

“An Exploratory Study of the Impact of Male Partner Violence on the Integration of
Refugee Women into Canadian Society”

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the impact of male partner violence on eight refugee women's integration into Canadian society, using Ager and Strang's Integration Framework, and feminist theory. The gaps in the literature regarding this issue inspired this inquiry. Qualitative research methods were used to gather and analyse data. Eight refugee women who had experienced abuse from a male partner were interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview guide. Data were transcribed verbatim, then categorised and analysed using NVivo. Grounded theory techniques were used to identify and explore themes. The findings revealed three stages at which participants' integration into Canadian society was challenged: pre-termination, termination and post termination stage. Hope, control over decision making, and motherhood were significant for participants' ability to leave abuse, and to integrate into Canadian society. This thesis concludes that male partner violence and structural factors were barriers to participants' integration into Canadian society.

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Dedication: To my sister Pamela, your perseverance and hardiness lives on; and to Mbuya VaMasi, the matriarch whose hard work I will always cherish, I dedicate this thesis to you both. *Tionane mwari achida.*

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a serious social problem in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006; DeKeseredy & MacLeod, 1997). Studying violence against refugee women is important because of their circumstances as refugee women. Experiences of trauma and torture by some refugee women prior to coming to Canada, puts them in a vulnerable position. However, for some refugee women, life in Canada may include experiences of violence from a male partner. Therefore, an exploration of how male partner violence affects their integration into Canadian society is important. Information from this exploration could be helpful in informing the design of practice and policies that address the integration needs of refugee women in general and those that have experienced male violence in particular.

Rationale

Little is known about the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women into Canadian society, therefore, this study sought to provide some insight into this relatively unexplored area. A review of literature indicated that although scholars of violence against immigrant and refugee women's issues have paid some attention to the service needs of this population (Arora, 2004; Smith, 2004; Miedema, 1999; Miedema & Wachholz, 1998; MacLeod & Shin, 1990), they have ignored the impact of male partner violence on their integration into Canadian society. On the other hand, a review of literature on the integration of newcomers shows that despite its growth in scholarship, the issue of gender has been ignored (Miedema & Tastsoglou, 2000). Overall, the literature on both integration and violence against women tends to lump

issues of refugees with those of immigrants (Moussa, 2002), even though the circumstances that cause women to come to Canada as refugees differ from those of immigrants in many ways. For instance, refugees are most likely to have gone through traumatizing experiences prior to, and during the process of coming to Canada (Laxroix, 2006; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Forbes- Martin, 2004; Castles et al., 2003; Moussa, 2002; Westwood & Lawrence, 1990). Also, the unplanned departure causes refugees to “Encounter more hurdles in their settlement and integration process than the other class of newcomers...” (Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999 as cited in Mahamoud et al., 2004. p.18). Furthermore, the experiences of refugees in the host country are characterised by stress for a number of reasons (Westwood & Lawrence, 1990). Some of the stress is a result of family dislocation and constant concern about their wellbeing, their own situation, uncertainty of legal status, and being haunted by posttraumatic experiences (Behnia, 1999). Male partner violence adds to the stress that refugee women experience. Yet, little to no research has been done to study the effects this might have on the integration of refugee women. This thesis intended to address these gaps.

The settlement of newcomers has become an area of increased involvement by social workers, whereby social workers are “the human face of the welfare state... delegates of the establishment, which dispenses the very resources that can facilitate the integration process” (Valtonen, 2001. p. 253). Valtonen ascertains that the proper integration of newcomers is the object of resettlement social workers. It is imperative therefore that those social workers who work with refugees be fully aware of issues that

are pertinent to their proper integration into the host society. Therefore, by identifying the barriers to the integration into Canadian society of refugee women that have experienced partner violence, and by identifying their needs, as well as by making recommendations for interventions, I am contributing to the knowledge that might be useful for the integration of refugee women into Canadian society.

This study is also important because Ottawa is a major recipient of refugees in Canada. In the last decade, the highest percentage of refugees coming to Canada has settled in the Ottawa – Gatineau region at 23.3% (City of Ottawa). The history of refugee settlement in Ottawa includes the large resettlement of the Boat people through project 4000 in 1979. It was an initiative by Ottawa Mayor Marian Dewar to sponsor 4000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees fleeing Communist regimes (CTV News, 2009). Therefore, it is important to know some of the barriers they might encounter in their integration into Canadian society.

Purpose

This study explores the impact of male partner violence on the economic and social integration of refugee women into Canadian society. More specifically, this thesis has three objectives: To identify barriers to the integration of refugee women who have experienced male partner violence; to identify their needs; and to draft recommendations for intervention with this population.

Organization of the Material

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature regarding refugee integration into a new society and violence against refugee women. Chapter Three discusses the two theoretical frameworks that guide this study: Ager and Strang's (2004) Integration Framework, and feminist theory. Chapter Four discusses the methods that were used to conduct this study. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven present the findings of this thesis as follows: Chapter Five introduces study participants and their experiences prior to leaving the abusive relationship. Chapter Six looks into participants' experiences of leaving abusive relationships with a particular focus on the factors that influenced leaving. And Chapter Seven reports participants' experiences after they had left the abusive relationship. Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter; it gives an analysis of the findings and provides recommendations for intervention and for further research.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to reveal the gaps that currently exist in the literature on the effects of abuse on refugee women's integration into Canadian society. I will present a brief overview of the existing knowledge in the areas of the integration of refugee women, and of male violence against refugee women. I will review and discuss the gendered nature of both the refugee process, and of male partner violence. I will also review and discuss the literature on challenges faced by refugee women who experience abuse in accessing services and leaving abusive relationships and the failure by service providers to respond to their needs.

