact. As discussed in other places within this thesis, the recording of conversations and the signing of forms, as originally stipulated in the ethics application, were dispensed with as possible violations of the fragile relationships of trust that were being established.

My target population was Burmese individuals, over 18 years of age, who were a part of the '1988 generation'. While they did not need to be 'students' – understood to be largely of Burman ethnicity and having joined the student army, the All Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF), following the uprising in 1988, ideally they were to have left the country as a result of the same military coup that took place in 1988. The students have been the focus of much of the UNHCR overseas refugee resettlement campaigns and appear to be experiencing some of the most specific and acute challenges. These particular obstacles and characteristics will be dealt with at length in the following chapter. Students and the ethnic refugees interspersed with them are found primarily in the Lansdowne and Dufferin neighbourhoods of Toronto, while the Burmese population of Winnipeg is generally, and increasingly, centered around the Young and Sargent Street areas, although with a number of exceptions (please refer to the maps included in the Annex). In both cities these are low income, inner city areas and the Burmese housing

was particularly low-income within these neighbourhoods. All of the individuals interviewed were born in Burma, and all but several arrived within the past 10 years - the majority arrived between 1994 and 2000. Again, all but several arrived as Convention Refugees and in the Toronto case study, nearly all spoken to were affiliated with the student movement, and most were ethnic Burman. This is not the case in Winnipeg, where only four of the twenty surveyed were ethnic Burmans, and only three were associated directly with the student movement.

4.4.3
Ethics Review Process

The ethical problems posed by the conducting of research on refugees and displaced populations is significant enough to have merited writings in its own right (Leaning, 2000; The Sphere Project, 2000). A raft of issues contribute to their particular vulnerability, including; their frequently insecure political and legal status, the facility of research associated with the concentrated nature of these populations (whether in refugee camps or in ethnic enclaves) and the language, culture, education and social norms that complicate the ability to obtain their genuinely informed and voluntary consent (Leaning, 2001). The impetus to develop ethical requirements for research with these easily manipulated and exploited populations despite being strong, has been shaped by the tension between the need to protect these populations and provide them with much needed supports that may result from research.

> Are such [clinical] studies, in which the unavoidable trade-off in risk and benefit is accentuated by the irreducible uncertainty of achieving truly informed and unforced consent, ever justifiable? The field response is yes. Sometimes the refugee setting raises special extreme problems

> that can only be addressed in that setting, and failure to improve our knowledge on how to deal with these problems is in itself unethical (Leaning, 2001:1433).

One of the dynamics encountered in the writing of this thesis, has been the apparent contradiction presented by the Ethics Review process and the desire to remain respectful of the vulnerability experienced by the participants in the research. Much has been said in the course of this thesis of the suspicion, distrust and fear within the Burmese communities of government spies and of the interview process itself. This is particularly so given cultural contexts (wherein family and 'in-groups' often form the core of those to whom one can be open and honest) and shared experiences of trauma and intimidation (the Burmese intelligence was highly adept at manipulating information and creating 'divisions' among opposing groups). Seeking to forge relationships of trust, security and intimacy with those being interviewed, and I argue this was the *only way* in which they could be effectively interviewed, was at odds with the processes determined by the Ethics Review committees. While their guidelines and requirements are designed to protect research subjects and prevent future legal complications for the university, my experience in trying to fulfill their requisites was that it would have increased the anxiety and discomfort of the intended participants to such a degree that their participation would likely have been pre-empted. Specifically, the need to have strictly scripted telephone or letter invitations to participate would have led Burmese community members to suspect their becoming involved in something bigger, more 'organized' and more potentially dangerous than they would be willing to consider. The requirement of signatures would be an imposition of just such a condition described by the Canadian Centre for Survivors

of Torture as a source of resistance and stress.[31] Finally, the rather rigid structuring of Ethics Review procedures did not permit for the relationships of spontaneity, familiarity and trust required for interviewing, to be established. For further clarification, please refer to the Ethics Review application package in Appendix 6, although it bears note that later changes to the research approach were not subsequently submitted for approval as they were made adaptively during the data collection process.

A further consideration that evolved through the process of this research, is the existence of ethical issues that *were in no way addressed* by the formal Ethics Review process. Specifically, in my case, the personal emotional investment called for by PAR (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1998), and the use of personal acquaintances as research 'subjects' raised ethical issues that I had not considered beforehand, and were not flagged by the Ethics Review. For example, when interacting with friends, where does one draw the line between PAR 'research' and things told in confidence? This was an issue I struggled with throughout. There have been numerous details which I feel would contribute to this thesis which I have decided not to add in the interest of those individuals who shared information, perhaps not fully clear on the boundaries of myself as 'friend' and myself as 'researcher,' and whether information disclosed prior to the 'official' beginning of the research period was appropriate for inclusion.

PAR brings with it an associated baggage of ethical considerations. Hajdukowski-Ahmed notes,

> Participatory Action Research is thus paradigmatic of sociological research that adheres to an ethics of answerability. Such an ethical position is essential to ensuring that the participation and their utterances do not become "disposable" and that the results of the research generate

[31] http://www.icomm.ca/ccvt/effects.html

> recommendations which can positively affect their lives" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1998: 648).

She goes on to suggest however that the ethical imperatives of PAR may in fact *require* a dispensing with the various accountability mechanisms posited by bodies such as the Ethics Review Board. "It goes without saying that such a methodology requires a considerable temporal and emotional investment, as well as a willingness to ignore the deadlines and demands for quantification of productivity imposed by granting agencies and institutions" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1998: 648). This being said, however, as the researcher, I would argue that in part due to my pre-existing relationships and emotional investment with the communities studied, that I attempted to be extremely conscious of their vulnerabilities and decided in favour of omitting information if information or circumstances seemed at all compromising. However, with note for future research conducted on similar issues, there needs perhaps to be some mechanism to address these ethical issues as the Ethics Review Process not only inhibited what would appear to be meaningful research, and did not verify those issues which appeared to be of greatest potential concern.

4.5 Data Collection:

4.5.1
Overview

The type of methodology that a researcher adopts is closely linked to the research question itself. The methodology was, as has been discussed earlier, chosen for two central reasons. First, out of interest in assessing the applicability of the PAR

methodological approach to studies of immigrant adaptation and resettlement. And second, given the particular characteristics of the subject population, conventional social science techniques did not seem appropriately sensitive. There were significant issues of trust involved, with an explicit antipathy towards those interested in studying them for their own ends. I employed PAR methods from a pragmatic point of view, in that it made the research endeavour more palatable to the Burmese participants, but also from an ethical perspective, in that I did not feel it justified to limit my involvement with the community to satisfying my own interests.

The data collection procedures for the study included both interviews and eventually the more encouraging structure of group interviews (refer to the research questions as submitted to the Ethics Review in Appendix 1). Equally important to data collection, I feel has been an establishment of personal relationships with those whom I eventually interviewed. While unfortunately insufficient time was spent with the Toronto Burmese community to fully engage the PAR process to its potential, there was still a period of developing trust and building friendships before I could begin interviewing. In the case of the Winnipeg Burmese community, there were a number of years of well established relationships with people I am honoured to consider my close friends, and have included spending holidays and ceremonies with community members, embarking on fishing trips, trips to the beach and many evenings eating, drinking and talking. Much of my sense of the context in which the Burmese communities are embedded has evolved over years of relationships amounting to direct and possibly at times ‘participant’ observation. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, my relationship with the Burmese in Winnipeg began with the first arrivals there, and occurred as a result of time I had spent on the

Burmese border and was maintained through a Winnipeg organization to which Burmese and non-Burmese alike belonged, Empowering Women of Burma. My belief coincides with those espoused by Hyndman that feminist scholarship in geography should "be more accountable, embodied and responsive" (2001:212). In my involvement with both Burmese communities I would like to believe that my approach and practice have reflected this.

Four types of qualitative methods were employed—a review of the related literature (although little was directly related to Burmese immigrants), semi-structured interviews, group interviews and direct observation. Interviews were conducted with settlement service providers in each of the communities in addition to the Burmese target populations. In order to study and represent this population qualitative methods were primarily employed, although quantitative data were additionally collected on such numerical subjects as level of education, years in Canada, years in an intermediary country, frequency of contact with relatives in Burma and border areas, etc. The former sets out to explore the behaviour, attitudes, characteristics, expectations, self-classification and knowledge of the group as they relate to experiences in the pre- and post migration period (Neuman, 1997).

4.5.2
Semi-Structured and Group Interviews

As discussed throughout this thesis, the fear of spies, military/ police informants and the dangerous nature of expressing opinions under the circumstances in which most of the Burmese refugees were forced to leave, has influenced the research design such as to

ensure the privacy, anonymity and comfort levels of the interviewees. Notes were made occasionally during but primarily after conversations. Interviews were never restricted to questions that had been drafted, and interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on other issues, some of which appeared to serve therapeutic purposes and almost all of which proved to be directly or indirectly related to questions of the context in which they arrived in Canada and issues of integration. Interview times ranged from 1 hour to 3 hours.

The rationale for the use of group interviews (or informal focus groups) as methodology has been informed in large part by its value to feminist research. Even more than so semi- and unstructured interviews, the attraction of focus groups lie in the more ambiguous and less hierarchical relations between researcher and researched. Closed ended survey and interview techniques are inherently limited and predetermined in comparison. As Geraldine Pratt notes on her work with Filipino women in Canada, the subjects of her research were equally free to examine her personal politics and were able to direct and interpret the topics that were important to them (Pratt, 2000). Some of the benefits recommending focus groups as methodology are observed by Pratt to include; the notion that knowledge is developed in a context and in relation to others, a space in which the authority of the researcher can safely be challenged, and the ability to observe directly the process of how meanings and opinions are generated. Given the particularities of the Burmese participants in this process, namely a deeply rooted distrust of authority, an ingrained sense of class, race and gender, and an overall fear of ‘saying too much’ or the ‘wrong thing’, focus groups became the increasingly preferred method for engaging discussion. The lighter atmosphere brought about by greater number verged

on festive and at times therapeutic, all hopefully positive outcomes of a process that may have otherwise been uncomfortable and invasive.

4.5.3
Data Recording and Analysis

Throughout the interviews, as tape-recording as a means of recording data had been dispensed with, note taking was relied upon as the primary instrument for that purpose. This was done both during and subsequent to the interviews. Every effort was then made to transcribe the interview notes into electronic format the same day. The handwritten notes and the disks, onto which the electronic copies had been saved, were then secured in my own personal files where I have retained them. Analysis of data was undertaken through two primary means. As the methodology aspired to PAR, the thoughts, assessments and analyses of the communities involved were incorporated and served, in an iterative sense, to further define the avenues of exploration. Second, encoding of the various emergent themes was done, with these themes (ie. pre-migration context, ethnic difference, social capital, demographic imbalances, discrimination) then serving as the basis of the findings and further enquiry.

4.6
Conclusion

This methods chapter has moved through a number of topics. First a section on self-reflection and objectivity has been provided, and the role of PAR (and feminist geography to a lesser degree) as the philosophical angle of the research was considered.

In assessing the potential limitations of this research a number of points have been identified: the absence of random sampling structures, the differences in size, composition and settlement service provision in the two cities, language barriers, limited time and funds, and pre-existing relationships with the Winnipeg Burmese community as contributing to potential bias. Finally, research methods have been discussed, with particular emphasis on the iterative nature of the research design using PAR methods, and the ethics review process, which was altered by the emerging nature of the participants. In sum, the methods for this research have been highly flexible and adaptable as required by a) the PAR approach, and b) the particular socio-cultural dynamics of the groups with whom I was working. The following chapter presents the findings of the research and discusses their significance. A series of descriptive narratives based on interviews have also been included in the interest of providing a more textured, personal element.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

5.1
Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings. It explores a series of issues that emerged from the PAR process and were forged by participation from the 'interviewees'. These issues flesh out the initial research objectives of documenting the settlement and integration issues faced by the Burmese population, insights into the settlement needs of the Burmese populations and an exploration of social capital development within these populations. The findings include basic demographics as well as consideration of such dynamics as gender relations, ethnicity and religious affiliation. It goes on to consider the psychological impacts of involuntary migration and the pre-migration context on processes of integration. Education, skills and employment form a significant topic of concern for the Burmese interviewed, and this is discussed at length in this chapter. Also, the experiences of Burmese with the integration process in Canada are considered, as is the degree to which settlement services are meeting articulated needs. Finally, and pertaining directly to the central research question of this thesis, an exploration of social capital and community organizing is attempted with respect to the target communities. In all, this chapter discusses trends within the Burmese communities studied, experiences and narratives that have surfaced in the research process, and an analysis of contrasts in the settings studied. The individuals described in the narratives have all been referred to by pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

5.2
Overview

There are a number of themes that have emerged in a complex nest of characteristics, experience and context. The patterns shared by the post-1988 Burmese in the cities studied have implications for the depth and scope of their integration trajectory. The prevalence of limited education, skills and English language ability, along with considerable similarity in age and experience condemn this group to clustering at similarly low levels of employment. The shared trauma of wartime experience, fostering ubiquitous distrust, and manipulated cultural currents of passivity, hierarchy and dependence, place the Burmese at risk for mental illness, violence and reactions to events that are no longer appropriate in their new context. Further complicating this scenario, the cities and social environments into which they are resettled appear to influence, through a variety of mechanisms, the opportunities and barriers with which they are faced. Being a minority among minorities and lacking the collective organization implicitly required by the pluralistic Canadian system has deep impacts on the pathways of adaptation adopted by Burmese.

5.3
Social Demographics

The Burmese surveyed amounted to a total of 40 individuals; 20 in each Winnipeg and Toronto. These 40 Burmese were surveyed through a combination of semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and informal focus groups, and each of the

communities were surveyed for the following demographic characteristics among others; gender, age, ethnicity, religion and level of education.

Table 4:
Gender (As breakdown of 40 participants)

	Female	Male
Winnipeg	6	14
Toronto	4	16

Table 5:
Age (As breakdown of 40 participants)

	20 and Under	21-30	31-40	Over 41
Winnipeg	1	17	2	0
Toronto	0	18	1	1

Table 6:
Length of Time in Canada

	< 1 year	1-5 years	5-10 years	> 10 years
Winnipeg	5	10	3	2
Toronto	3	11	6	0

Table 7:
Ethnicity (As breakdown of 40 participants)

	Burman	Karen	Chin	Mon	Chinese
Winnipeg	7	1	10	0	2
Toronto	15	2	0	1	2

Table 8:
Religion (As breakdown of 40 participants)

	Buddhist	Christian	Muslim
Winnipeg	8	11	1
Toronto	20	0	0

Table 9:
Highest Level of Education (As breakdown of 40 participants)

	Primary School	Secondary School	Vocational Certification	Attended Some University	Completed University Degree
Winnipeg	7	5	2	4	2
Toronto	4	9	2	1	3

Table 10:

2001 Census Data	Winnipeg	Toronto	Vancouver	Canada
Chinese	13,070	435,690	347,985	1,094,700
Filipino	31,210	140,405	61,555	327,550
Burmese	40	995	610	2,840
Cambodian	415	2,430	1,170	20,430
Laotian	1,180	2,905	970	16,950
Thai	170	1,305	1,345	6,965
Vietnamese	3,495	45,105	22,865	151,410
Hmong	0	25	40	595
Indonesian	275	2,680	2,285	9,700
Japanese	1,800	20,085	27,040	85,230
Korean	1,035	43,110	29,180	101,715
European origins	328,875	1,652,530	624,915	8,731,955
African Origins	6,685	119,625	17,465	294,705
South Asian Origins	13,425	504,005	163,340	963,190
Total	661,725	4,647,955	1,967,475	29,639,035

Breakdown of selected ethnic groups in Canada (2001)
Statistics Canada 2001 Census Data

Numbers of Burmese recorded in the 2001 Statistics Canada Census are reported for Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver and for Canada generally on the table above. While the Burmese populations are low compared to other ethnic groups, these numbers must be taken with some degree of scepticism. As noted by a study conducted on Burmese in Vancouver by Jennifer Hyndman, Burmese Convention refugees arriving in BC were

undercounted due to coding errors by Canadian authorities in Thailand. And while the BC Region of CIC took action to correct the coding procedures in Thailand, Burmese refugees in B.C. have nevertheless been undercounted (BDO, 1996). As the statistics provided by Statistics Canada may not have been subject to the same coding processes as those of the CIC count, there is a strong possibility of discrepancies between the numbers of Burmese in Canada, particularly with respect to the gender breakdown. While the 2001 Statistics Canada census data lists a reasonably equal representation of male and female Burmese, (in Toronto, men=520 and women=470, in Winnipeg, men=20, women=15) this is contrary to all that has been expressed by Burmese interviewed. With the post-88 generation Burmese refugees affiliated with the student resistance movement, based on various testimonies, every effort was made to prevent women from joining the 'students' in the jungle and thus averting the associated risks and hardships. The question over the accuracy of demographics among Burmese Canadians is one clear area for further research to be conducted. The sole Burmese settlement councillor working in Toronto confirmed this also noting that the post-88 refugees who came to Canada were disproportionately male and single. This characteristic is significant in that Burmese refugees are arriving individually and without the family supports critical to adjustment and mental well-being. The deficit of Burmese women also condemns many of them to imposed 'singleness', particularly where language presents a real barrier to social interaction with non-co-ethnics. If it were in fact correct that there is a greater gender imbalance, this would certainly complicate the nature of their lives in Canada and would have implications for social dynamics in existing communities and a reconsideration of future immigration policy concerning Burmese refugees.

5.4

Gender and the Role of Women

Also requiring comment is the role of gender in the Canadian Burmese communities studied. As mentioned above, the actual numbers of women, particularly in the case of Winnipeg, have been unbalanced up until the present, and have contributed to a community that is almost exclusively male. While this certainly brings stressors of its own, it has made it difficult to assess what the role of women might be in that community. In the case of one wife who was sponsored to Winnipeg by her husband, she is the only female involved in this core group and given the cultural restraints on inter-gender interactions; her net of close supports is limited. It remains to be seen whether this will continue to be the case given Winnipeg's recent female arrivals.

In Toronto on the other hand, the ratio of males to females appears to be more equal. There are numerous married couples and families, many of which having met in the Thai border areas or refugee camps. Based on conversations with women in Toronto, it seems that through the unraveling of traditional roles (particularly with women being forced into the job market), gender relations exhibit considerable tensions. Due to the insecurity of employment and the difficulty for male household heads to acquire decently paying, long-term employment, women were also forced to seek employment, usually in factories, while still being expected to assume traditional reproductive roles in the household. Even in cases where males were laid off and female spouses continued to work, complaints were made that the male partners were unwilling to assume a supporting role by undertaking domestic tasks. Women also appeared to have little control over expenditure of income, particularly in cases where the male is sole earner.

There were complaints of money being spent weekly on drinking and playing pool, while there was insufficient income to meet basic household needs. Male members of the community mentioned the need for anger management training generally and it was noted that several episodes of confrontation with the law were in regards to battery and domestic abuse. The narrative below depicts an example of just some of the more visible struggles being confronted by members of Burmese communities in the context of domestic tensions and abuse. Some of the themes drawn out in the following case involve a lack of sufficient community and formal supports to have mitigated the challenges being faced by this particular family, the divisions which later erupted in the community, and the distrust and isolation demonstrated by the Burmese community's unwillingness to involve external actors (ie. the police) in resolving the crisis. The details of this case, which happened to have occurred in Ottawa, are detailed through a newspaper clipping in the Annex. The example suggests that social networks and supports in the community need to attend to these sensitive issues, and in some cases may demand access to external structures and resources.

Narrative 1:

One of the participants who had been a primary community organizer and had a well developed awareness of broader Canadian 'culture' and processes, relayed to me an incident with ongoing and divisive effects on the local Burmese community. This individual, whom I will call Aung Tun, expressed to me his personal dilemma in being asked to act as an interpreter for court proceedings related to a death in the community. It seems that a female member of the Burmese community had been beaten to death by her

husband. She had been severely beaten four or five times prior to this and at no point until her death had police or other intervention been sought. Immediately after her death, it seems that the dead woman's parents had been told by others in the community, primarily other women, to "forget about it" and move on. The aspect that most frustrated Aung Tun was the absolute unwillingness of any members of the Burmese community to speak with the police or any other external parties. The Burmese community had apparently been sharply divided with half of the population supporting the husband, and the other half sympathetic to the dead wife. Those defending the husband, and again it seemed that a surprising number of these were women, implied that the wife had been a 'bad woman', had provoked her husband and deserved what she had received. For those who felt that the husband was at fault, the fear of authority, particularly police, and a general discomfort and unfamiliarity with the Canadian system, in addition to cultural prohibition on sharing and making public 'private' or potentially shameful information, led to their silence. Aung Tun expressed his reluctance to act as interpreter primarily through his conviction that the husband would inevitably receive a sentence lighter than deserved. He reinforced the need to provide links outside of the Burmese community for female members, believing that domestic violence was a common occurrence.

5.5 Ethnicity

Ethnicity did not assume the central role over the course of this study that I had initially anticipated. This may perhaps be due in large part to the sampling techniques, and particularly snowball sampling (in Toronto) that was conducted. The Winnipeg sample

was perhaps unique, and due to the small size of the population, I can say with some degree of certainty, that the ethnic divisions were not as defining as in other communities. It may be as a result of their self-selection in moving to, or choosing to remain in, Winnipeg that might be related to their increased tolerance and willingness to work with prior antagonists. In fact, the Winnipeg community viewed themselves as anomalous, 'the only such case in North America.' Toronto, however, was a different case. Given the use of snowball sampling and the lack of interviewee's ethnic diversity, most of the Toronto sample consisted of a single ethnicity: ethnic majority Burmans. In the case of the Toronto community, I am certain that the sample and their ethnic-religious backgrounds were *not* representative, and therefore the generalizability of that case study is limited. Given the snowball sampling technique used in Toronto and the sufficiently large populations to allow ethnic minority enclaves to form, the individuals eventually interviewed shared many commonalities (including for the most part being ethnic Burman Buddhists). I am aware that certain ethnic groups have clustered in areas that are not necessarily typical geographic choices of Burmese refugees or other immigrant groups generally (ie. the Chin communities are based primarily in Ottawa and Manitoba, and the Karens of Toronto happen to live in different neighbourhoods). Altogether, while I may argue that the Winnipeg case was representative, and that the ethnic divisions seen there (if correctly interpreted) were valid, it is not clear whether the *Winnipeg community itself* is representative of Burmese diasporic communities throughout Canada. The Toronto case study, however, while perhaps being indicative of the Burman post-88 generation in Toronto, simply does not reflect the experiences of other groups in that city. Therefore it is likely not so much a case that ethnic conflicts *do not exist* in Toronto, but

simply that I did not succeed in locating participants with the potential of providing that valuable viewpoint. On the other hand, it is also conceivable that as the total Burmese refugee population in large urban centers increases, the *need* for interaction between ethnic groups simultaneously decreases and the resulting ethnic homogeneity leads to less *opportunities* for ethnic conflict to occur.

In all cases, while when asked directly about attitudes towards ethnic minorities, Burmans consistently insisted that they bore no ill feelings and enjoyed the company of and respected ethnic minority individuals. This was in spite of being aware that generally speaking, ethnic minorities were suspicious and bore outright enmity towards Burmans. Questioned more indirectly however on attitudes towards the ethnic minority requests for self-determination and autonomy, it was expressed by a number of Burmans that this was impossible and should be opposed at any cost and the ethnic 'frontier' areas were vital to Burma's strategic security. The question of likelihood of an external invasion of Burma was never addressed. Religion in the Burmese context is intertwined with dimensions of ethnicity. The ethnic minorities in Burma had long established alliances with the British and other colonial powers in a mutually beneficial effort to mitigate Burmese strength. A result of this effort to distinguish themselves from the Buddhist Burmese as well as deepening relationships with Britain and their Allies during World Wars I and II resulted in a number of conversions of ethnic minorities to Christianity. Pockets of Muslims have also long existed in Burma, particularly in Arakan State bordering Bangladesh and in the delta region. Muslims are subject to considerable discrimination in Burma, as are Christians but to a lesser degree. It is commonly stated by the ethnic minorities that while they may act as privates in military services they are ultimately denied higher-ranking

officer status, explicitly, unless they convert to Buddhism. Muslims are widely ostracized in all forms of public service in Burma. In numerous instances during the interviewing process, discriminatory statements were made regarding Muslims. This was in spite of acquaintances and some members of the community being Muslim. While the Buddhists in the communities seemed fairly strong in their beliefs, particularly the women, there were a number of instances where they would attend church services with other Christian Burmese. While their identities in Burma exist very much relative to ethnicity, in Canada, where even the country 'Burma' is unbeknownst to many, the merits or shortcomings of identification of ethnic group within Burma gradually falls away. This is less true in the case of ethnic minorities (mainly Christian) for whom cultural survival has been a focal point of struggle, but in general they seem to cease to define themselves in a negative comparative sense to Burmans.

5.6
Psychological Impacts

The psychological impacts of the regime's militarization are compounded by the traumas of war and have at times inevitably culminated in situations of extreme stress. This has been expressed by the Burmese community its fear of a growing trend of suicides. The sole Burmese settlement councillor in Toronto confirmed that there have been several suicides committed by his clients in the past few years, one involving the leap of a student into Niagara Falls. In an ethnic community where suicides are culturally rare and in a third country that is supposedly a safe and prosperous haven, confidence is shaken. It was expressed to me that the community had collectively considered the potential causes

for the suicides, and given that the physical conditions of existence were much easier than they had been in either Burma or Thailand, the only conceivable explanation the community could come up with was a loss of dignity and meaning. This psychological struggle has been articulated to me in various dimensions, but most fundamentally as a sense of themselves on the bottom rungs of the ladder in Canadian society with little foreseeable means of upward mobility.

In the course of interviews the issue of psychological impacts on Burmese refugees came up repeatedly. I spoke with a number of Burmese medical practitioners related to this study, and while they were not mental health professionals, they expressed no doubt that posttraumatic stress was widespread among post-1988 Burmese. The effects of posttraumatic stress, and torture specifically, require sensitivity from those working with and providing services to Burmese refugees. The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture underlines the fact that those afflicted by mental illness resulting from torture are essentially healthy people who have been "systematically subjected to treatment intended to destroy their personalities, their sense of identity, their confidence, and their ability to function socially"[32]. Other consequences of torture and trauma described by the Centre and in keeping with behaviours exhibited by the Burmese refugees in Canada, include, fear and resistance to situations involving officials (especially those in uniform), signing of forms and staff of government agencies (whom may be feared to be reporting activities or representatives of the governments from which they fled). In fact, while interviewing in Toronto, I was told by a number of individuals that undoubtedly there were Burmese Military Intelligence spies infiltrating that community. I was told to be very careful of what I said and to whom, and cannot easily dismiss that there may be truth to their

[32] http://www.icomm.ca/ccvt/effects.html

allegations. Regardless, there are definitely cases of posttraumatic stress and torture survival within the Burmese communities, and for reasons of psychological trauma, absent family networks and language barriers, there is a high likelihood that these cases go untreated and unaddressed. There are few culturally acceptable sources of support for people suffering from mental illness, and as a result of the associated stigma, I have yet to hear of any Burmese refugees in either of the Canadian communities studied seeking treatment. Promisingly however, in both Winnipeg and Toronto, there was mention of trying to develop culturally appropriate means of addressing trauma. In the Toronto community, farsighted members have apparently attempted to initiate independent 'tea circles' whereby members discuss and share experiences in an effort to initiate healing.

A related issue regards the transformation of frustration and tension from inappropriate forms of interaction, including violence, to more constructive forms of conflict resolution and anger management. Clearly the occurrence and acceptability of anger is related to life lived in war zones and in extreme insecurity. How can one not link the regime's emphasis on 'crushing enemies' and the limited negotiation and conflict resolution skills of Burmese refugee communities? Combined with the frustrations of being unable to secure adequate employment or social ties with the Canadian mainstream, the likelihood for anti-social behaviour is amplified. Key community leaders expressed concern at the levels of conflict that were occurring within the community. They noted that these were occurring within households, as evidenced by police being called for incidents of domestic assault, as well as assaults by Burmese on police officers themselves. These incidents will continue to occur without the psychological and social supports needed for the constructive resolution of tensions and the re-learning of negation

skills acceptable in the Canadian context. The below story of Min Naing illustrates some of the problems surrounding mental illness that permeate and are to some degree shaped by the communities themselves. This provides a clear indication that institutional capacity building in the area of health and social services might improve intra-ethnic social capital and positively enhance integrative tendencies.

Narrative 2:

Min Naing was fired from his job at an Ottawa restaurant where a number of Burmese were working, a result of his having physically attacked his supervisor. After this incident he decided that it was his 'relaxing time' and left his apartment in Ottawa to stay with friends in Toronto. Not having made arrangements with his landlord, and not having paid for subsequent months' rent, Min Naing's possessions were eventually disposed of by the landlord. When he did return to Ottawa, he did not seem particularly worried about having lost all he owned, but moved in with his knapsack to an acquaintance's one bedroom apartment. The acquaintance, as was Burmese custom, planned to allow him to stay a few nights and hoped to put pressure on him to move out soon after. This friend understandably wanted his apartment back, but as it was winter, could not stomach kicking Min Naing out onto the street. The friend had complained to me, not knowing what to do. He had provided Min Naing with food once while he was in prison, and while he did not consider Min Naing to be his friend, it was clear that Min Naing felt a bond with him.

When I first met Min Naing, it was apparent to me that he was not well. Still in his early thirties, his eyes were clouded over by cataracts. It seems that he spent a lot of time staring at the sun. He spoke continuously about Buddhism and his special place in the cosmic system, and showed me paintings he had made of his brain, which he claimed produced a blue light. The acquaintance flip-flopped from agreeing that Min Naing had mental illness to claiming that he was '95% alright'. His theory was that Min Naing had entered the refugee camps when he was quite young and was therefore bullied excessively. He did not want Min Naing to stay with him and he continued to appeal to other members of the community to accept him for one or two days a week. There was at least one occasion where certain members had agreed, but had apparently changed their minds and locked all the doors upon Min Naing's arrival.

The acquaintance went with me to meet a Burmese-origin, Buddhist psychologist in the area. She made no bones about informing my friend that Min Naing was beyond his help and that my friend needed to look out for himself first and foremost. She advised that Min Naing needed to undergo evaluation and that if he could not be voluntarily driven to an emergency ward, that the police should be called to take him. My friend expressed his frustration afterwards, as first and foremost, as refugees who had spent most of their lives fleeing the police, there was no way he could justify asking the police to 'deal' with Min Naing. And second, he denied that Min Naing was 'crazy' as he was still able to perform basic tasks. He and others in the community did not agree that he was mentally ill, and believed that possibly he was pretending. The situation has yet to be resolved.

5.7
Education, Skills and Employment

Education has long been highly valued by Burmese society. Under British rule Burma boasted one of the most educated populations in South East Asia and its historic heroes represent the best and brightest minds. This has since changed and among the damage caused by the current regime, one of the deepest cutting assaults has been on the development of human capital. It is estimated that altogether the regime spends less than 1.1% on education, and that most of the texts and teaching materials are decades out of date. Not only has English been banned in educational curricula, but ethnic minorities are prevented from teaching ethnic languages. All education, even in minority areas must be conducted in the language of the dominant group.

One of the tragic ironies of this study and its focus on the post-1988 'student' group is their unfortunate lack of education and skills. It is this reality and the serious disadvantage at which it places them, that is acknowledged repeatedly by those interviewed as the greatest challenge facing the recent wave of Burmese migrants. Their designation as 'students' signifies their status at the time of the crackdown – *in 1988*. Many have, as a result of the conflict that subsequently took place, remained in a state of arrested development in so far as their education and skills development are concerned. While a few of those surveyed were university students at the time of the crackdown, many were secondary school students, and have thus never succeeded in graduating with even a secondary diploma. The policy of the Burmese education system to withhold English education has acted as a considerable barrier for those subsequently resettling in Canada. Difficulties with language, while existing for the Winnipeg group, appear to be a

much greater obstacle for those living in Toronto. Their concentration in several downtown neighbourhoods has allowed the formation of ethnic enclaves, which while beneficial in seeking employment and social support, has allowed for an environment where English is used only minimally. Upon arrival in Canada, and for the duration of government support, refugees in both communities are eligible for English as a Second Language classes. For reasons that are not completely clear, many of the Toronto residents attended 6 months or less of ESL (it may be related to the higher number of Burmese in Toronto with dependents). While this may be partly due to their urgency in finding employment and supporting their families, it also appears to be at least partially a consequence of cultural stigma for adults to attend school. The other component of this equation involves a pre-migration context which has seen a large number of Burmese refugees of a rural and less educated background. The Burmese settlement councillor in Toronto suggested that some 20-30% of Burmese refugees in Toronto were illiterate in their first language. He suggested that an offshoot of this was a relative lack of educational appreciation among some members of the Burmese community. He had been called in to act as resource councillor in several Toronto schools that had a number of Burmese children attending. He noted that these children had in many cases grown up in the border areas and were now attending school for the first time. As a result, there were considerable adjustment problems, and he expressed his frustration with convincing parents at PTA meetings of the necessity and value of education.