Literature Review on Refugees and Integration

Canada has benefited from the influx of immigrants since its creation as a confederation in 1867 (Hawkins, 1988, 1991). Prior to confederation, Canada did not have a policy to receive refugees (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d). The arrival of Jews and Dukobours who were fleeing persecution from Czarist Russia and Eastern Europe in 1900 marked the beginning of Canada's involvement in the protection of refugees (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d). From the time Canada acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, it has given refuge to people who fear persecution in their countries of origin (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). Citizenship and Immigration Canada estimates that every year 25 000 refugees are admitted into Canada (ibid).

Gender and the Refugee Experience

Persecution, war, and/or severe human rights abuses cause people to flee their home countries and seek refuge in foreign lands (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). For refugee women, gender defines the entire experience of being and becoming a refugee (Freedman, 2007; Forbes-Martin, 2004; Boyd, 1999). The gender distribution of world refugees, whereby women and children constitute more than half the population of world refugees (70 to 80 percent), gives testimony to this fact (Forbes-Martin, 2004; Osaki, 1997). Osaki estimated that girls constitute nearly a quarter, and adult women constitute nearly a fifth of world refugees. In fact, as of 1996, out of 67 countries, women were between 40 and 60 percent of the entire refugee population (Osaki, 1997). However, ratios of refugees who seek protection in countries such as Canada and the United States of America have shown disproportionately lower percentages of women (Boyd, 1999; Osaki, 1997). For instance, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that for every 100 men that are admitted to Canada, only 61 women are admitted (Boyd, 1999). This may be an indication of the influence of gender on the availability of resources that allow refugees to seek protection in such countries (ibid).

The refugee experience has also been considered a gendered experience because the reasons that specifically cause women to seek refuge in other countries include gender-based persecution; when women are persecuted because they are women, and through means that only women can be subjected to, for instance, through means such as forced

pregnancies, stoning, female genital mutilation (Freedman, 2007; Forbes-Martin, 2004; Boyd, 1999).

The gendered nature of the refugee process especially the reasons behind the displacement of women from their homelands have sparked debates about whether women deserve to be treated as special group in need of protection under the Geneva Convention (Boyd, 1999). Observing women as a special group in making considerations for accepting a woman as a refugee in the receiving country has been left to the discretion of the receiving country. Canada's response to this was the enactment of the gender based persecution guidelines by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) in 1993. These guidelines allow officers of the IRB to recognise gender as grounds for making a refugee claim. However, despite this response by Canada, critics argue, is not gender sensitive enough because the guidelines are left to the discretion of the officer of the IRB to follow. They have also regarded the low numbers of women admitted through this program an indication of continued gender inequity in the refugee determination process (Boyd, 1999). Nonetheless, those in favour of these guidelines consider the guidelines an important recognition of the gendered nature of the refugee experience (Guha, 1999).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that one third of world refugees reside in camps. However in Sub Saharan Africa, the ratio is one in seven (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2009). The gender distribution of refugees seems to also suggest that women and children are overrepresented (Forbes-

Martin, 2004; Boyd, 1999). For every 100 men in refugee camps, there are 126 women over the age of 18 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1997, as cited in Boyd, 1999). In these camps, protection for women is often non-existent; women are subjected to further human rights abuses such as rape (Freedman, 2007; Forbes-Martin, 2004; Osaki, 1997). Domestic violence and spousal abandonment are prevalent, due to the strain imposed by the inhumane living arrangements characteristic of most refugee camps (Forbes-Martin, 2004). Furthermore, overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, poor security, are additional problems women in refugee camps often endure. These conditions and the additional stress of the uncertainties of staying in a refugee camp compound the stress that refugee women face (ibid).

The Women at Risk program (WRP) by the Canadian Government in 1988 was a response to the influence of gendered women's experience in refugee camps (Freedman, 2007). The program was in recognition of the fact that, gender puts women at an increased risk of abuse, and that they might lack protection in refugee camps. Therefore, women who could be unsafe and/or lacked protection are eligible to get priority resettlement into Canada. However, this program has been criticised for not being gender sensitive enough. First, the numbers of women admitted to Canada through the WRP are very low, only 586 women (Freedman, 2007). Second, women who fit the criteria of the Women at Risk Program also have to fit the conditions for resettlement in Canada. Such conditions include potential to adjust well in Canada, and good "moral" behaviour (Freedman, 2007; Boyd, 1999). These criteria and conditions for qualifying are gendered

(Freedman, 2007; Boyd, 1999). This is because the trauma of the flight stage, the number of children, and low levels of education, characteristic of some refugee women in refugee camps, may not be seen as signs that a refugee woman has the potential to integrate into Canadian society (Boyd, 1999).

How Newcomers become a Part of a New Society

With the influx of immigrants and refugees into Canada, the issue of their relationship to the host society has become an area of interest. There are different relationships and policies to describe or define the ways newcomers become a part of a new society. These include assimilation, acculturation, and integration. Each of these concepts implies different roles that the newcomer and the host society assume. Gordon views assimilation to be, “the entrance of the minority group into the social cliques, clubs, and institutions of the core society” (Gordon, 1964, as cited in Bloch, 2002, p.81). When newcomers assimilate, they lose their original identity and assume the host society’s identity. Therefore, assimilation results in changes by the newcomers only, in which they adopt characteristics such as cultural values and language, and lose their own distinctiveness (Castles et al., 2002). This view of settlement has received the criticism that it ignores the influence of newcomers in shaping their new society (Bloch, 2002, p.811).

On the other hand, Berry recognises the ways in which newcomers become part of the new society as acculturation, which as opposed to assimilation, is a two way process that allows both culture to respond to the other (Berry, 1980, as cited in Bloch, 2002).

Berry argues that acculturation may result in assimilation, separation, marginalisation, or integration. Assimilated groups lose their cultural identities and absorb those of the new society (ibid). Separated groups retain their own cultural identity due to restricted access into the new society (ibid). A marginalised group “loses its own identity and culture without becoming part of the wider society” (ibid, p.82). Integrated groups retain their culture and have the capacity to assume some of the new society’s culture (ibid).

Defining the Integration of Refugees

Generally speaking, integration refers to “the process through which newcomers become full and equal participants in all the various areas of society” (The Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998). Three key aspects of newcomer integration emerge from the literature, integration as a two way process (Li, 2003; Castles et al., 2002; Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998), integration as a long-term process (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998), and integration as both a process and a goal (Phillimore & Goodson, 2008; Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998).

Integration is a two way process that allows both cultures to respond to the other (Li, 2003; Berry, as cited in Bloch, 2002; Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998). Not only does the newcomer adapt and adjust to the host country, the host country also adapts to the newcomer and exercises its responsibilities in ensuring full and equal participation in all of its institutions by the newcomer (Li, 2003; Omdivar & Richmond, 2003; Bloch, 2002; Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998). Integration “is usually seen as a positive outcome because it enables the retention of the identity [of the newcomer] alongside the

capacity to access aspects of the dominant culture, thus preventing exclusion” (Bloch, 2002, p.82).

Canadian Government’s Multiculturalism Act of 1988 is an approach that allows immigrants to retain their own culture yet be able to participate in all aspects of Canada’s political, social, economic life (Li, 2003; Saloojee, 2003; Bissoondath, 2002; Valtonen, 2001). Some scholars believe that the Multiculturalism Act of 1988 fosters/ enhances integration rather than assimilation because it espouses the two way process in which newcomers influence their new society and the new society influences them. Whether or not the policy of multiculturalism fosters integration of newcomers is a subject of endless debate. An overview of the debate on whether multiculturalism is an integrationist approach include the arguments that multiculturalism is divisive, that it lacks policy direction (not prescriptive and very vague) and also that there is evidence to suggest it is failing to integrate newcomers (Bissoondath, 2002). Critics of multiculturalism as an approach to newcomer integration, advocate for a framework that has as its basis, inclusion (Li, 2003; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

Some critics question the possibility of a two way process in integration because of the power imbalance between the host society and the newcomer (Sakamoto, 2007). Sakamoto argues that the newcomer is in a position of less power compared to the host society; therefore, the extent to which he/she can influence the host society is highly limited.

Valtonen (2001) acknowledges the power imbalances that exists between the host society and the newcomer, and adds the concept of citizenship and participation to help explain how the two-way process can occur. Valtonen argues that the two-way nature of the integration process can be viewed from the perspective of citizenship and participation (ibid). Citizenship defines the relationship between the newcomer and the state. Valtonen, cites Marshal's conception of citizenship, and defines it as consisting of "universal civil, political, social rights and obligations of the newcomer to the host society, from which should ensure formal equality with other residents of the receiving society," i.e. the equality of rights for all citizens. Participation relates to how newcomers act and exercise their own agency in a new society when they take part in various areas or institutions within the host society. Valtonen argues that citizenship and participation are central to the two way process of integrating into society.

The integration of newcomers into a new society spans generations, therefore it is considered a long-term process, whose impact can be assessed on the actual newcomer as well as their offspring (Canadian Council For Refugees, 1998). To substantiate the view that integration is a long-term process, there is a growing body of literature in Canada that addresses the degree of integration of newcomers by studying various issues concerning first, second or even third generation offspring of newcomers to Canada (e.g. Hum & Simpson, 2007; Palameta, 2007).

The integration of newcomers into a new society is both *a process* and *a goal*. The process of integration is the infrastructure that exists to ensure inclusion and participation

of newcomers in their pursuits to achieve various goals. The goal of integration is the desired outcome that newcomers seek to achieve for example, housing, employment.

The processes that influence the outcomes of integration can be assessed to determine integration (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2008; Phillimore & Goodson, 2008).