As in the case of other immigrant groups, members of the Burmese communities do experience a lack of recognition of credentials, but this is likely more directly a result of an absence of diplomas and certification than entirely a shortcoming of the Canadian

system, which has been severely criticized for its non-recognition of credentials for many skilled immigrants. In the case of those that fled under duress, certification was simply among the many valuable documents that were left behind. In a number of cases, there is considerable experience with particular trades; many Burmese had spent time working illegally in Thailand, Malaysia and India, and developed skills as carpenters, electricians, construction workers, welders and in other professions. While these skills might be highly valued in the Canadian labour market, the lack of Canadian references, Canadian work experience and credentials, denies them the opportunity to employ their skills. Additionally, some of the participants in Toronto claimed that they had received no job orientation and were thus ignorant of the resume writing, job search and interview process as well as, critically, their labour rights. While whether this is entirely true is not clear, it begs the question of what gaps exist that are preventing the Burmese refugees from accessing critical services.

The lack of education and qualifying credentials severely constricts the opportunities for employment within the Burmese communities. The limitations of language ability and passivity and insecurity in the face of an entirely unfamiliar system further entrenches a cycle of demoralization. This leads predictably to their easy exploitation in the labour force as well as considerable frustration at their own lack of knowledge and apparently hopeless prospects for moving beyond minimum wage general labour. One individual relayed to me, and was enthusiastically supported by others in the group, that they understand at best, perhaps 30% of the Canadian system and language into which they have been transplanted. This is, on average, five years after arrival in Canada.

An important consideration is that of rights, and particularly compensation. It bears mention that among these refugees, many saw active combat and physical injuries are not uncommon. Given their overall lack of education, skills and Canadian work experience, they are limited virtually from the gate to minimum wage, physically demanding employment. In the instance of physical injury, they see themselves as in a particularly vulnerable and precarious position. One of the key labour related concerns expressed to me was that of personal injury and the likelihood of being fired or simply quitting once injured on or off the job and unable, even if just temporarily, to satisfy physical demands. I was told that they understand that they should have basic labour rights and that if injured on the job they should have recourse to compensation, but as they are unaware of their specific rights and feel that they lack the languages skills to contest job loss, the only option they see available is terminating the position, often with considerable financial hardship resulting.

The jobs held by the members of both Burmese communities, particularly among new arrivals and in the Toronto community, generally involved either physical labour or factory related work. It seemed to be the case in Toronto that members of the community tended to find employment with large companies and factories in which a number of other Burmese were also employed. These positions ideally required minimal English and were physical in nature. The two main companies mentioned in Toronto were those of a furniture making factory and a meat packing plant. Coincidentally, while conducting interviews in Winnipeg, recent arrivals were seeking employment and several had found it in both meat packing plants and furniture making factories. Where there were higher degrees of education and the stay in Canada had been longer, it seemed that a number of

Burmese went into computer related industries. Several had taken computer programming and business computing courses at university and vocational levels. In cases where women were interviewed, they expressed a preference for a traditional domestic role, however, where finances made this impossible, they took work in factories as seamstresses, etc. The women clearly felt at a disadvantage, and being discouraged from activity outside the home, were more limited in their English ability and skills.

A tendency that might easily escape the notice of Canadian resettlement service providers, but was pointed out to me by earlier and more financially secure members of the Burmese diaspora, is the considerable problems the new wave of students experience with budgeting and broader organizational skills. This becomes quite understandable when situated within the broader context of their lives. Traditionally, young people and particularly students in Burma are quite dependent on their parents. They generally live at home until marriage, and most matters and significant decisions in their lives are made by their parents. As mentioned earlier in this chapter parents are ranked with Buddha among the top five pillars demanding utmost obedience and respect. Parents alternatively, dole out money as seen appropriate, scold their now adult children still living at home for drinking or smoking, and generally strive to protect and shield them from negative forces in the broader world. A relationship of mutual dependency arguably common in certain Asian societies is carefully nurtured. In the case of the post-1988 generation, those dissidents, many still in high school, who fled to the jungles in the border area exchanged the protectiveness of their parents for a different form of control and paternalism in their military superiors. Under the military structure, student soldiers were told when to wake up, what to eat and what to wear, and have virtually never in their lives had their own

money to manage and spend. In a society where groupism and activities involving the collective were strongly reinforced, new Burmese arrivals struggle with the shock of aloneness and lack of social supports never previously encountered and imagined. Simple tasks such as money management and short and long-term planning are often foreign to them, creating not only considerable stress but also significant and unnecessary misallocation of resources. The following narrative about Maung Naing illustrates the difficulties faced by community members in relating to and accessing western approaches to health and the Canadian 'system' generally. It highlights the vulnerabilities many refugees face in accessing services that are officially available to them, and the importance of utilizing various forms of social capital, in this case networks of trust, in order to access those vital services.

Narrative 3:

While attending BCOM's first Christmas party, it was brought to my attention that a member of the community was quite sick. I had approached an old friend, Maung Naing and asked how life was treating him. He immediately answered that he was not too well as he was stressed over the condition of his roommate. His roommate, Sein Myint, who was in his thirties, was at their shared apartment and was apparently in bad shape. The situation was of considerable concern to Maung Naing, who could not sleep for Sein Myint's laboured breathing at night and the apparent absence of assistance in dealing with this situation. Sein Myint had not been eating for three weeks despite Maung Naing's cooking of expensive foods like jumbo shrimp in an

effort to get him to eat. Maung Naing and others interpreted his refusal to eat as ingratitude and stubbornness, feeling that he did not appreciate their efforts. Sein Myint had long been somewhat detached from the Burmese community and thus the awareness and concern of community members was not as heightened as it might otherwise have been. From Maung Naing's description, it seemed that Sein Myint's life had been falling into disrepair for some time, with a lack of interest in maintaining the cleanliness of share and personal space as well as personal hygiene.

A Burmese Chinese physician attended to most of the Burmese in the community and had visited Sein Myint several times in the past few months. She was present at the Christmas party and I spoke with her as well concerning Sein Myint and his condition. The physician confirmed that Sein Myint was indeed a sick man; extremely anaemic and possibly psychotic (as a result of his physical condition). The last time that she had seen him, three weeks prior, she had advised him to go to emergency. Her position was one that, she could only suggest a course of action, but if it was not followed upon, it was beyond her control. Maung Naing and other friends admitted that they knew he needed to go to the hospital but that Sein Myint (who likely had not been with his senses for a considerable period of time) had not personally initiated a trip to the hospital and that they did not have a vehicle, did not speak much English, and were above all immensely intimidated by the institutional environment of the hospital. It was unfamiliar to them and given their histories as refugees under a repressive state, they were fearful of institutions generally.

As I had access to a vehicle, I determined that one way or another; Sein Myint should go the hospital as soon as possible. After the Christmas party, at around 8 pm

Maung Naing, another Burmese friend, my cousin (who is also active and interested in the welfare of the Burmese community) and I went to the apartment to get Sein Myint. When we arrived, he was sitting cross-legged on his floor, emaciated and breathing heavily with an overturned teapot beside him. He was confused to see us and did not resist when told that he was going to the hospital. Dressing him took a while and he was unable to walk by himself. We finally succeeded in getting him into the car and to the hospital emergency ward. Upon being interviewed (with a friend translating) by the registration nurse, we were told that he should have come in much sooner and that they would admit him immediately. During the interview process I noticed a large tumour-like swelling behind Sein Myint's ear. This was pointed out to the nurse and Maung Naing informed us that there had been a similar growth behind Sein Myint's other ear, which he had lanced a month earlier. One friend remained with Sein Myint overnight during the testing while the rest of us returned to the home of one of the central Burmese community members. The rest of the Burmese were genuinely shocked that Sein Myint's condition was so bad. As he had been withdrawn for a while, they had not been aware of his deterioration and had not taken seriously Maung Naing's concerns.

Simultaneous to this situation, was one in which a member of the community had gone to Regina to attend to his 24 year old cousin who was apparently terminal with an undetermined illness. Subsequent to admittance to the emergency ward, this cousin was determined to have at most a few days to live. The community member flew immediately to Regina and his arrival coincided with his cousin's last-ditch abdominal surgery. Upon the opening of the abdominal cavity, it became evident that

the cousin was full of tuberculosis. A large section of his intestine was removed in the hope that under treatment he might still recover. The knowledge that TB could travel and infect other body parts was new to most of us, and raised the possibility that it might be related to Sein Myint's case, particularly as his results seemed to indicate abdominal growths. As it was the Christmas holidays, the results on Sein Myint were slow in coming out. Over this period, and resulting from concerns over TB, Sein Myint was isolated and all visitors were made to wear masks. The Burmese community became reluctant to visit him, noting that HIV and cancer (two other potential candidates for Sein Myint's illness) did not concern them, but that they were afraid of TB. On the insistence of my mother, a nurse and active 'facilitator' of the Burmese community, they agreed that fear was not an appropriate response, and that both visitation of Sein Myint should continue and an information session should be held once results were obtained as to his diagnosis.

One of the most disturbing elements of Sein Myint's story is the presence of his family in the city who have denied him contact in response to his not fulfilling their expectations of a 'good Burmese'. His heroin use while posted in border regions with mining towns, in which drug and prostitute use is endemic, is a typical story. The time he and his family (parents and sisters) spent as refugees in India was likely largely free of needle sharing drug use (something verified by concerned friends who had lived with him in India). In Canada he has devoted himself to work – rejected by family and living with the conviction that he is a 'bad person' and probably an awareness and fear of the likelihood that he had HIV. Sein Myint has an older brother who lives in Norway, is educated and is very supportive of Sein Myint. At the request of the local Burmese

community he came to Canada to visit his brother and to see him for the first time in over a decade. He too, despite possessing a doctorate in engineering has failed to meet the family's expectations by directing his personal money towards his own education rather than support of his parents. He too, is estranged, and on his visit to Canada did not see the rest of his family. He shared his story about the guilt that both he and his brother Sein Myint carry with them for having failed their parent's expectations.

At the time of this writing, Sein Myint has tested positive for HIV. He also appears to have TB and possibly a form of lymphoma (another concern related to the growths behind his ears). With advocacy from non-Burmese, mechanisms have been put in place for psycho-social supports, looking at long term counselling, assistance with filing for employment insurance and developing a long term plan of care and general life strategizing. The Burmese community has been overall supportive of Sein Myint and his example has served as a learning experience on the realities of drug use, HIV/ AIDS and the necessity of social supports. Sein Myint, for his part, has been reunited with his brother and reassured of his unconditional support, as well as the non-judgemental support of the broader Burmese community.

5.8 Patterns of Settlement

5.8.1

Housing

Over the period of 1986 to 2000, Winnipeg homes averaged an increase in price of 23.6%, compared to faster growing cities like Calgary (125.2%), Vancouver (166.5%) and Toronto (91.8%)[33]. The ability of newcomers to establish themselves through securing adequate housing has been identified by researchers as indicative of their level of adjustment and integration (Chambon et al, 1997). In their search for adequate housing, Chambon et al. suggest that newcomers are likely to experience multiple aspects of disadvantage. These range from 'race' (or skin colour), gender and class (socio-economic status). In the first and last of these disadvantages particularly, the Burmese in both urban settings appear to have been subject. Of all the categories of immigrants, refugees stand as those most likely to experience the greatest disadvantages in accessing adequate housing (Chambon et al, 1997). In the context of Toronto particularly, lower income immigrants are essentially restricted to the rental market. This is not necessarily the case in Winnipeg, where even very low-income members of the Burmese community were able to pool resources and purchase a large (although lower quality) house. In Toronto vacancy rates have been between 1 and 2% over the past several decades, and less than 10% of this is non-profit and government owned social housing (Chambon et al, 1997). While the rates in Winnipeg might be cheaper, the question of whether the housing itself is comparable is questionable. As the Social Planning Council of

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Frontier Centre for Public Policy (2002). http://www.fcpp.org/pdf

Winnipeg notes, Winnipeg has some of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada, and is the child poverty capital of Canada[34]. Additionally, the waiting list for Manitoba Housing buildings has increased 93% from 2000 to 2003. The Burmese community is mainly concentrated in what have been recognized as seven of the most distressed neighbourhoods in Winnipeg[1] (City of Winnipeg Social Development Committee 1995). With only 4.2% of Winnipeg's total population, the The "distressed seven" neighbourhoods include the West Broadway, William Whyte, Spence, Centennial, West Alexander, North Point Douglas, and Lord Selkirk Park Neighbourhood Characterization Areas. These neighbourhoods are characterized by very high levels of poverty, high unemployment and crime rates, low educational attainment, etc (City of Winnipeg Social Development Committee 1995). Please refer to Figures 4-7 in this chapter for maps of Burmese settlement patterns in the two cities studied. The plotting of community concentration was based on personal communication with key informants and interviewees.

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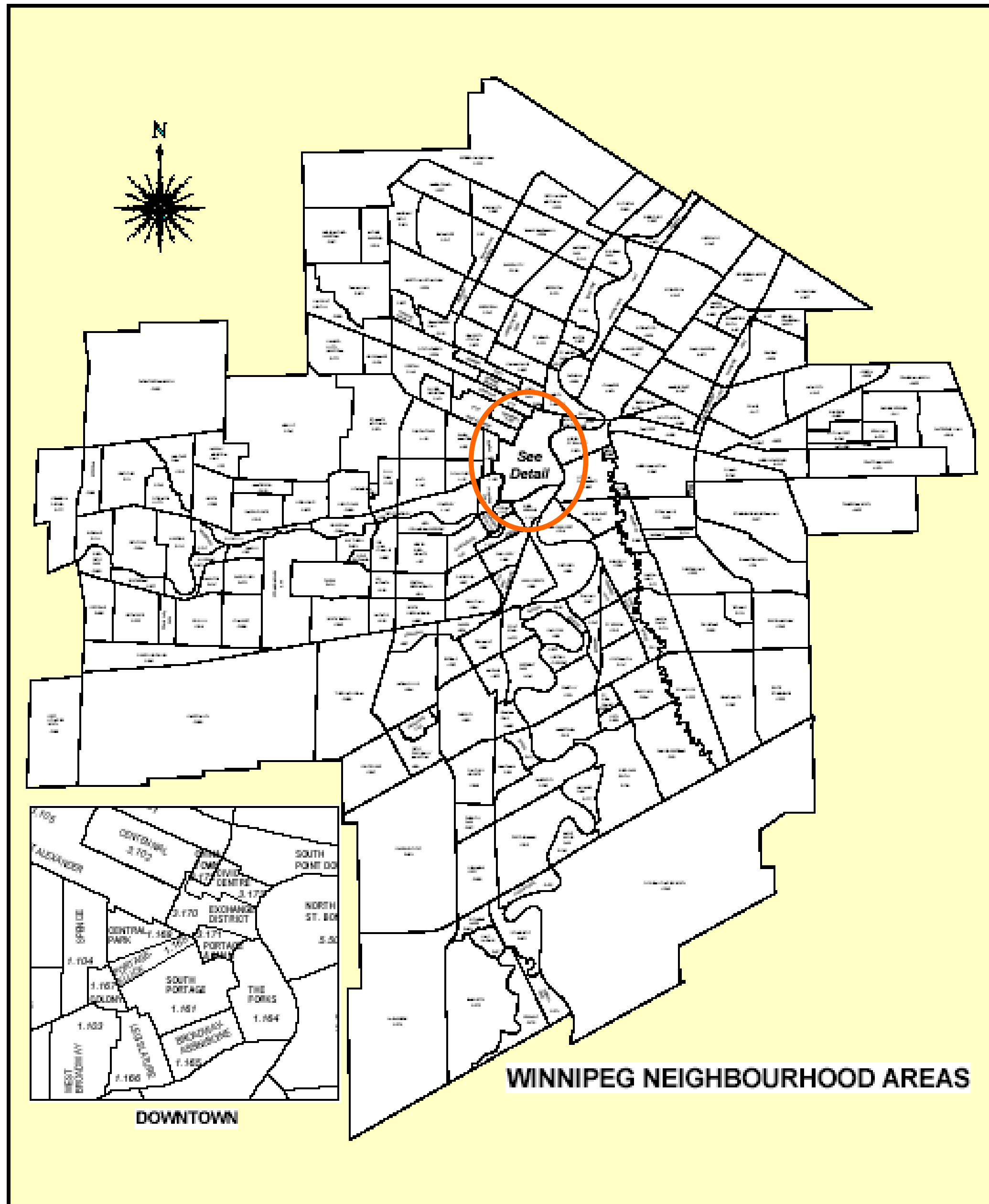
[34] 1998 - http://www.spcw.mb.ca/reference/doc_childpov98.html#3