Therefore, refugees' experiences from the time they arrive in the host society to a time when they are in a comparable position to the majority of the host society are indicators of their integration into the new society (Phillimore & Goodson, 2008, p. 309).

Gender Hierarchies in Integration

The post-flight stage for refugees is the stage of settling and integrating into the host country, or country of final destination where gender hierarchies influence the integration of refugee women (Forbes-Martin, 2004; Boyd & Grieco, 2003). Women's gender roles and other barriers in the host country subject refugee women to experiences that differ from those of men (Freedman, 2007; Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005; Forbes-Martin, 2004). Some of these barriers include racism, language, gender roles that confine women to the domestic arena, non-recognition of foreign credentials, low levels of education from their countries of origin (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005). Even though these barriers also affect refugee men, for refugee women gender creates more barriers towards their integration into the host society.

A gendered analysis of this stage reveals the gender stratification in various areas of refugees' experiences in the host society, for example, admission rates of female refugees compared to their male counterparts, labour force participation rates, the rates at which

female refugees access language and cultural knowledge of the host society. All these areas are critical for the integration of newcomers into a new society.

The rates at which female refugees are admitted to Canada as refugees in comparison to their male counterparts depict the gendered nature of the post flight stage. Female immigrants are less likely than male immigrants to be admitted to Canada as refugees. In the decade between 1994 and 2003, 10% of female immigrants, versus 13% of male immigrants, were admitted to Canada for humanitarian reasons (Statistics Canada, 2005a). Between 1993- 2003, 10.4% of new immigrants were female, whilst 13.0% of all new immigrants were male. Employment in Canada is a very much-gendered field (Salaff & Greeve, 2003). The distribution of men and women in various fields is unequal and so is the pay distribution by gender. Women in Canada earn less for doing work that is similar to work done by men. Women are also concentrated in areas of employment of low income, which are mostly part time and precarious. For refugee women, this is even worse due to the triple impact of their race, their plight as refugees/non-Canadian and their gender (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005).

The labour force participation of refugee women is also highly influenced by power hierarchies, particularly along the lines of gender and race (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005). Tastsoglou and Preston contend that the financial hardships that newcomers encounter upon arrival push women to low paid, unsafe, unsatisfying jobs that have no prospects for advancement. Moreover, refugee women's involvement in the paid labour force does not necessarily relinquish them of their gender roles in the domestic sphere (ibid).

Household duties and paid labour force compete for refugee women's time. This may negatively affect their overall labour force integration.

Tastsoglou and Preston (2005) argue that gender roles are a major variable in determining immigrant¹ women's economic integration processes and outcomes.

Traditional gender ideologies and gender based divisions of labour emphasizing the role of women as homemakers, providing at best a supplementary income, results in immigrant [refugee] women being unable to take advantage of language training programs, diminishing their prospects for meaningful employment and confining them to poorly paid jobs (n.p.).

They also argue that the integration of immigrant women is also "racialised gender parity" meaning that immigrant women's integration is influenced by their gender as women and as non-white women (ibid). Immigrant women's experiences of both racial and gender discrimination affect their integration into Canadian society. Tastsoglou & Preston (2005) identified four areas that reflect how gender and race affect the integration of immigrant women in Canada. These areas are, first, the rate of labour force participation, second, unemployment rates, third, occupational industrial segregation, and fourth, employment earnings.

Citing Statistics Canada, Tastsoglou & Preston, (2005), report a large disparity between the labour force participation of immigrant women (including refugees), and non immigrant women, and immigrant men, where immigrant women's participation is lower

¹ Immigrant women includes refugee women.

than either that of immigrant men or Canadian born women. In 2001, the labour force participation of immigrant women was 64% compared to non immigrant women at 70%, and immigrant men at 80% (Statistics Canada, 2005b). In addition, unemployment rates among immigrant women (including refugees) are higher than those of non-immigrant women, and immigrant men. In 2001, immigrant women had an unemployment rate of 8.1%, compared to 7% for Canadian born women, and 6.8% for immigrant men. Furthermore, there is occupational and industrial segregation by gender and race, whereby immigrant women are overrepresented in manual work, compared to Canadian born women, who occupy managerial, professional, or clerical positions (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005, n.p). Gender and race affect refugee women in employment earnings. Compared to immigrant men and non-immigrant women, immigrant women earn less (ibid).

Recognition of foreign credentials by the host society is also important for the economic integration of refugee women (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005). In fact, some scholars have argued that true integration in employment is achieved when an immigrant woman engages in work commensurate with her skills (Neuwirth, cited in Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005). However, there is documentation on how refugee and immigrant women's foreign credentials are not recognized in the Canadian labour market, which results in poor labour force integration outcomes (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005).

Some refugee women may consider getting some skills training or education to increase their opportunities to integrate into the Canadian labour force. However,

structural barriers and gender hierarchies may influence the acquisition of skills and access to education by refugee women. Structural barriers such as limited funding for higher education may limit refugee women's ability to access education. The cost of higher education has also been a major deterrent for the participation of women in education. For example, in Ontario, access to student loans is instrumental for low income individuals' access to higher education. However, before August 2003, refugee claimants were not eligible for student loans (Slobodian & Kits, 2003, as cited in Mohamoud, 2004). As a result, refugee women who had an interest in pursuing post secondary education faced this as a barrier to socio –economic integration. Other ways in which structural barriers interfere with refugee woman's ability to get education may be their responsibilities to their dependants. The cost of childcare and the limited availability of childcare spaces may add to this barrier.

Gender Hierarchies and Language

The importance of language skills for the integration of refugees is well covered in the literature. Upon their arrival into Canada, refugee women are less likely to have knowledge of either of Canada's official languages than their male counterparts because of the gender hierarchies that exist in their countries of origin (Forbes-Martin, 2004). However, gender hierarchies in the country of final settlement may also affect language acquisition (Beiser & Hou, 2000). Refugee women's ability to access language and cultural knowledge can be a result of how the division of labour in the household is often along gender lines, which results in refugee women carrying more household

responsibilities than their male counterparts (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005; Beiser & Hou, 2000).

In a study of Southeast Asian refugees to Canada, Beiser and Hou (2000) found that upon arrival to Canada, Chinese women were less likely to speak English than their male counterparts. After ten years of being in Canada, there was an even wider gap in English language proficiency between the same refugee women and men. Beiser & Hou (2000) attributed these latter differences to women's gender roles that confined refugee women to the household resulting in little access to learning the English language through opportunities such as the paid labour force. Compared with refugee women who were working outside the home, those who were not had lower levels of English language proficiency. This led Beiser and Hou (2000) to conclude that language acquisition is gendered.

One variable that distinguishes the experiences of some refugee women from their male counterparts when they arrive in a new country is the experience of male partner violence. However, literature on integration has not yet considered how this gendered experience may affect the integration of refugee women into Canadian society. In the violence against women literature where the subject of male partner violence against refugee women is mostly covered, the effects of male partner violence on their integration into Canadian society are also yet to be explored.

Measuring Integration

Dimensions of integrating into a new society are the various areas in which newcomers participate upon entering that society, which include social, economic, and political (Valtonen, 2001; Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998), and cultural, structural and psychological. Cultural integration is “The learning of cultural ways of a community to which one does not belong,” (Kallen, 1995 as cited in Valtonen, 2001, p. 251). Structural integration occurs when “the relations among members of different ethnic collectives results in the participation of these individuals in ethno cultural institutions other than their own” (Valtonen, 2001. p. 252). Psychological integration is the newcomer’s own sense of wellbeing and belonging in a new society. Integration in these various dimensions is mutually beneficial but not mutually exclusive (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998).

Approaches that have been used to assess the integration of newcomers into a new society include measuring the level of residential segregation (Balakrishnan & Hou, 1999), interracial marriages, labour market participation/segregation, the levels of naturalisation, acceptance of newcomers by dominant group, social interaction, and social proximity, as well as the level of inclusion or exclusion of newcomers in the new society (elaborated below).

Balakrishnan and Hou (1999) found two dominant strands of studies about the ways in which socio-economic integration of newcomers has been assessed in various studies in Canada. There are studies that focus on the links between residential segregation and

labour market segregation. These studies revealed that residential segregation could be an indication of either full or no integration of newcomers. They report that in the USA, the residential segregation of the African American population symbolises non-integration of the black population, whereas in Canada, the segregation of some minority groups has helped promote their cultural distinctiveness, which is characteristic of multiculturalism. This has resulted in the distinctiveness of the French population in Quebec, and other ethnic minorities. They argue that in Canada, multiculturalism might be the driving force behind such residential segregation, rather than the non integration or the exclusion of those groups by other groups.

Balakrishnan and Hou (1999) went on to construct measures of residential and employment segregation. They studied their association for immigrants living in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, for the census years 1981, 1986, and 1991, in an attempt to determine whether the degree of residential segregation might have an impact on labour market segregation in Canada. Their findings led them to the conclusion that the association between the level of residential segregation and occupational integration in Canada was declining. In other words, residential segregation of newcomers in Canada does not seem to signify socio-economic integration or non-integration into Canada. Therefore, in Canada at least, based on their findings, residential segregation does not necessarily reveal the degrees to which newcomers are excluded nor is it a good measure of newcomers' integration into a society. However, there is the argument that newcomers to Canada have been segregated into certain neighbourhoods because of their

socio economic status, and racism. For example, because of unemployment, and underemployment, newcomers find themselves concentrated in low income housing.

Levels of inclusion and exclusion/marginalisation are also used to assess the integration of newcomers into a new society. Inclusion refers to the ways in which refugees access resources, participate in society, and benefit from belonging in society (Castles et al., 2002). On the other hand, denial of access to certain rights, resources or entitlements normally seen as part of membership of a specific society implies exclusion (ibid, p.118). Exclusion impedes the participation of newcomers in mainstream society, either due to barriers such as discriminatory mechanisms including racism, administrative regulations, and/or a lack of social or human capital, thereby preventing integration (Valtonen, 2001). Structural factors influence whether newcomers are included or excluded in the host society, for instance, through the non recognition of refugees' foreign credentials. The responsibility of ensuring the inclusion of newcomers falls on the societal structures of their host society.