Figure 4

Map of Winnipeg and Burmese Concentration

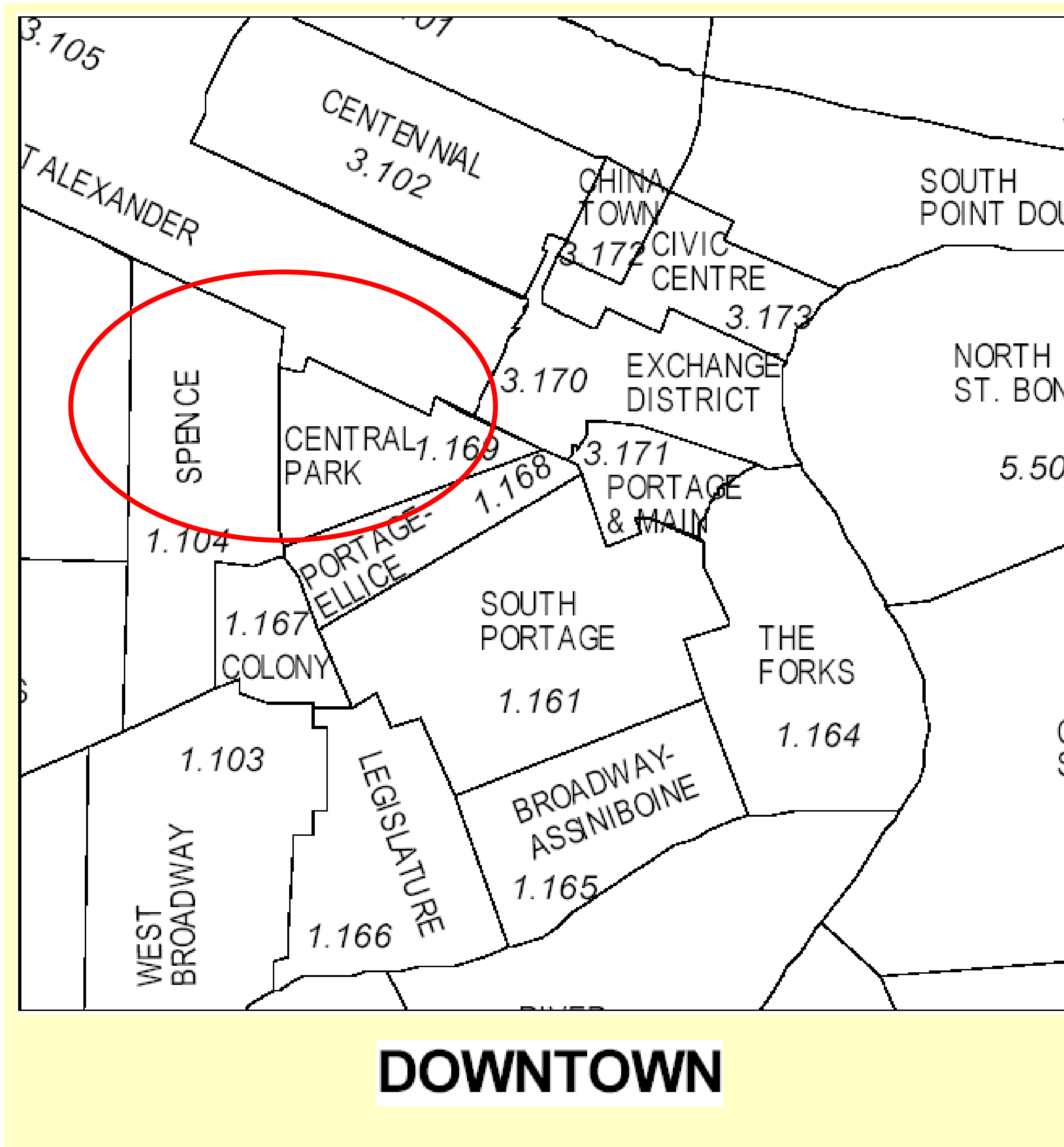


http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/Area_Char.PDF
Winnipeg.ca – Planning, Property and Development

– Area of residential concentration recent Burmese immigrants

Figure 5

Map of Downtown Winnipeg and Burmese Concentration

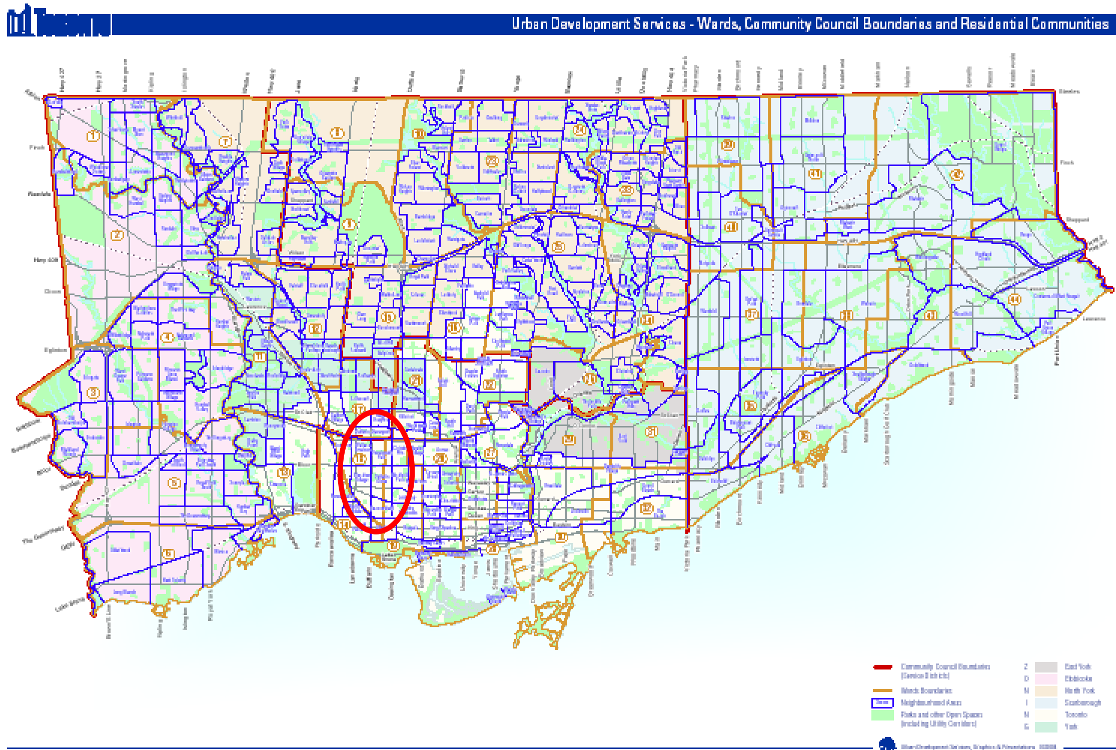


Winnipeg.ca – Planning, Property and Development
http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/Area_Char.PDF

—— Main area of residential concentration of recent Burmese immigrants in Winnipeg

Figure 6

Map of Toronto and Burmese Concentration



http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/torontomaps/pdf/hoods2004.pdf

Primary area of residence - Burmese population

Figure 7

Map of Downtown Toronto and Burmese Concentration

http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/torontomaps/pdf/hoods2004.pdf

Main area of residential concentration for recent Burmese immigrants in Toronto

5.9
Integration and Immigrant Settlement

David Ley argues that residential segregation is not in itself sufficient in capturing the multidimensional nature of isolation among immigrants (2000). He identifies a series of integration indicators that happen to be highly correlated to residential segregation. These indicators include occupational segregation, residential segregation, non-official mother tongue use at home and ethnic in-marriage. Ley notes that occupational segregation, the concentration of ethnic minorities in specific parts of the labour market, is highly correlated to patterns of residential segregation. Social life is closely tied to residential proximity and that minorities are more likely to draw upon social networks from their in-group. This is, of course, compounded by limited ability to speak the official languages, which also clearly restricts social interactions to the same immigrant group. Finally, ethnic intermarriage is seen to represent a decisive stage in the process of social integration. Ley indicates that with the exception of a few anomalies, Asian-origin minorities show higher levels of isolation and segregation on all measures. Given these indicators, I felt it to be useful to attempt to situate the Burmese communities within Ley's framework of integration (see Table 11). According to Ley's criteria, the Burmese in Canada would be poorly integrated, although if this were to be disaggregated on the basis of specific communities, there are clear differences with the Winnipeg community appearing better integrated. Researchers have argued that one of the key indicators of integration within the mainstream society is the number of relationships held with non-co-ethnics. Breton claimed that cultural integration could be viewed in terms of increasing contacts with non-co-ethnics, a vital source of information regarding

mainstream Canadian culture. These non-co-ethnic social connections facilitate access to services, social institutions and occupations and are considered extremely important in acquiring necessary cultural knowledge (Breton, 1990).

Based on discussions, it would seem that the Winnipeg Burmese community overall had greater resources in terms of non-co-ethnic social networks. This may in part be due to the fact that several of them were sponsored by faith-based groups that have continued to maintain contact with these members. Of the Toronto community, the mainly Buddhist Burmans interviewed were government sponsored. In Winnipeg (and as I later found in Ottawa), there was a considerable number of faith-based sponsorship by churches of Christian ethnic minorities from Burma. Once a relationship has been formed between refugees and a Canadian based faith group, there has seemed to be continued interest in sponsoring other members of the same ethnic/ religious group – mainly family members of previously sponsored refugees. The relationships between church groups and refugees appear to be very positive and are a source of great pride and support for the refugee communities that they assist. There is however some degree of resentment from the non-Christian refugees who see themselves as being denied the same levels of engagement. I must also note that I and subsequently my extended family members have maintained close contacts with the Winnipeg group for much of its existence, attempting to act as advocates, meet with their family members during trips to Burma, fill out incorporation forms, arrange meetings with community leaders, etc. Even these limited contacts seem to have made considerable differences in terms of the confidence and sense of empowerment experienced by the respective communities, to have 'someone in their corner' so to speak. The Toronto community by comparison seemed very much to be

exclusively reliant upon their own members, and while there were a handful of charismatic community leaders who commanded considerable respect, these were not necessarily people with the skills or ability to promote improved community integration within broader Canadian society. Given that there seemed an absence of well qualified and successfully integrated individuals that remained willing to continue their affiliations with the stigmatized 'students', the community seemed to be equally poorly poised to attain upward mobility particularly in terms of the labour market.

DeVoretz comments on the potential paths taken by communities, although I object to his implication that the ethnic enclave community members were willfully doing less than they could to promote their own integration and success,

> When an Asian immigrant group which is linguistically distinct from its host population enters a country such as Canada that immigrant group faces a difficult choice. It can attempt to learn the host country's language and open for themselves a wider labour and housing market. On the other hands, the immigrant can shirk from this linguistic task and accept an enclave with cheap ethnic goods (linguistically friendly media and consumer goods) and face lower income and employment prospects. (DeVoretz, 2003: 4)

This idea of 'shirking the linguistic tasks and accepting an enclave' can conversely be interpreted in light of the discussion above, to be a development of institutional completeness and social capital. By definition institutional completeness infers the development of boundaries excluding those for whom the ethnic-specific services do not apply. The Toronto community in that sense has developed some form of social capital and institutional completeness, which is evident through its enclave tendencies. The question which DeVoretz's commentary poses, is whether this form of institutional completeness is desirable considering the tradeoffs which it implies.

To further flesh out Ley's framework of integration, the anecdote below provides insight into the degree to which inter-ethnic relationships are perceived to be unlikely, and how this, and the skewed gender demographics within the Burmese communities, shape gender and family considerations. The consequences of overlooking demographic imbalances are not to be underestimated – the below story highlights the extent to which demographics reshape communities and even individual identities.

Narrative 4:

Ko Aye related to me an interesting phenomena that appeared to be occurring throughout several Burmese communities in Canada, and is related in part to the distortion of Burmese refugee demographics, as well as the difficulties in integration and interaction with non-co-ethnics. As has been argued elsewhere in this paper, the official statistics of gender demographics for the Burmese in Canada do not seem to reflect the reality. Despite the official portrayal of relative comparability on the basis of gender, anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise. Ko Aye described the impacts of the gender imbalance as having several notable effects. First, given the preponderance of single men in their early to mid-thirties (the student generation), there have simply not been enough women to go around. In certain communities, and Vancouver was one of the communities indicated, there was suggested to be considerable 'recycling' of relationships in a manner quite contrary to the morals and norms of traditional Burmese society. Men would actively pursue and attempt to seduce married women. The 'normal' societal boundaries that would proscribe close interaction with married individuals of the

opposite sex were apparently being eroded. The marriage breakdown rate was suggested (and this has not been empirically validated) to be very high. Interestingly, this was suggested to be the case among ethnic Burmans and not among the ethnic minority groups.

A second point that was made by Ko Aye, with reference to the shortage of women, was the necessity in exploring alternative 'arrangements'. In his own case this was evidenced in being a self-proclaimed bisexual. In his very pragmatic logic, Ko Aye had been advising members of the community that since there simply were not enough women that they should begin to 'look at other men.' Ko Aye, in his own case, claimed that his bisexuality was a conscious decision resulting from insufficient partners of the opposite sex. Unlike Burma's neighbour, Thailand, homosexuality does not have a tradition of being accepted within broader society. It has a very negative connotation within Burmese culture and the aversion to it is outspoken and aggressive. It seems that Ko Aye has only been able to maintain his standing within the community as a result of a long history of earned respect and high standing. This does not seem to be the case with others demonstrating homosexual tendencies – other cases seem very much to have been ostracized. This narrative has been presented for two reasons. First, to suggest the alterations undertaken by the Canadian Burmese communities as a result of demographic imbalances are potentially leading to rather extreme behavioural patterns. Second, to highlight the degree to which integration, and the consideration of partners from non-co-ethnic groups, appears to be a challenge, this may be because the community itself has not found adequate social outlets for community building with other groups, be they refugee/immigrant organisations or other ethno-cultural groups.

Below is a table representing the placement of the Burmese communities in Ley's (2000) framework of integration indicators.

Table 11:
Segregation of Respective Burmese Communities

	Winnipeg	**Toronto**
Occupational Segregation	-relatively high clustering at bottom rungs of labour market - jobs had generally been sought and found independent of other co-ethnic members (this had been the case up until the arrival of more recent members, perhaps due to the self-selection of Burmese remaining in Winnipeg desiring to remain free from the 'complications' associated with the Burmese community. Now appears to be changing with greater reliance of co-ethnic community member contacts.	- very high degree of occupational segregation with majority of members working for a handful of employers, ie. factories, butchers, furniture manufacturers
Residential Segregation	- originally dispersed, but due to joint purchase of housing, members have begun to cluster in this inner city area (ie. Sargent and Young St. area). As stated above, original members had generally sought to avoid over-reliance on other members. Again with new arrivals this dynamic appears to be changing.	- highly clustered in Landsdowne, Dufferin neighbourhoods. -several Burmese shops also exist in this neighbourhood allowing almost all interactions to be conducted within co-ethic community
Non-official language use at home	- majority of Burmese are single males, but Burmese or ethnic minority languages being the language spoken among close	- Burmese spoken almost exclusively in households as well as in the neighbourhoods.

	friends, community members	
Ethnic inter-marriage	- no cases	- unaware of any cases

5.10

Experiences and Impressions of Burmese in Respective Communities

A number of impressions were shared by the Burmese surveyed, but for all the benefits and shortcomings perceived in Winnipeg and Toronto, there seemed to be a fundamental cost- benefit choice; Winnipeg was seen to offer superior service provision and perhaps more opportunities, while Toronto offered the security of an ethnic enclave, with social and economic support as well as shielding from racism and discrimination. The concerns raised by the Burmese communities exhibited great similarities. While there was the distinct impression that the Winnipeg community, being self-selected in the sense that they are the few who have been initially settled in Winnipeg and decided to stay, were in some respects less dependent on the social supports of a larger Burmese community, these individuals may not be representative of a more typical sample. In attempting to account for the differences in outlook, innovation and adaptability, there are a number of reoccurring themes.