The ideal representation of integration is when newcomers are included in a new society, where they can participate in all areas of society without facing barriers (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Saloojee, 2003). On the other hand, exclusion is an undesirable process and outcome in which newcomers are not allowed access and equal participation in society (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Castles et al., 2002). Exclusion results in the non- integration of newcomers. To this end, Valtonen observes that inclusion and exclusion “delimit the extent and scope of citizenship and participation.”

Therefore, scholars advocate for social inclusion as a framework for integration policy and practice. I will incorporate these concepts into this study by critically analysing how participants' experiences indicate either inclusion into or exclusion from various aspects of Canadian society.

Literature Review on Male Partner Violence in Canada

Male partner violence is violence that a woman experiences from a male partner, “that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to a woman” (United Nations, 1993). Male partner violence may occur in any of the following ways:

Physical abuse: are acts that intended to cause physical harm or injury to the victim (Crowell & Burgess, 1996).

Stalking: are behaviours such as following, threatening, repeated phone calls, threatening loved ones, and breaking into living space (Crowell & Burgess, 1996). Women who are stalked by their abusive ex-male partner may be vulnerable to being murdered by the abuser/ stalker (ibid, p.18). Such behaviours are “harassing or threatening, involving threats of serious harm, and are engaged in repeatedly” (Mahoney, Williams, & West (2001, p.152).

Financial abuse/ economic subordination: is abuse of financial resources and a way of exercising control on the victim (Statistics Canada, 2002; Johnson, 1995; MacLeod & Shin, 1990, 1993).

Sexual abuse or sexual manipulation: is “Any sexual act that a woman submits to against her will due to force, threat of force, or coercion” (Mahoney, Williams, and West, 2001, p150).

Religious and spiritual abuse: “preventing a woman from participating in her spiritual or religious practices, ridiculing her beliefs, or using spirituality to justify controlling her” (National Clearing House on family Violence, 2002).

Psychological abuse, emotional abuse, isolation, and verbal abuse: are “Acts of recurring criticism and/or verbal aggression toward a partner, and/or acts of isolation and domination of a partner. Such actions cause the [victimised] partner to be fearful of the other or lead the [victimised] partner to have very low self esteem”(O’Leary , 1999, as cited in Mahoney, Williams & West 2001. p. 152). An abuser may assert his power and control over his victim by severing her connections to friendships and community ties, which makes the victim dependent on the abuser, limits her access to channels that may help her in escaping abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1998).

Immigration related abuse: “Abusers’ use of the immigrant social context and their ability to control legal status against immigrant partners” (Raj & Silverman, 2002. p.377). Abusers may perpetrate immigration related abuse by threatening deportation, withholding the filing of immigration documents, reporting women to immigration officials etc.

Prevalence of Male Partner Violence

According to Statistics Canada, partner violence against women affects more women than it does men. In a 2002 survey, out of all violent crimes that were reported to the police, 27% of the cases were of family violence, 62% of which were cases of spousal assault. Women victims constituted 85% of these cases, compared to men at 15% (Brzozowski, 2004). Nonetheless, statistics on victimisation along immigration status are sparse. However, several qualitative studies have demonstrated that male partner violence against women does not discriminate along the lines of race, age, ability, or even immigration status, among other variables. Research on the prevalence, severity, and frequency of male partner violence against refugee women is also sparse (Augustine, 2002; Oxman-Martinez, et al., 2002). Such scarcity is attributed to the failure of the methods of measurement used in most quantitative studies to adequately reach refugee women. For instance, the Violence against Women Survey, and the victimisation surveys are conducted only in French and English, miss the input of refugee women who may not have French or English language skills (Smith, 2004).

Even though the prevalence of violence against refugee women remains unknown, the findings of several qualitative studies of violence against refugee women in Canada document the occurrence of male partner violence through the various forms identified above (e.g. MacLeod & Shin, 1990). Furthermore, studies of violence against refugee women report a number of barriers they experience once they have experienced male partner violence. Most of the barriers faced by refugee women are unique to refugee

women, owing to their race, culture, religion, and mostly their immigration status (Mosher et al., 2004). For these reasons, it is important to explore the barriers refugee women face upon experiencing abuse, and how these barriers might have an impact on their integration into Canadian society.

Barriers to Accessing Services

When a woman experiences male partner violence, access to services is important in helping to address her needs (Miedema & Wachholz, 1998). The women's movement spearheaded the development of a number of services aimed at addressing the needs of abused women. Such services include abused women's shelters, counselling services, support groups, financial support services, and legal advocacy. Despite the availability of these services, refugee women face a number of barriers in accessing them. The extent to which refugee women face barriers in accessing services for abused women (Sev'er, 2002; Sharma, 2001; Miedema & Wachholz, 1998; MacLeod & Shin, 1993; 1990) is well explored in the literature.

The growth of literature on abused refugee women's access to services can be traced back to MacLeod and Shin's (1990) groundbreaking study from which they found that refugee woman's experiences of violence were complicated by their immigration status and their minority status. They also found that refugee women faced barriers in accessing services, due to language barriers and racism. Refugee women required services that were responsive to their unique needs. In 1993, the same authors reported their findings from a study of abused women who did not speak English or French. In

that study they found that women who faced language barriers experienced violence, lived in isolation, and had no access to help, even for some who had lived in Canada for a long time (MacLeod & Shin, 1993). Since then, literature on violence against refugee women has grown, and has given some insights into the causes of violence, refugee women's responses to abuse, barriers they encounter in accessing services and difficulties they face in leaving the abuse.