5.10.1

Discrimination

> Racism and racial discrimination are facts of life in Canada. They exist openly and blatantly in the attitudes and actions of individuals. They exist privately in the fears, in the prejudices and stereotypes held by many people, and in plain ignorance. And they exist in our institutions. (Canada, Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State Multiculturalism and Citizenship, 1989:3)

Discrimination proved to be a significant hurdle in both communities. Some participants were cautious about pointing to racism as the source of their exclusion from mainstream society, seeing their own limited language skills as the likely cause. Other participants appeared frustrated with the attempts to present a ‘polite’ and whitewashed depiction of their experiences. While it was clear that language presented a formidable barrier, it seemed that systemic and widespread forces of exclusion were also at play. It was noted that discrimination, while occurring in various fields, was most detrimental when affecting livelihood and employment. At lower levels of the wage scale, the discrimination encountered seemed relatively mild, but those members of communities with education and skills, capable of acquiring higher level positions felt that the discrimination was considerable, and in fact, in several instances, intolerable. In these cases, the individuals referred to had medical backgrounds and came upon the same complaint expressed by other immigrant groups – the lack of recognition of credentials. These qualified individuals have either struggled considerably for recognition within their fields, or in a Winnipeg case, left for a position in more ethnically diverse Toronto. The metaphorical glass ceiling appears to be met much more quickly in the less cosmopolitan Winnipeg with respect to job mobility. In cases of highly educated and skilled Burmese

in Winnipeg, there have been explicit examples of discrimination whereupon they have been informed that only ‘whites’ could hold certain high-ranking positions. Other individuals who have experienced the higher levels of the employment market in both Winnipeg and Toronto, remarked that they were capable of reaching much higher positions in the more multicultural Toronto than would have been possible in Winnipeg. A number of studies have indicated that recent immigrants experience a considerable income penalty (Pendakur and Pendakur 1996, Ley, 1999) with almost triple the number of recent immigrants falling beneath the low-income cutoff than the rest of the population. For those immigrants who did not have high school graduate status, did not speak English at home, were female and were of non-European ethnicity, these conditions worsened considerably (Ley, 1999).

With respect to discrimination on a day-to-day basis, there were a surprising (particularly for me, given that I am from Winnipeg) number of cases of racial prejudice and discrimination among the Winnipeg Burmese community. Ranging from physical assaults in shopping centres, to being suspiciously watched and followed in stores, it is safe to say that this particular community has indeed been subjected to discrimination at multiple levels. This discrimination is perhaps more easily discernible with the Winnipeg group, where language skills and cultural adaptation are well developed and therefore less of an excuse for discriminatory treatment. It was difficult to ascertain the degree of day to day discrimination faced by the Toronto community, first due to language barriers, and secondly due to their ability, living and working in close-knit ethnic communities, to avoid excess interaction with non-coethnics. Nonetheless, the fact that there have been a number of cases of Burmese immigrants assaulting employers and in several instances,

police officers that they believed to be treating them unfairly, suggests a perception of persecution. It would seem that all things being equal, Toronto offers greater respite from day to day discrimination as well as structural discrimination experienced most acutely at the higher levels of employment. In one sense this is directly related to the Burmese ethnic enclave it contains, but particularly with respect to higher levels of employment, may relate to a greater tolerance of diversity inherent in a much more multicultural environment.

The following story describes the discriminatory experiences of one of the members of the Winnipeg Burmese community. It provides insight into various contested definitions of identity – Steve, a Chinese Burmese, considers himself Chinese, but finds himself excluded by the Chinese community in Winnipeg. Likewise, feeling discriminated against by the broader Canadian society, he is labelled and ostracised as a Chinese or simply as a generic, and non-belonging, 'Asian'.

Narrative 5:

Steve Chow arrived in Winnipeg in 1988. He had been accepted as an economic immigrant and had subsequently sponsored his wife under the family class of immigrant. Despite her being a practicing medical doctor, the Canadian immigration system was not particularly interested in admitting physicians, and she would therefore not qualify as an economic immigrant. Having graduated with a BSc in physics while in Burma, and being a successful proprietor of businesses, Steve Chow was one of the few economic immigrants to arrive from Burma in the past several decades. His reason for leaving was the institutional discrimination he faced as a

‘Chinese’ in Burma. Despite having been preceded by several generations in Burma, Chinese Burmese like Steve were denied full citizenship and considered, like many of the ethnic Chinese throughout Southeast Asia, to be perpetual outsiders. The Chinese that Steve spoke was minimal, and the business that he conducted was almost entirely with Burmese.

Once in Canada, Steve and his wife felt excluded from the Chinese community, their families having lived for generations in a ‘barbarian’ land. Steve acquired an MBA from the University of Western Ontario and his wife struggled with the various accreditation obstacles to becoming a qualified family physician in Canada. Steve and his wife eventually sponsored her brother, who had also been a respected physician in Burma, but he found the discriminatory obstacles to becoming accredited and establishing a practice in Winnipeg to be too much. He moved to Toronto where he found the employment situation to be much more tolerable. While their experiences, education and political interests were very different from the core group of Burmese in Winnipeg, some 10 years after living in Canada, and feeling entirely devoid of a social network and relationships with the broader community, they began to attend events organized by the informal Winnipeg Burmese community.

Steve and his wife felt caught between multiple worlds. They felt the repeated sting of discrimination. She within the workplace experienced a glass ceiling to the level at which she could participate. He, within the business world, and also, to varying degrees, in day-to-day life in Canada, felt persecuted. One event that he clearly recalls involved being assaulted in one of the larger Winnipeg malls. A young white man deliberately walked into his path while he was walking through the mall, and punched

him strongly in the shoulder, telling him to "go back to China." Shocked and outraged, Steve called 911 on his cell phone as he followed the individual, to report the assault. The man turned on him, punching him repeatedly, and while Steve called for help from passers-by no one offered assistance. Steve's assessment of the situation was that in Burma, they were subject to institutional discrimination, while the broader Burmese society was always polite and respectful. In Canada, despite proclaimed institutional tolerance and celebration of multiculturalism, the broader public has little desire to embrace cultural/ ethnic difference.

5.11
Accessing of Services

Service provision and the capacity of the Burmese communities to access it has presented itself as one of the greatest challenges facing the Burmese in Canada. Winnipeg, for those who lived there, received high ratings in terms of the settlement services provided upon arrival. This is true more so for the more recent arrivals than for the first few government sponsors placed in Winnipeg. Upon the gradual development of a core community of Burmese in the city, new arrivals were increasingly met at the airport by Burmese, at the request of Manitoba Interfaith Immigration, and assisted in initial orientation. While the involvement of the Burmese community in providing culturally appropriate supports for new arrivals is voluntary and without compensation, and may demonstrate a positive example of coordination between a service provision agency and a relatively compact ethnic community, it also demonstrates the development of a 'shadow sector' filling the gaps of the settlement service sector.

In the following example, a personal narrative of arrival in Canada presents often-repeated themes of confusion, neglect and impersonality. While the institutional completeness of the Winnipeg Burmese community has since attempted to ensure that similarly stressful situations are avoided, their efforts are uncompensated and external to formal service provision. This example demonstrates the need for either a more effectively coordinated formal service provision system, or an accounting for the shadow sector, which is informally being developed to meet the obvious needs of newly arrived refugees.

Narrative 6:

Maung Maung Kyi was one of the first Burmese refugees to arrive in Winnipeg. He came in 1996 as a government sponsored refugee, directly from Bangkok where he had been living for a number of years since he fled Burma in 1988. Maung Maung Kyi had not particularly wished to come to Canada, nor to leave Thailand, but given his continuing political activities, the Thai intelligence were making it clear that he would once again be imprisoned. Fearing the possibility of deportation to Burma, Maung Maung Kyi sought refugee status through the UNHCR, and began applying for asylum through various embassies. Accepted by Canada, which he knew virtually nothing about, he was told that he would be going to Winnipeg. Shown the dot on a map he asked what 'Winnipeg' was like, and was told that it was 'like the inside of a freezer'. He believed the embassy official to be joking.

Maung Maung Kyi arrived in Winnipeg's international airport alone and in the middle of the night. He had only the clothes that he had been wearing upon leaving

Bangkok, had no passport (only refugee documents) and no money. Maung Maung Kyi's English was also quite limited. At –40C it happened to be the coldest day on record that February, and Maung Maung Kyi, finding no one waiting to meet him, went outside in his short-sleeved shirt to smoke. It did not last long. After waiting for close to an hour, he approached a security personnel. She could not understand his situation and kept asking to see a passport. Finally, she lent him 25 cents to call Welcome Place, the settlement service agency, which subsequently dispatched someone to pick him up.

In Toronto, the initial arrival and adjustment period seemed to be less effectively coordinated, and it seemed that few of the people surveyed felt that their initial orientation to life in Canada was adequate. Many of them were secondary migrants originally placed in other communities (London, Ontario or Ottawa among others) and moved to Toronto as soon as the opportunity presented itself. The primary service provider is COSTI where there is one Burmese councillor on staff. Generally, however, the preference clearly seemed to be to seek support from co-ethnic informal support networks. The councillor was not able to provide definitive reasons for this tendency, but suggested that it was a combination of limited education, lack of experience with formal service provision and lack of awareness of existing formal supports, in addition to a deep suspicion of institutions and of those (including himself) who were not within their immediate circles of contact. Consistently the Burmese interviewed in Toronto stated that there had been no real orientation, and other than ESL classes they were provided with no skills or adjustment training relevant to life in Canada. Perhaps most telling was the statement of one Toronto individual that they, "understand maybe thirty percent" of what

was going on around them in Canadian society. Through the course of this study it has become evident that in Toronto, there is clearly great need and that this need is not harnessing existing support services. The Burmese councillor employed at COSTI stated that the primary constraint responsible for the gap between the Burmese community and formal service sector was the unwillingness of the different levels of government to provide greater funding for such a statistically small population group. This begs the question as to why the mainstream services are not sufficient. This thesis suggests that the answer is twofold. First, there exist limitations inherent in the community and related to pre-migration context. As discussed in Chapter 3, these include tendencies towards suspicion and distrust, and away from community organizations and institutional structures. Also, given the limited education and 'life in the jungle' experiences of many of this group, they are simply unaware of the benefits to which they may be entitled. Second, very few communities appear to exist solely on 'mainstream supports' provided in Canada's official languages. Where immigrants arrive not speaking either English or French, in most cases, there are often written materials in their native language or a language with which they are familiar. This does not exist in the case of the Burmese, up to the present there are no existing materials related to settlement services in Canada provided in the Burmese language. This is hopefully beginning to change – the Burmese Community Organization of Manitoba (BCOM) whose formation was an indirect result of this thesis research has been awarded funding for the translation and printing of 'Welcome to Canada[35]' packages in the Burmese language. Finally, in general, statistically larger immigrant communities possess a greater diversity of skills and

[35] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/welcome/wel%2D07e.html

experiences and therefore offer greater institutional completeness. The greater range and scope of other larger communities is in contrast to the similarity of experience and length of stay in Canada demonstrated by Burmese immigrants in Canada. The various subgroups that arrive come through similar channels and tend to remain in neatly divided groups offering little support and compensation to the strengths and weaknesses of other subgroups. This thesis suggests that greater statistical numbers will yield greater representativeness and will serve to smooth out the rather abrupt divisions that are currently present in Burmese populations.

It must be noted however, that as relatively positive as the assessments were of Winnipeg, the community living there was, perhaps, as mentioned, exceptional. Related to me several times as their reasons for remaining in Winnipeg despite the lack of a sizeable Burmese community and the 'bad weather', were their desires to a) avoid speaking exclusively Burmese, b) avoid the 'trouble' of the Burmese community in Toronto (ie. perceived social tensions and substance abuse) in favour of quieter Winnipeg, c) a genuine desire to integrate into Canadian society, and d) a sense of already belonging to a broader community in Winnipeg. While not yet declaring themselves to 'be Canadian', many of the Winnipeg Burmese admitted that they did not feel entirely Burmese either. The process of 'hyphenation' and multiple identities seemed more developed among these individuals. Another exceptional characteristic of the Winnipeg community was their ability to cooperate and operate collectively as a community regardless of ethnicity or ideology. With the exception of a few earlier Burmese economic immigrants that did not identify with the more recent wave of migrants, there were regular events and gatherings in which all participated. At the time

of this thesis being written, the Winnipeg Burmese community had undergone incorporation and was beginning to devise strategies for future community-based endeavours ranging from lobbying at the municipal and provincial levels and acting collectively as a sponsoring agency for family members to examining economic opportunities as a group. The development of the Winnipeg Burmese community appears very positive, and while the experiences of some members have been exceedingly trying, they appear for whatever reasons (self-selected individuals or structural) to be adapting successfully to the Canadian context.

The Toronto community on the other hand, appears to be struggling with little immediately apparent opportunity for amelioration of conditions. While the Toronto community is more diverse than the Winnipeg community, which is primarily single men whereas Toronto has more families and generational/ gender representativeness, the Toronto community seems insulated from broader society in a way that appears to be hindering their opportunities for advancement and integration. The combined impact of the ‘ethnic enclave’ where all appear to have similarly limited knowledge of the broader system and lack of ties with non-co-ethnics, the lack of comprehensive orientation and front-loading of skills and training has led to a community being excluded from vital social networks.

In both communities there is significant evidence of a 'shadow sector' providing uncompensated services to newcomers independent of official NGO settlement assistance. The lack of Burmese speaking staff at service delivery agencies is a serious deterrent for those, and they are by far the majority, who are not comfortable with the official languages. Similar to the findings of Jennifer Hyndman in a study of Burmese in

Vancouver, it became apparent that hundreds of volunteer hours have been provided to Burmese newcomers to assist with translation in accessing medical services, locating suitable housing and communicating with landlords and building managers (BDO, 1996). This resonates with the research of Rachael Zacharias Bezanson on Afghan communities in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. She remarked on cultural values that propelled new arrivals to seek the support and assistance of existing co-ethnic networks rather than formal organizations, particularly where language was an issue. Respondents in that study clearly felt more comfortable utilising social capital among friends, family or acquaintances as opposed to booking an appointment at a service provision agency. She notes as well, the stress that such social networks may place on families and relationships as a result of hospitality obligations (Zacharias Bezanson, 2003b). This would parallel experiences of Burmese communities in Winnipeg and Toronto, where several members act as ‘hubs’ of social support, at times even jokingly referred to as the local UNHCR. One participant noted however, that even if there were sources of funding to reimburse members for their efforts, that as a matter of cultural pride, no Burmese would likely feel comfortable accepting payment for a culturally expected ‘contribution’ to the community’s welfare. This raises the question of whether there is a need for a shift in perception within the Burmese communities regarding this informal service provision and the appropriateness of receiving compensation, in order to achieve greater institutional completeness.

5.12
Social Capital and Community Organizations

There is a saying among Burmese, "Wherever there are two Burmese, there will be three organizations." I have taken this to suggest in one sense the Burmese enthusiasm for organization forming, and in another, their self-described inability to work together. This interesting dialectic, while seen by Burmese in part to be a source of pride, and simultaneously their downfall, upon closer observation does not appear to be all that unique. Joshua Hoyt writes,

> For the past twenty-five years I have been a professional organizer…through the years I have heard endlessly repeated how difficult it is to organize in the (fill in the blank) community. Often the complaint comes from outsiders, bemoaning the lack of activism or the conservatism of this or that community. Even more often, though, the refrain comes from within the community itself…(2003:38)

Hoyt goes on to explore what he refers to as the 'universals' in community organizing. The first of these 'universals' is the importance of institutions. As he sees it, community institutions are the space within which leadership is fostered, information shared, and relationships are built in such a way as to withstand the individualistic isolation he argues to be prevalent in the West. "Effective organizing in immigrant communities is done with and by the institutions and leaders that the communities have created for themselves, and respects their agenda and self-interests" (Hoyt, 2003:40).

In Winnipeg, up until the time of the Burmese Community Organization of Manitoba formation, there was no formal organization of Burmese immigrants. Some community members belonged to various transnational ethnic and political organizations, but there were no local, geographically based community organizations. This is not to

suggest that there was no latent social capital. There was and it manifested itself in a variety of ways. Several years prior to this study, several members of the community had pooled their resources and had been able to purchase affordable, inner-city housing. This shared housing, including a family with several small children, and a single, early immigrant to the community, became a central meeting place for all other members, eventually leading to other members finding apartments and housing in near vicinity to the house. One of the unique characteristics of this household was that it was inter-ethnic and inter-religious, in a context and among people who stated that they would not have shared company if it were not for economic necessity and the small size of the Winnipeg community. Virtually all members of the Burmese community in Winnipeg would take part in several annual events (Burmese New Year, summertime trips to the beach) organized by one of the earlier, central members. These events, again, cut through ethnicity, religion and immigration status, and were defined by their apolitical nature.

The Burmese community in Toronto has appeared to be more stratified and fragmented. Based on interviews and conversations with individuals in Toronto, a system of categories and sub-categories of identity and groupings began to emerge. There were first and foremost, the pre-1988 arrivals, which were rather strictly and diametrically opposed to those arriving after 1988. One of several organizations existing in Ontario and operating out of Toronto is the 'Burma Canadian Association of Ontario.' This was described to me as representing primarily the interests of Burmese Canadians who had been in Canada for a relatively long time, generally since the 1960s and 70s. These individuals were almost entirely economic immigrants, generally skilled professionals, and bearing no explicit opposition to the Burmese government. It was apparent that there

exists a considerable chasm between this pre-1988 group and the more recent refugee wave. There exists generational, class, educational and primarily political differences between the two groups. With respect to the earlier economic immigrants, the post-1988 'students' are viewed as uncouth, provincial and essentially troublemakers. There is little if any overlap between the refugees and the organisation of the earlier Burmese Canadians.

In addition to this primary categorical division, there is yet another fissure. This time largely within the pre-1988 immigrants. As is the case in most of Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese in Burma fostered ethnic enclaves, struggled to maintain cultural identity and were subjected to exclusionary policies by the central government. Subsequently, Chinese Burmese have evacuated the country in various waves since the 1960s. With a dual sense of identity, both as Chinese and as coming from Burma, the resettled Chinese Burmese have found themselves unwelcomed by either community, and have thus, in larger centres such as Toronto, formed their own communities and organizations.

Several organizations exist, primarily related to the interests of broader Canadian society and Burmese academics in lobbying against human rights abuses in Burma. The largest of these is Canadian Friends of Burma, based in Ottawa, but with members and affiliated activities throughout Canada and including Toronto. The Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma is another such organization, serving an important purpose, yet without much relevance for or interaction with Burmese refugees and their day to day needs in Toronto. More representative of the post-1988 generation is the Burmese Students Democratic Organization (BSDO), based out of Toronto. In conducting research in Toronto, the BSDO was the primary organization with which

contacts were established, and it became clear that it represented at its core, the Burmese 'students', particularly those deeply committed to their identities as revolutionaries opposing the Burmese regime. While there appeared to be strong leadership and activism within this organization, it was directed more at the situation in Burma and its border areas, and not as much to community building or self-help. Again, as discussed previously, ethnic lines run deeply in many Burmese communities, and the BSDO is primarily representative of ethnic Burmans, although there are numerous exceptions. A series of small, more or less informal, ethnic organizations exist in Toronto and other large cities where ethnic minorities concentrate. It became starkly apparent that there did not exist any forms of organization devoted to supporting the integration process of Burmese in Toronto, to bridging ethnic divides, or to overcoming the significant cultural and linguistic barriers that they faced. The one Burmese settlement counsellor in Toronto, for reasons relating to lifestyle choice, struggled to establish an open rapport between him and members of the Burmese refugee community. They do not appear to be accessing existing services and there is very limited institutional capacity within the community to provide for their needs otherwise. The question is once again raised of how these pressing needs might be met? Clearly, an investment of resources needs to occur in order to involve members of the post-1988 Burmese community in culturally and linguistically appropriate settlement service provision. Additionally, however, and perhaps most importantly, there remains the question of the value and process of cultivating institutional capacity within the community so as that it can begin to meet its own needs.

The final vignette is provided in order to spotlight the experiences of members of the Burmese communities who have been sponsored through the World University

Services of Canada WUSC program. From my research it appears that a significant number of Burmese refugees are coming through WUSC, but the limited social support these refugees received suggests that there is still a dire need for greater community-based resources and service functions. In the cases of the WUSC sponsored refugees, there is perhaps a need for professional refugee support service providers to oversee the process or at least be available for consultation.

Narrative 7:

A number of the Burmese in Canada have arrived via the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) refugee sponsorship programme. These group-sponsored refugees have particular stories and experiences that merit illumination. WUSC is an NGO that operates in universities throughout Canada and is a sponsorship agreement holder with the government of Canada, enabling its various branches to sponsor refugees and support them according to that university group's interests. As a previously active member in one of the Winnipeg WUSC groups, I feel able to speak to the challenges being faced by these groups, and the refugees they sponsor. In this narrative, I will present the experiences of three individuals who arrived among the same annual 'sponsorees' of different WUSC groups.

Sha Reh, 22, contacted me after he had been in Canada for several months. He had been sponsored by a WUSC group in Edmonton, and had come to Canada with 3 other Burmese who had been placed in Winnipeg, Toronto and Ottawa respectively (2 out of the 3, including Sha Reh, were ethnic minorities). I had known Sha Reh from my stay in the border refugee camps years prior and had lived with his mother and sisters, coming to

see them as family. Sha Reh had, throughout that time, been living in another refugee camp to pursue his education. I did not know Sha Reh as well as the rest of his family, but there was certainly a feeling on my part that I had responsibilities towards Sha Reh. He contacted me in November 2002 and while communication in English over the phone was difficult, it was apparent that the culture shock was intense and that he was struggling with isolation and the radical change in circumstance. As my family was based in Winnipeg, we convinced him to allow us to bring him to Winnipeg for the Christmas break. His English was clearly limited and the Edmonton WUSC group had apparently sponsored him despite the fact that he had not succeeded in passing the Test of English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) required to be admitted to university. He was attempting to complete several high school courses with the hope of being able to apply to university in the future. Staying with my family, it was clear that he was craving human contact. He always seemed to be wherever other people were. Despite being a shy, reserved person, he said that he spoke more in the two weeks in Winnipeg than he had in the preceding two months. Before coming to Winnipeg, he admitted that he had been desperate and that there had appeared to be no hope. No one understood him or appeared to care, and he felt entirely alone. He spent his nights wandering the streets of downtown Edmonton. Upon being introduced to the Winnipeg Burmese community, he began to be aware of opportunities to move to other, more conducive centres, and said that he began to see hope. He felt renewed enough to return and continue with his paid education in Edmonton. I spoke several times with the student head of the local WUSC committee responsible for Sha Reh. While she seemed sincere in her desire to help him, it was difficult for her to appreciate where he was coming from. She had difficulty in

communicating ideas to him, and preferred if I could act as a go-between for the more important communications.

At the time of this writing, Sha Reh is still in Edmonton and has been admitted to university. He is particularly lucky in that his WUSC committee sponsors refugees for their entire degree programme (pays tuition for 4 years). Sha Reh has made numerous trips to Winnipeg to stay with my parents and visit his Burmese friends there. He claims that without the support from the Winnipeg community and my family, he doesn't think he could have survived. He says that he was mentally and emotionally near to the edge. My mother has also made one trip so far to the refugee camps to visit Sha Reh's mother and reassure her that her son would be all right. The two mothers have since developed a close friendship.

Soe Tun, 20, was sponsored by a Winnipeg WUSC committee and came at the same as Sha Reh. Soe Tun is an ethnic Burman and is very sociable and outgoing, typical of gregarious Burmese culture. He appeared to be adjusting very well to life in Canada and his academic programme at university. He spent a lot of time with the Burmese community and was able to establish friendships with non-Burmese at school as well. Having the WUSC local committee cover his tuition and residence at the university for the first year seemed to work very well for Soe Tun. Towards the end of his first year, however, the situation had changed. The WUSC funding ceased and Soe Tun was denied a student loan, as, not being familiar with application procedures, he had led the Student Loans board to believe he was living at home with his parents. Working full time and in school full time, Soe Tun, is able to sleep only four or five hours a night, and unable to afford food, has been living on a diet of crackers. My family has begun subsidizing him

financially, as there does not appear to be any support net built in for WUSC sponsorees by this local committee beyond their first year.

Win Thant, 23, and her husband were sponsored by WUSC the year after Sha Reh and Soe Tun. Win Thant's sister Zar Mar had been a part of the cohort that included Sha Reh and Soe Tun. Win Thant, Zar Mar and Sha Reh all belong to the same ethnic group. An Ottawa WUSC committee had sponsored both Win Thant and Zar Mar. A WUSC committee in Saskatchewan had sponsored Win Thant's husband. Win Thant had an 8-month-old baby at the time that I met her in Ottawa. The sisters were fortunate in having each other, as raising a child and supporting themselves was no small task. Zar Mar was both working and in school full time. The sisters were quite isolated in Ottawa as they were the only ones from their particular ethnic group, and due to ethnic tensions in Ottawa, there was limited interaction among groups. They were unaware as to why Win Thant's husband should have been placed in a separate city from his wife and newborn baby.

In all cases, these WUSC sponsorees, while careful not to criticize the 'benefactor' that had brought them to Canada, admitted that if they had known prior to coming to Canada how difficult the situation would be, they would have seriously reconsidered their decision to come.

5.13

Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed a number of findings, namely; demographics, gender, ethnicity, education, skills and employment, integration, the accessing of services and the development of social capital and community organizations. It has sought to situate the lives and patterns of Burmese communities, and more specifically, individuals within these communities, in a spatial and temporal context that brings to bear on their ability to develop healthy, functioning communities, families and personal wellbeing. The subsequent chapter reflects on lessons learned and proposes a series of recommendations with applications for settlement service provision agencies, immigration policy makers and the Burmese communities themselves.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1
Introduction

The previous chapter presented and reflected upon the findings of the research. It discussed the issues identified by the communities themselves as being the most pressing, and provided a series of narratives from discussions with individuals interviewed. . In this chapter the lessons learned through the process of this research are distilled and related back to the initial theoretical concepts presented in the literature review chapter, and avenues for further research are identified. This chapter examines issues of social capital, institutional completeness, integration and community organizing as it relates to the Burmese communities studied. It reviews the main lessons gleaned from this research, outlines those areas in the literature most in need of development and puts forward policy and practical recommendations with relevance to the Burmese immigrant groups.

6.2

Overview

This thesis has sought to address a number of key aims. As identified in the Introduction Chapter, these objectives have been:

- to document the settlement and integration issues faced by the Burmese population, particularly as a statistically small immigrant (refugee) group

- to gain greater insight into the settlement needs of the Burmese population and how these have been shaped by pre-migration context
- to explore the question of social capital within the Burmese population and its possible consequences for resettlement and integration
- to contribute to the testing of the applicability of PAR methodology in the study of refugee groups
- to generate recommendations that will facilitate the settlement and integration of the target population in Canadian society

The first objective, relating to the documentation of the settlement needs expressed by the Burmese immigrant population in Canada, has occurred in varying degrees throughout this thesis. Primarily, though, the concerns and specific experiences of the two communities studied have been presented in the chapter on findings, Chapter Five. The second objective, a more comprehensive understanding of the pre-migration context and its resulting impacts on the current integration and resettlement experience were discussed in Chapter Three – The Pre-Migration Context of the Burmese Diaspora. The third objective, the exploration of social capital and the role that it is playing in the successful integration of Burmese communities has been incorporated at various points throughout the thesis. Specifically, social capital as a key issue has been explored throughout the chapters of this thesis. The fourth objective, the applicability of PAR as a means of studying refugee and resettlement issues, has been addressed throughout, and particularly in the methodology chapter, in reference to the particular vulnerabilities and trust issues experienced by the participants. Chapter Four also discussed the rationale and intended benefits of employing PAR as the methodological approach of choice in this thesis. The use of PAR and lessons learned from its use are also discussed further in this

chapter. Finally, the fifth objective, the generation of specific recommendations, is mainly fulfilled in this, the concluding chapter.

What has become clear through conducting this research is that Burmese immigrants in Canada, and more specifically, the most recent wave of refugees arriving after 1988, are facing a number of significant challenges. This thesis has attempted to develop a sketch of the context from which Burmese are coming, the experiences many of them have faced, and how this impacts the opportunities and challenges they eventually face in their country of resettlement, Canada. While other immigrant groups, most notably refugees, have suffered comparably disastrous circumstances in their recent history, this paper makes the case that consideration of the unique characteristics shaping the experiences, identities and responses of Burmese refugees is warranted and necessary in facilitating a successful resettlement process. This thesis has argued that the pre-migration context of the post-1988 Burmese in Canada has significantly impacted their ability to utilize and further develop existing human and social capital, and consequently their institutional completeness and ability to organize. The Canadian settlement infrastructure is founded on principles of pluralism, civic engagement and active participation. The assumption that these principles are automatically operationalized within Canadian immigrant groups, particularly refugees, establishes a scenario in which struggle and misunderstanding are inevitable. It is for this reason that critical consideration must be given to the processes and dynamics of integration *framed by* the divergent characteristics and pre-migration contexts of particular groups. This thesis does not address in depth the issue of how culturally and context-appropriate integration might be facilitated, however, based on the literature relating to community organizing, and the

experiences following from this PAR project, a justification is made for both increased support for mainstream settlement service providers, and also for initiative to be taken in catalyzing and facilitating the organic growth of institutional capacity within these communities.

6.3
Situated within the Broader Literature

A number of theoretical concepts were referred to in the literature review, Chapter One. Social capital, as the focus of this thesis has been suggested to be both a means and an end in itself (Mohan and Mohan, 2002). Social capital brings along with it various attributes potentially desirable as well as undesirable, and may, as I argue, be a means by which institutional completeness is developed and thus the resettlement transition softened. While the literature has linked social capital with the building of networks of trust (Putnam 1995; Halpern 1999), I also argue here that social capital is influence by various factors such as pre-migration context and by the existence and accessibility of enabling policies, supportive funding and external catalytic forces. Perhaps most useful in considering social capital in relation to marginalized communities such as the rather isolated Burmese refugee communities, are the concepts of bridging, bonding and linking social capital (Gittell and Vidal 1998; Briggs 2004; Gress 2004). Like much of the preceding work, this thesis looks to community involvement and associational affiliations as a means of building social capital (Putnam 1995; Hyman 1995).

Framed within Breton's early theories of institutional completeness and the role of the state (1990), it appears unclear as to how exactly this has played out in the Burmese

communities. While there has remained limited organizational capacity, and in the case of the Toronto community, limited social capital, the ethnic support network has been relied upon to a much greater extent than formal settlement service provision agencies. Again, this appears to be not so much a sign of institutional completeness, but rather a lack of capacity to even access existing services. This does seem to reflect a form of social capital, but one which isolates rather than integrates. Social capital which bridges and links as opposed to strictly bonding is what is needed (Gittel and Vidal, 1998). A catalyst or close support external to the community could provide pivotal assistance in tapping into such social capital (Daubon and Saunders, 2002). The smaller scale and faith-based supports provided to the Winnipeg community have cushioned the settlement transition, and provided a platform from which to organize and initiate institutional development within the community. Effective policies and services in this case would appear to promote complementary institutions within ethnic community groups. While it has not demonstrated this decisively, this thesis has contributed to Hyman's claim that social capital is developed *as a deliberate response to some catalyst.* My, and my family's close and continuing involvement with the Winnipeg Burmese community would appear to have played an important role in its recent transition to funded, formal community organization.

The Burmese communities studied here resonated with the characteristics outlined earlier as typical of involuntary migrants. The feelings of 'loss of control over one's life', myths of return and desires to 'liberate the homeland' described by Kuntz (1973) and others (Stein1981; Luciuc 1986) are all sentiments expressed in varying degrees by the respective communities, but most strongly by the less successfully integrated Toronto

community. The refugee literature with its emphasis on economic achievement, the effects of geographic settlement and the role of ethnic enclaves, has been explored by comparing two communities, Winnipeg and Toronto, and their differing experiences. As has been discussed, there is a particularly poignant trade-off with which Burmese newcomers are presented. Smaller communities like Winnipeg may offer greater opportunities for settlement support and integration, but without the benefits of co-ethnic social supports and insulation from discrimination. Larger cities like Toronto may effectively shelter new immigrants, allowing them to lead lives reminiscent of that in Burma, while at the same time hampering the integration process and limiting their opportunities in Canadian society as suggested by DeVoretz (1995).

In reviewing Goldlust and Richmond's theory of objective integration (political, social, cultural and economic integration, all of which were considered by the authors to be directly linked to the immigrant's length of stay in the host country) and subjective integration factors (identification with the new country, internalization of values and norms, and satisfaction with the immigration and integration process, as related to the experiences of the migrants prior to arrival, their expectations prior to migration and their quality of interaction with others in the host society), the findings appear less definitive. Both Winnipeg and Toronto communities have as yet failed at successful *objective* integration. They remain within low-income and general labour brackets, and for the most part have yet to develop extensive networks of relationships with non- coethnic Canadians. Yet with respect to *subjective* integration, and perceived success in the new country, it would seem that the Winnipeg community identifies itself much more closely with Canada than do their Torontonian kin. The Winnipeg group, unlike the Toronto

group, for the most part hesitate to define themselves as solely Burmese – interviewees stated that they 'considered themselves Canadian, but not completely Canadian,' and that 'it would be hard to return to Burma as they were not totally Burmese any more.' These individuals reflect a new, hyphenated form of Burmese – existing in a state of 'between-ness' (see Clifford 1988; Bhabha 1990, 1994), but still making the important transition towards greater integration with wider Canadian society, and so one hopes to greater parity as a collective.