Some of the barriers include a lack of knowledge of the existence of services; language barriers; fear of deportation due to their precarious status; lack of knowledge of their legal rights; and discrimination from service providers (Gillis et al., 2006; Jiwani, 2002; Moussa, 2002; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Currie, 1995; MacLeod & Shin, 1990). Lack of trust in the police and the justice system may also be another barrier to accessing services by refugee women. For instance, some women's displacement may be a result of repression from the military and police; as a result, such women when they experience abuse in Canada, are least likely to involve the police (Gillis et al., 2006; Moussa, 2002; Miedema & Wachholz, 1998). In addition, racism and prejudicial practices of the police to refugee women have also led to the reluctance by refugee women to use the police as a response to violence (Gillis et al., 2006). Also, the responses of the criminal justice system, which criminalises the perpetrator often resulting in the separation of the family unit, are responses that may not be in the best interest of a refugee woman (Gillis et al., 2006; MacLeod & Shin, 1990).

When refugee women seek services, the services may not respond well to their needs. One of the reasons is the way in which services for abused women are structured. Services such as shelters, counselling and, crisis lines, often lack the sensitivity to the needs of refugee women (Arora, 2004; Moussa, 2002; Sharma, 2001). For example, the living conditions of a shelter, which have been reported in several studies as crowded, and lacking in privacy, may conjure up refugee women's memories of the traumatic refugee camps experiences prior to coming to Canada (Moussa, 2002).

Leaving Abuse

Refugee women who might consider leaving the abusive relationship may face barriers because of their culture, their immigration status. Most often, the refugee process, which causes women to be dependent on their male partners, could also make it difficult for refugee women to leave (Sharma, 2001). In the case of male partner violence, the duty to protect children from abuse is often assumed to be a woman's role (Davies & Krane, 2006). Therefore, concerns for children's welfare may hinder women's endeavours to leave. Other barriers refugee women face when they want to leave an abusive relationship include the refugee/immigration process, lack of support, lack of awareness of available services, lack of awareness about their rights in Canada (MacLeod & Shin, 1990; 1993).

Despite these barriers, some refugee women manage to leave. However, In Canada, refugee women's experiences after leaving abusive relationships have not received that much attention. In addition, how leaving an abusive relationship affects integration into

Canadian society is yet to be explored. When women leave an abusive relationship, it is with the hope that they would be free from abuse. However, studies have shown that women may continue to experience abuse from a former partner. Moreover, the risk of death is heightened when women flee an abusive relationship (Anderson & Saunders, 2003).

The effect of leaving an abusive relationship on financial wellbeing is an area that has received some attention in the Canadian literature. One study by Mosher et al., (2004) investigated the experiences of Ontario women (the majority of them were refugee and immigrant women) who were/ had been on welfare, after they had experienced abusive relationships. They found that participants faced financial hardships being on welfare. Some of the hardships they faced include inadequate financial assistance from welfare, restrictive eligibility rules, and regulations. As a result, it was difficult for them to support their children. These financial hardships forced some women to return to abusive relationships. Gender role socialisation dictate childrearing a woman's role (Hick, 2007). Women provide most of the care giving to children and in the case of divorce or separation; the general expectation is that the woman will continue to care for the children.

The 'feminization of poverty' in Canada also explains why women face financial hardships after leaving abusive relationships. Hick (2007) defines this as the growing numbers of women living in poverty (p.130). In Canada, single mothers with children under the age of sixteen constitute the largest proportion of people living in poverty;

poverty levels are also rising among this population (Hick, 2007). This is exacerbated by the fact that this population has the highest incidence of unemployment and part time employment (ibid). Hick attributes this to gender discrimination in the labour market, women's gender roles of caring, inadequate childcare services, and a lack of child support payments from absent fathers.

In other jurisdictions, such as in the United States of America, studies have revealed a positive correlation between domestic violence, welfare dependency, and poverty among abused women. They have also found a high rate of financial insolvency among this group (see for example Davis, 1999; Raphael, 1999; DasGupta, 1988). Anderson and Saunders (2003) reviewed literature from the US and Canada and reported that after leaving abusive relationships, women in the general population experienced psychological trauma, *insufficient material and financial resources*, and faced the risk of violence.

To summarize, this review of the literature outlined the refugee experience as a gendered process. It has demonstrated how gender hierarchies affect refugee women from the time of displacement all the way to the country of final settlement. The influence of gender hierarchies in refugee women's lives can be seen in male partner violence. This literature review has also revealed some of the issues that arise for refugee women when they experience male partner violence. Despite this much knowledge about this population with regards to abuse, connections are yet to be made between abuse and the integration of refugee women into Canadian society. This study attempts to bring

some insights into this area. In this thesis, interviewing refugee women who had left abusive relationships was intended to provide some insights to how abuse might have affected their integration into Canadian society.