6.4 Lessons Learned

6.4.1
Use of Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research has been an integral aspect of this project's research design. Several observations have emerged from the use of PAR as a methodology in this project. First, the ability to ensure and defend the validity of results obtained through PAR makes it a challenge for someone attempting an initial research project such as that presented by a thesis without the structures provided by a conventional methodology. Without the careful 'audit trail' argued for by McTaggart (1998) along with other PAR 'validity' criteria, it can become quite easy to lose sight of the methodological rigour required by academic research.

However, as a researcher, I have found it deeply satisfying to view the 'subjects' of my study as my 'partners'. I have relished their insights, their enthusiasm and their sense of empowerment – the emotional investment argued for by Smith (1997) and Hajdukowski-Ahmed (1998) was at once both a strength and a liability. The existing familiar

relationships with the Winnipeg community for example, both enabled me to access information, yet barred the following of Ethics Review conventions. It also raised ethical issues of where the 'friend' ended and the 'researcher' began. To become involved in PAR in some senses involves a greater commitment of time and interest that cannot be limited strictly to the research period itself. It also opens up the researcher for changes in research direction otherwise unanticipated. Finally, like ethnographic approaches, PAR requires that the researcher invest considerable periods of time in the field with the participants, coming to understand the context, and the specific ways marginalized participants have of communicating meaning. While the research was conducted intensively for one month in Winnipeg and periodically over four months in Toronto, this was, in retrospect, insufficient time to fully engage and follow up on issues raised.

Related to the question of methodology, the representativeness of the sampling must be considered along with the validity of the methodology itself. The snowball sampling that was used in Toronto had the unintended effect of skewing the sample composition such that it was predominantly Buddhist Burman. While there are significant communities of Karen, Mon, Chin and others in Toronto, for the most part, they remained outside the sampling due to existing ethnic divisions within the Burmese refugee population. As a result, 'ethnic' issues per se did not surface in the process of interviewing the Toronto Burmese, and this may well have been a different case if a more broadly representative sample had been selected. This is something that will need to be accounted for in future efforts to study Burmese communities.

6.4.2
Role of Catalyst

The role of catalyst in this process, both specific to the cases studied, and as a matter of theory, warrants discussion. As Hyman noted in his study of civic engagement, social capital and community organizing, the conversion from one stage to another may occur as a "deliberate response to some catalyst" (1995:198). PAR in its application to the Burmese communities studied, originated with a desire to conduct research and thereby to trigger solutions to practical problems, and implement courses of actions indicated by the research. The writing of this thesis and its attention to the attainment of integration and the well-being of the Burmese communities, has, I believe, effectively served as a catalyst in community organizing and action. The role of catalyst has been, I would argue, in these cases, decisive. Although the research was conducted with two communities, the intensive interaction, planning and assistance required for community organizing, as well as the development of substantial trust, could only be activated in the Winnipeg community. For logistical reasons, these efforts on the part of myself were limited in Toronto. It may be the case that efforts to ignite community organizing and the development of institutional completeness may require the deliberate addition of a catalyst. The critical effects of this catalyst might be sought internal or external to the community by a variety of means. Internally, from within the community, this might take the forms of strong leadership or the development of mentorship relationships with other organizations such as established community groups or service agencies. Externally, this might be undertaken by government agencies through the funding of community groups, or possibly the financing and promotion of consultants to conduct research and advocacy

work on behalf of immigrant and/or ethno-cultural groups. The critical lessons learned from this research are; a) essential services exist but are not being accessed by the Burmese communities, and b) the Burmese communities are motivated and interested in improving their situation, but lack the knowledge, skills and capacity in order to be able to effectively do so. Recommendations on how to address these barriers are offered below.

6.5

Social Capital and Formation of the Burmese Community Organization of Manitoba

The development of a community organization was not an initial aim in conducting the PAR research. It resulted naturally from discussions with community members, particularly in Winnipeg, who had been meeting informally at a regular weekly time and place. They would occasionally organize community events (ie. Burmese New Year, picnics to the lake, etc.), and expressed similar concerns and needs, but lacked a cohesive base from which to address their collective and individual problems. It seemed, to myself as the researcher at least, to be an initiative that followed organically from the PAR activities. I began to discuss the possibility of this with community members and what they might have to gain from organizing more formally. They expressed immediate interest and excitement. My primary concern was that given the existing potential for ethnic divisions to be further entrenched in this effort, that it might serve to exacerbate existing tensions. Community members voiced confidence that this would not occur. There was consensus that politics should remain entirely absent from any of the explicitly 'community' activities and that the central focus should be settlement support and self-

help for the existing Burmese community. In the initial stages, there were a series of meetings initiated with representatives from Manitoba's Interfaith Immigration Committee (MIIC) on how best to proceed as an immigrant organization, and how the province's settlement support agency might be able to assist the work of the Burmese community. The MIIC expressed keen interest and support for the initiative and suggested that documenting the processes of community organizing might be of considerable use to other ethnic immigrant communities at similar stages in seeking to organize. Within a few months of the formation of the organization, a series of 'crises' or problems had arisen within the community – not 'community crises', but problems of an individual and personal nature. These challenges reinforced the value in having a collective body to act in the interests of its members (see the letter written to the Minister of Labour in the Appendix), and further served to strengthen the organization's sense of purpose. A half year after the formation of BCOM, I surveyed members via email as well as verbally over the phone as to whether there had been any value in initiating the organization. Perhaps most satisfying to myself, and most demonstrative with respect to the role of community organizing in developing social capital, were comments relating to the degree to which ethnic tensions have diminished ("completely different") since the initiation of the multi-ethnic community organization.

This thesis has come from the hypothetical position that while a portion of the challenges being experienced by the Burmese population relates to the limited allocation of government resources for the specific concerns of statistically small immigrant groups, it also suggests that an even more significant portion of the challenges being faced stem from the pre-migration context. This context has led to conditions of limited social capital

and institutional completeness. While in part, this thesis has argued for a greater allocation of resources towards more ethnic-specific formal supports, it also recognizes the need for growth, initiative and leadership to occur from *within* the Burmese communities. In exploring how these crucial assets might be fostered, this thesis has looked to the building of social capital as a means of acquiring institutional completeness. It has attempted to experimentally pursue through the application of PAR the building of social capital. This PAR approach was devoted in part to identifying concerns and needs within the communities, but also to the potential and desire for community organizations that might more sustainably and self-sufficiently meet the needs of their constituent members.

The PAR approach was employed only to a limited degree in the case of Toronto due to the inability of myself, as the researcher, to spend the requisite amounts of time there. The resulting development of a community organization in Winnipeg as opposed to Toronto, suggests one or both of several explanations. The Winnipeg community had already amassed significant degrees of social capital prior to the commencement of the PAR and thus required only a catalytic event to initiate what would have inevitably developed organically on its own. Conversely, it could be suggested that the Winnipeg and Toronto communities possessed comparable degrees of social capital and that the role of external catalyst being able to devote considerable time and resources to the formation of community organization was entirely decisive. It is conceivable that the Toronto community did not organize as the requisite investment of time and energy on the part of a mobilizing agent did not occur. While this thesis has explicitly suggested that the Winnipeg community possessed greater degrees of pre-existing social capital, it

is difficult to conclusively determine the extent to which institutional capacity was functional in each of the communities and the evidence suggesting that the Toronto community was lacking in relative cohesiveness is primarily anecdotal. This being said, I would offer my assessment that the development of a community organization in Winnipeg and not Toronto was a combination of these two factors. An external catalyst prepared to devote energy to the fostering of an organization appeared to be critical (through which bridging social capital is attained), yet without a pre-existing backdrop of relative trust and acceptance, including for example, a conducive faith-based, sponsorship-oriented environment, the proposed community organizing would have been hard pressed to gain sufficient support to be initiated, much less to maintain momentum and resist divisive internal ethnic forces.

6.6 Recommendations

6.6.1
Settlement Service Providers

- view communities as partners, allowing them to define their needs and priorities
- develop innovative, reflexive strategies to working with communities
- make every effort ensure the cultural and linguistic appropriateness of services offered to communities
- seek to hire counsellors and staff from the community who have credibility and the trust of the community
- make every effort to facilitate the development of institutional completeness within ethnic community groups by; jointly applying for funding, facilitating networking with more experienced groups, assisting in the writing of grant proposals, and mentoring

- enhance community based refugee sponsorship programs

Life in Burma and second countries of asylum are quite different from the lifestyles being experienced by Burmese immigrants in Canada. There needs to be provision of 'life skills' appropriate to the Canadian context, and based on the common experience of being overwhelmed not only upon arrival, but for years afterwards, suggests a need for more gradual and comprehensive orientation. This might be addressed by the communities themselves, possibly in partnership with mainstream service providers. A further consideration that might involve collaboration between Burmese communities, settlement service providers and government agencies such as Human Resources Development Canada and Canadian Immigration and Citizenship, lies in exploring employment-training options that allow *paid* work experience. At present, the problem with the Burmese communities are less ones of having credentials recognized, as being able to tap in to those vocational careers in which they have prior experience. Apprenticeship programmes could be sought out, while remaining mindful of the 'opportunity cost' being faced by Burmese in choosing advanced needs such as education over more immediate and pressing needs such as repaying debts. There may also be a need to negotiate reductions in eligibility criteria for immigrants such as Burmese to enter apprenticeship programmes. Finally, a critical component in developing sustainable community organizations is the need to find funding. Regardless of the ideas, experiences and enthusiasm of community groups, where English is not a first language and the writing of grant proposals is not familiar, external support and guidance are invaluable. Settlement agencies can take a pivotal role in either assisting grant proposal writing,

jointly applying for funding or connecting ethnic communities with individuals or groups willing to devote the time to assist in the writing of proposals. These are suggestions that do not necessarily apply directly or exclusively to settlement service providers, but rather call for a collaboration of stakeholders in finding appropriate solutions.

6.6.2
Policy Makers

- invest in 'front-end loading' strategies, allowing new immigrants (particularly refugees) to improve their marketable skills prior to entering the workforce, thus better ensuring their long-term employability and independence from social assistance
- make grants and funding opportunities available for communities to organize – focussing on the building of capacity to design and implement projects
- act upon 'equal opportunity' claims by making resources available for less statistically significant or experienced immigrant groups (ie. Ensuring that vital information exists in their language)

This thesis has argued that at least part of the solution to the problem of successful adaptation and integration of Burmese immigrants in Canada lies in successfully harnessing their own powers of social capital and community organizing. In order to facilitate this process, policy makers and funding agencies play a decisive role. Investment in 'front-loading' of training and skills presents a wise investment in the long-term ability of immigrants, particularly refugees, to be productive. This needs to be balanced with the tendency of newcomers to be overwhelmed by an array of decisions and learning processes that may be starkly different from anything they have experienced before. Recognition of this might include on-going orientation and language training,

with an immediate emphasis on practical and employable skills training. Significantly, given the positive results of community organizing and its relationship to the building of social capital, the funding of community development activities and the promotion of ethnic specific services leading to institutional completeness may contribute greatly to the empowerment and engagement of these communities.

Other concerns that have surfaced relate to the consciousness, or lack thereof, of immigration officials of the pre-migration context. While the census statistics present a relatively equitable gender breakdown, it does not reflect the reality of most Canadian Burmese communities. This predominance of young single men creates unnecessary social and psychological tension. There needs to be a concerted effort to address this gender imbalance. Additionally, the lack of affordable and accessible childcare stunts the ability of those women in the community to participate fully. The need for them as the primary childcare providers limits their mobility and independence, further entrenching existing domestic power dynamics and creating skewed trajectories of integration. Childcare and careful analyses of the gendered dimension of immigrant integration need to be considered by policy makers.

6.6.3
Burmese Community

- value of community development needs to be recognized by communities in deed as well as name

- trust, relationships and social capital need to be developed both within the Burmese community and with individuals and groups (such as faith-based sponsoring agencies) outside of it

- importance of civic engagement and participation within broader Canadian society needs to be recognized: cultural passivity in the face of authority,

dependency and 'gratitude' to benefactors need to be understood to not always be appropriate or expected in the new context

- assertive identification and pursuit of opportunities in Canadian context: services exist, but they must be actively sought out
- women must be encouraged to participate in community decision-making processes, and a climate of intolerance for violence against women must be fostered

Burmese Canadian communities are facing an interesting challenge. Given the status of many as refugees from a military regime, there exists almost universal consensus on the need for democracy and the protection of human rights. Yet, in almost no cases have they been exposed or active participants in processes of democracy and civil society. They have all experience the lack of rights, but have little transferable experience with how human rights and equality might be respected and applied in practice. Thus, while promoted in theory, there exists a gulf between the values espoused by Burmese communities and the practical understandings and experiences of Canadian society. The pre-migration context manifests itself in challenges to the community development of social capital and institutional completeness. Divisions, historic prejudices and hierarchies reveal themselves in distrust and a possessiveness of knowledge and opportunity. These tendencies stand in opposition to efforts to build trust and cooperation. Even with bountiful funding and external assistance to community development, unless there is an openness among the Burmese communities to move beyond rigid identities and pervasive, historic tensions, there will be limited success in fully engaging the opportunities available in Canada. Efforts must be made to forge at least working relationships with and between groups. Initiatives to develop non-co-ethnic

relationships will assist and facilitate in this process. Opportunities to meet non-Burmese must be encouraged and spaces for these interactions actively sought and explored.

6.7
Areas for Further Research

- greater research needs to be conducted on other statistically small immigrant groups and their experiences with integration (ie. Nepali, Tibetan, etc.)
- careful exploration and presentation of practical constraints, opportunities and implications for community organizing, and its role in institutional completeness and subsequently successful integration
- more prescriptive studies with practical implications for the improved responsiveness of host country institutions to newcomers

In conducting a survey of secondary sources for this thesis, it became apparent that while there is an increasing body of literature on immigrant groups in Canada, these have focussed for the most part on large groups whose needs have particular interest for service providers. In seeking to meet the needs of these various waves of immigrants, smaller immigrant groups such as the Burmese become lost in the shuffle. While their needs may not always be different, the devotion of some attention to providing appropriate services may greatly improve the integration process. Providing resources for the development of social capital and institutional completeness within ethnic communities may fill the gaps in areas where it is not financially or numerically justified for the government to devote extensive support. Settlement service providers, policy makers, immigration researchers and immigrant communities might all benefit from contributions to the body of literature on numerically small immigrant groups. Related to

this are the implications for investing in ethnic or community organizations. How successfully can these organizations be formed and maintained? What are their dynamics of leadership? How necessary is an external catalyst? Besides fostering vehicles for the building of social capital, how else might a host country be made more responsive to immigrant needs? Particularly when they are high needs, apparently statistically insignificant groups of refugees? This thesis has sought in an exploratory sense to unpack some of these questions and concepts. It has been preliminary in generating recommendations, and aims in large part to inform the shaping of a broader research agenda.

6.8
Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to evaluate the degree to which this thesis has successfully addressed the objectives it originally outlined. It has identified a series of lessons learned throughout the course of the research, relating to the documentation of the Burmese immigration experience in several urban communities. It has assessed the role of PAR as methodology and as a useful tool in the study of refugee and immigration related topics. A discussion was provided on the formation of a community organization in Winnipeg as an offshoot of the research conducted for this thesis, and has related this organization to PAR and the topic of social capital. Finally this chapter has reflected upon what recommendations might serve to better meet the needs of the Burmese population, and allow them to better address these needs themselves.

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Appendix 1
Interview Questions

I. Social Demographics

1. Level of formal education...

2. Specific training, e.g. vocational, technical, professional in Burma etc..

3. Specific training, e.g. vocational, technical, professional in Canada etc..

4. Where do your parents (immediate family) live...?

5. Parents' livelihood………………………………………………

6. Do you have children? If yes, how many children............? And where do they live...?

7. Place of residence in Canada..?

II. Questions related to Integration

8. How long have you been in Canada..?

9. Have you lived somewhere else in Canada before coming to live in your current location…………?

10. If yes, where...................... and why did you come to your current location..?

11. If you came as a refugee, what was the reason (ie. ethnic persecution, ABSDF, etc.)…………..?

12. If you were sponsored by a group, what sort of organization was it…………………………………?

13. Were you satisfied with the resettlement process (ie. did you feel that you had enough support from sponsors when arriving in Canada)………………..?

14. What is your current immigration status……………….? If you do not have citizenship, do you plan on seeking it…………………..?

15. How would you describe living here………………………..?

16. Do you agree that Canada is a multicultural country……………….?

17. Do you feel that you experience racism in Canada……………………..?

18. What did you think about Canada before you came...?

19. What do you think about Canada now...?

20. Please, name two major problems facing members of the Burmese community in Canada:

III. Questions related to Transmigration

21. Do you belong to any Burmese/ ethnic associations in Canada.......................?

22. Do you belong to any Burma related association outside of Canada…………………?

23. Is the Burmese community here very supportive……………?

24. How do you think the Burmese community in your current location compares to other Canadian cities……………………………?

25. Do you have close relatives in Burma (border areas)………………?

26. Have family members been directly affected by the current government (ie. SLORC/ SPDC)…………..?

27. In the last year, were you able to get in contact with relatives in Burma (or in the Burmese border areas)…………?

28. By what means do you get in contact (ie. phone, email, letters)....................?

29. Are you able to offer financial support for family/ contacts in Burma (border areas)………………?

IV. Ethnic Identity

30. Did you live in an area (state) where your ethnic group was the majority…………..?

31. While in Canada have you belonged to an organization related to your ethnicity…………….?

32. What do you see as being your primary identity (ie. ethnic group, Burmese, Canadian, Asian)……………….?

33. How difficult has it been to develop associations/ relationships with Canadians…………?

34. How important is it to marry someone of the same ethnic group (or at least Burmese)…………..?

35. How important is it for your children to be exposed to Burmese / your ethnic culture…………..?

36. Has your attitudes towards other ethnic groups changed since coming to Canada………..?

37. On a scale of one to ten, with one being most difficult and ten being easiest, please rate your willingness to associate with opposing ethnic groups before and after leaving Burma.

38. If the political situation in Burma changes, do you plan to return…………?

39. What do you see as the ideal political situation in Burma (ie. independence for ethnic minority states, autonomy within a federated state, union, etc.)……………….?

Appendix 2
Commentary by BCOM Members on Value of Community Organization

The dialogue boxes below are what were listed as responses to a question posted on the listserv, asking members whether the Burmese Community of Manitoba (BCOM) had been useful.

The community organization website may be found at:
http://www.bcom.4t.com/

For another community organization that has subsequently been formed subsequent to this research, please visit the Burmese Community Service of Ottawa (BCSO) website:
http://www.burmesecommunityservice.org/

Personally, I do believe that working in BCOM, with everyone's help intellectually and technically in the days to come, will surely help me to learn how to work professionally and enhance my knowledge and skills. Once again, I extend my profound respect to you, our members, for entrusting me the post of secretary to equip myself for the future. Please do also correct me and constructively criticize me so as to do better which I am badly in need of.

(BCOM member- Feb.6, 2004)

There has been a lot of help from BCOM.
We are getting closer to each other than ever before. And no longer are we simply Chin, Karen or Burman or any other different.
We can get into a lot of new things and become full of new knowledge.
There are now many opportunities for the future new comers. Those are not the only things. We have gotten so many other things we cannot finish listing them. I wish Burmese people in Ottawa or any other places can come along, as BCOM, in the future too. That will be another benefit from BCOM. From there, we could go on to endless things. Oh well, we do have some difficulties as every organization has. But I believe that this is another lesson or knowledge for us. If we learn from that we will have success in both BCOM and our own futures.

Frankly, I have seen only good things ever since BCOM was formed.
From my point of view, BCOM has helped us:
1. to interact more intimately with each other,
2. regardless of different ethnic backgrounds, we have a sense of oneness and at the same time respect for differences - which I think is carrying a powerful message to others and is so lovely.
3. BCOM is our stepping stone for the future, not only can we work for the interests of our people here in Manitoba by representing our country's name, we can also inform the Canadian public about our country's issues.

(BCOM member- Feb. 20, 2004)

To tell the truth about having organized BCOM and how it has worked for the community and its members, till now it has been going perfectly. Acknowledging members that are not apparent individually. At least it makes members' feelings strong and unified, creates affection among the community and those who have relations with it and the loneliness has evaporated since it has been established. Further more, there are so many benefits that it is hard to explain, yet one thing that is impossible to disagree with is that so many opportunities have been found after this organization was formed, such as: education opportunities, job opportunities, dealing with immigration cases, and many possible chances to get help in sponsoring and other governmental affairs when necessary, etc.

(*BCOM member – Feb. 1, 2004)*

Appendix 3: Burmese Community Murder/ Domestic Violence Case

Greed sparked killing: Crown

MOO
On trial

Hubby 'sick of in-laws,' court told

By SEAN McKIBBON
Ottawa Sun

Kolumbus Moo killed Deena Naw because he wanted the same nice cars and houses he saw fellow Burmese immigrants buying and was sick of scrimping to support his wife's demanding parents, Crown lawyer Jessica McNally said yesterday.

Murder Trial

"You wanted to kill her," McNally said as she cross-examined Moo yesterday. "You were sick of your in laws and you wanted to settle this fight on this night."

McNally fired a blistering salvo of questions at Moo, accusing him of intentionally aiming for his wife's head when he picked up a heavy kitchen mortar in anger.

"You couldn't afford the things you wanted and feed them at the same time," she said.

She suggested that rather than being blinded with anger on Sept. 8, 2001, he had instead deliberately chosen his weapon.

Moo denied the accusations, repeating his story that he had been so angry during an argument with his wife over how to pay for a new house that he lost control and couldn't remember exactly what had happened.

Moo said he had lost his temper when his wife said her parents would have to move in with them. But he also seemed to suggest that he hadn't had any problem putting Naw's refugee parents up in his apartment for the previous 10 months. McNally seized on it.

"Why go against hundreds of years of Burmese tradition and insist they move out if there were no tensions?"

Moo said he had been worried that if he continued to live with Naw's father, Harve Su, a problem would develop. He said he had hoped Su and his wife, Shelle Tin, would qualify for social assistance and would be able to move into an apartment of their own. "But they were just hopes, weren't they?" McNally said.

McNally suggested Moo had killed his wife because she had changed her mind about plans to cut her parents loose and Moo had lost face when his wife disobeyed him. Moo again denied the suggestion.

He also denied suggestions by McNally that he had hit his wife in the past — assertions that seemed to be confirmed by two witnesses who followed Moo.

Lay Lay, a mutual friend of both Naw and Moo, said Naw had never complained of physical abuse. Kitty Braceland, a nurse who would perform annual checkups on Naw, also told the court she had never detected any signs of physical abuse.

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Please remember to PRINT AND SIGN the form, and forward TWO copies to the Office of Research Ethics, Needles Hall, Room 1024, with all attachments.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Title of Project: Comparative study of Transnationalism, Ethnic Identity and Integration among Burmese refugees in Winnipeg and Toronto

2. a) Faculty Investigator(s) N/A

3. Faculty Supervisor(s)

Name	Department	Ext:	e-mail:
Margaret Walton-Roberts	GeographyGeography		mwalton@wlu.ca
James Bater	GeographyGeography	5451	jbater@uwaterloo.ca

4. Student Investigator(s)

Name	Department	Ext:	e-mail:	Local Phone #:
Regan Suzuki	GeographyGeography		regsuzuki@hotmail.com	883-8370

5. Level of Project: Graduate Course **Specify Course:** NA

Non-Theses Course Projects:

Research Project/Course Status:

6. Funding Status: N/A

7. Is this research a multi-center study? NA
If Yes, what other institutions are involved:
NA

8. Has this proposal been submitted to any other Research Ethics Board/Institutional Review Board? N/A

9. For Undergraduate and Graduate Research:

Has this proposal received approval of a Department Committee? N/A

10. a) Indicate the anticipated commencement date for this project: 8/15/2003

b) Indicate the anticipated completion date for this project: 12/30/2003

B. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

1. Purpose and Rationale for Proposed Research

a. Briefly describe the purpose (objectives) and rationale of the proposed project and include any hypothesis(es)/research questions to be investigated. Where available, provide a copy of a research proposal:
The Diaspora of Burmese over the past several decades into Canada and other immigration-receptive countries, has not resulted in the influx of numbers comparable to other Asian groups, but has on several levels been felt as the presence of a highly politicized population consisting of unrelated and often antagonistic ethnic groups. The differences between the ethnicities is further compounded by stark divisions within the majority ethnicity; the Burmans, primarily by those who are pro-junta and those who identify with the pro-democracy movement. This research project seeks to tackle several issues that might be illustrated by the case of the Burmese in Canada. First is the question of transnationalism, and the challenging of assumptions that minorities and migrants demonstrate an exclusive loyalty to one nation-state. By exploring the mode of social connections and frequency by which Burmese maintain ties to the political, social and economic spheres of Burma and surrounding areas, this question of dense social networks enmeshing several states will be explored. Second, the nature and possible transformation of ethnic identity and conflict will be examined with a view as to how social capacity building within and between ethnicities in Canada might influence inter-ethnic dynamics in Burma. Finally, integration and the ability of migrants from Burma to convert disparate experiences into strategies for functioning and participating within the Canadian context will be assessed from a perspective of comparing the institutions and structures differentiating two Canadian cities, Winnipeg and Toronto.

b. In lay language, provide a one paragraph (approximately 100 words) summary of the project including purpose and basic methods:

C. DETAILS OF STUDY

1. Methodology/Procedures

a. Which of the following procedures will be used? Provide a copy of all materials to be used in this study.

Survey(s) or questionnaire(s) (in person) All are standardized.
Interview(s) (in person)

Focus group(s)
Audiotaping
Analysis of secondary data set
Unobtrusive observations

b. Provide a brief, sequential description of the procedures to be used in this study:

1. Literature review on transnationalism, ethnic identity and immigration policies.
2. Identification of potential participants (likely through snowball sampling techniques) and request via mail for an interview appointment.
3. Survey-interviews conducted first in Winnipeg and subsequently in Toronto.
4. Analysis of data and dissemination of result.

c. Will this study involve the administration of any drugs? N/A

2. Participants Involved in the Study

a. Indicate who will be recruited as potential participants in this study.
Non-UW Participants:
Adults

b. Describe the potential participants in this study including group affiliation, gender, age range and any other special characteristics. If only one gender is to be recruited, provide a justification for this:

Participants will be refugees from Burma (Myanmar). They will be primarily male due to the disproportionate male sponsorship of refugees from Burma. Efforts will be made to seek out and include women. Refugees will be largely in the 20-40 age range and will be of a number of different ethnic groups.

c. How many participants are expected to be involved in this study? *Approximately two sample groups of 25 will be involved from Winnipeg and Toronto respectively.*

3. Recruitment Process and Study Location

a. From what source(s) will the potential participants be recruited?
Agencies
immigration settlement boards, ethnic associations

b. Describe how and by whom the potential participants will be recruited. Provide a copy of any materials to be used for recruitment (e.g. posters(s), flyers, advertisement(s), letter(s), telephone script):
The investigator (Regan Suzuki) will be responsible for the recruiting of participants based on associations with the Burmese community in Canada. A copy of letter to be used is included below. Dear Sir/madam: Re: Permission to Grant Interview: This letter is being written in regard to the current study, "Transnationalism, Ethnic Identity and Integration: Comparative Study of Burmese Refugees in Winnipeg and Toronto", being undertaken by myself as partial fulfilment of the Master of Environmental Studies program at the Department of Geography, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario. I would like to add the following regarding confidentiality: –those interviewed will remain anonymous in the collection and storage of data. –the interviewees' names will only be known by me and used for

personal reference. –anything the interviewee has stated, he/she has the right at any point to take back, or to be regarded "off the record". I will be calling you very shortly to confirm the date, time and place that will be mutually convenient for both of us for the interview. Thank you in advance for cooperation. Thank you! Tche Zhoo Bah Deh! Yours truly, Regan Suzuki Phone: (519) 883-8370 E. Mail: regsuzuki@hotmail.com

c. Where will the study take place? *Off campus: Various locations in Winnipeg and Toronto*

4. Compensation of Participants
Will participants receive compensation (financial or otherwise) for participation? No

5. Feedback to Participants

Briefly describe the plans for provision of feedback. Where feasible, a letter of appreciation should be provided to participants. This also should include details about the purpose and predictions of the study, and if possible, an executive summary of the study outcomes. Provide a copy of the feedback letter to be used.

A copy of the results will be made available to each of the communities (Winnipeg and Toronto).

D. POTENTIAL BENEFITS FROM THE STUDY

1. Identify and describe any known or anticipated direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project:
Anticipated benefits for the participants include involvement in the analysis of the current barriers and opportunities for empowerment and engagement of Burmese ethnic minorities within political processes, both in Canada and in an international Canada. Insights and strategies relating to conflict prevention and capacity building are also anticipated results.

2. Identify and describe any known or anticipated benefits to the scientific community/society from this study:
The study will contribute to the knowledge on Canadian immigration policy, regionalism and the differing results of immigration in different locales. Insight into the social networks comprising the phenomena of transnationalism will also allow more effective understandings of immigrant communities, their experiences and challenges, particularly as it affects refugees, and this may serve to inform policy.

E. POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS FROM THE STUDY

1. For each procedure used in this study, describe any known or anticipated risks/stressors to the participants. Consider physiological, psychological, emotional, social etc. risks/stressors.
No known or anticipated risks
No significant risks are anticipated. The interviews will be semi-structured, allowing

for questions to be avoided if they appear to cause duress. Participants will be explicitly encouraged to share that which they feel comfortable sharing and to notify the researcher if questions are emotionally/ psychologically difficult. Also, given strong networks and personal relationships the researcher possesses within these communities?due to her previous experience with the Burmese community, the researcher is confident that she will be have the trust and frankness of participants.

2. Describe the procedures or safeguards in place to protect the physical and psychological health of the participants in light of the risks/stresses identified in E1:
The low-key, friendly manner in which survey-interviews are conducted will hopefully allow the researcher to recognize and reassess questioning should signs of discomfort/ unease appear. Participants will be explicitly encouraged to share that which they feel comfortable sharing and to notify the researcher if questions are emotionally/ psychologically difficult.

F. INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

Researchers are advised to review the Sample Materials section of the ORE website

1. What process will be used to inform the potential participants about the study details and to obtain their consent for participation?
Information letter with verbal consent.

2. If written consent cannot/will not be obtained from the potential participants, provide a justification for this.

3. Does this study involve persons who cannot give their own consent (e.g. minors)? No

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G. ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANTS AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

1. Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data both during the research and in the release of the findings.
Anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured during the research by not revealing the names of participants that I have interviewed (or will interview), beyond the members of my thesis committee. In the release of the findings, no names will be used without consent, and results will be generalized in order to protect individual opinions and comments.

2. Describe the procedures for securing written records, video/audio tapes, questionnaires and recordings.
Written records of interviews will be secured until the completion of the MES, at which point they will be destroyed. The records will be kept at the home of the student investigator. Electronic data will be secured on the hard drive of the personal computer of the student investigator indefinitely. Recordings of key informant interviews will be kept indefinitely at the home of the student researcher.

3. Indicate how long the data will be securely stored and the method to be used for final disposition of the data.

Paper Records
Confidential shredding after 10 year(s).
Audio/Video Recordings
Erasing of audio/video tapes after 10 year(s).
Electronic Data
Erasing of electronic data after 10 year(s).
Location: Hard drive of researcher's personal computer. Recordings and paper copy at the home of the student investigator.

4. Are there conditions under which anonymity of participants or confidentiality of data cannot be guaranteed? No

---

H. DECEPTION

1. Will this study involve the use of deception? N/A

Researchers must ensure that all supporting materials/documentation for their applications are submitted with the signed, hard copies of the ORE form 101/101A. Note that materials shown below in bold are required as part of the ORE application package. The inclusion of other materials depends on the specific type of projects.

Researchers are advised to review the Sample Materials section of the ORE web site:
http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/human/informed_consent.asp

Please **check** below all appendices that are attached as part of your application package:

- Information Letter and Consent Form(s). Used in studies involving interaction with participants (e.g. interviews, testing, etc.)*
- Data Collection Materials: A copy of all survey(s), questionnaire(s), interview questions, interview themes/sample questions for open-ended interviews, focus group questions, or any standardized tests.

* Refer to requirements for content under Elements for Information Letters and Consent Forms, including suggested wording:
http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/human/samples/ElementsInfoLtrConsentForm1.htm

Please note the submission of incomplete packages may result in delays in receiving full ethics clearance.
We suggest reviewing your application with the Checklist For Ethics Review of Human Research Applications
to minimize any required revisions and avoid common errors/omissions.
http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/form101/checklist.htm

INVESTIGATORS' AGREEMENT

I have read the Office of Research Ethics Guidelines for Research with Human Participants and agree to comply with the conditions outlined in the Guidelines. In the case of student research, as Faculty Supervisor, my signature indicates that I have read and approved the application and proposal and deem the project to be valid and worthwhile, and agree to

provide the necessary supervision of the student.

______________________________ ____________________

Signature of Faculty Investigator/Supervisor **Date**

______________________________ ____________________

Signature of Student Investigator **Date**

FOR OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS USE ONLY:

________________________ ____________________

Susan E. Sykes, Ph.D., C. Psych. **Date**
Director, Office of Research Ethics
OR
Susanne Santi, M.Math
Manager, Office of Research Ethics

ORE 101
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