CHAPTER THREE - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employed two theoretical frameworks, Ager and Strang's (2004) Conceptual Framework of Integration, and feminist theoretical framework. The reason for this combination, as I will explain later in detail was that Ager and Strang provide a general model of integration irrespective of race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age diversity. Considering that, and keeping in mind the gendered nature of the refugee experience, a gendered analysis serves to complement this framework. I framed interview questions around the four domains of Ager and Strang's framework of integration. Feminist theory was the lens through which I made interpretations of women's narratives about their experiences of male partner violence and of integrating into Canadian society.

An overview of Ager and Strang (2004) Integration Framework

Ager and Strang are researchers who have studied the integration of refugees in Britain. They investigated the concept of integration, and developed a conceptual framework for refugee integration: *Defining Core Domains for Integration* (Ager & Strang, 2004). (*see figure 1- Indicators of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework*)

Following a thematic analysis of the data gathered from a variety of stakeholders, including refugees, they derived a framework for assessing integration from a normative perspective. Their framework provides key components of integration, characterized by ten indicators, which fall under four domains: Markers and means, social connections; facilitators; and foundations (ibid, p.170).

Markers and Means Domain

The *Markers and Means* domain is composed of areas in which full involvement in or full participation by the refugee is generally considered to reflect the integration of refugees (Ager & Strang, 2008). The dimensions in this domain are employment, housing, education, and health. Ager and Strang (2008) consider this dimension to be the outcome of full and equal participation, which are judged in determining the integration of refugees. For instance, the health outcomes of refugees or their involvement in the labour force are aspects looked at in determining the extent to which refugees have been integrated into society. Ager and Strang (2008) assert employment to be ‘a key factor’ in supporting integration, in providing income, economic advancement, re-establishing social roles, developing language and cultural competence, and establishing social connections (See also Bloch, 2005). According to Ager and Strang (2008), housing is another proxy for integration, which influences among other things, “...a sense of security and stability, opportunities for social connections, access to healthcare, education and employment” (p.15; see also Danso & Grant, 2000; Danso, 1997; Hulchansky, 1997). Education is an integral piece to the integration process and outcomes for refugees, because it ‘creates opportunities for employment, social connections, and language acquisition’ (Ager and Strang, 2004, p.16). The health dimension is useful for evaluating accessibility and responsiveness of health services to the needs of refugees (Ager & Strang, 2004). This is because “good health enables greater social participation and engagement in employment and education activities” (Ibid, p.17).

Social Connections Domain

Social connections are defined as relationships, connections, and networks that help to join refugees to other people and to services (Ager and Strang, 2004, 2008). Simply put, social connections are the elements that provide linkages that would allow refugees' rights and citizenship to materialise into full and equal participation in society. This domain relates to the two way process nature of the integration process, whereby refugees influence the new society and the new society influences them (Ager & Strang, 2004, 2008). Social connections are made up of social bonds, social bridges, and social links. Social bonds are connections between people who have similarities e.g. similar beliefs, values, backgrounds (Kazemipur, 2004). Social bridges are connections between diverse people (ibid). Ager and Strang (2008) contend that bridges allow the mixing of different cultures, races, etc, thus allowing the two way process of integration of refugees and the host country, allowing both to equally contribute to one another's, social economic, cultural life. Social links are "the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services" (Ager & Strang, 2008, p.181). In other words, social links refer to the access that refugees have to services that are intended to facilitate their integration into a host society.

Facilitators Domain

The Facilitators domain represents features that facilitate the engagement of refugees in the communities in which they live, hence the term facilitators (Ager & Strang, 2004, p.13). Ager and Strang acknowledge the possibility of barriers to social

connections; therefore, they identify the *facilitators' domain* to represent aspects that facilitate the integration of refugees. Language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability are dimensions of the *facilitators' domain*, because these are the areas that may pose barriers to the integration of refugees. A lack of familiarity with host country language limits refugees' ability to gain the cultural knowledge necessary to integrate into society and a sense of safety and stability contributes positively to the integration of refugees (ibid). Ager and Strang (2008) contend that lack of cultural competence by the refugee, and to some extent, the lack of awareness on the issues of refugees by the host community could be a barrier to the integration of refugees. Similarly, a lack of local language skills could be a barrier to integrating into the host country.

Refugees' sense of safety is also a factor that facilitates their integration into a new society. In their analysis, Ager and Strang (2008) found that refugees highly regarded where they lived as contributing factor to their sense of safety, which in turn was an aspect that facilitated their integration into British society. The stability of refugees in the communities in which they reside is also a factor that facilitates their integration into that society. Ager and Strang found that communities valued continuity in their relationships with refugees, when refugees moved out of communities, relationships were cut, which affected the two way process of newcomers' integration into host society. Stability in housing also allows continuity in the delivery of settlement services; Ager and Strang argue, and conclude that, instabilities in housing also affect the integration of refugees into the host society.

Foundations Domain

The Foundation domain includes refugees' rights and what they are entitled to within the host society, as well as their responsibilities to the host society. Refugee's rights and citizenship domain form the base for participation in society (Ager & Strang, 2008). Ager and Strang (2008) contend that the rights of refugees depend on how nation states define nationhood and citizenship. They conclude that the integration policies that a government implements, depends on what rights it awards refugees. These rights also dictate what the government is responsible for in integrating refugees. Citing several scholars, Ager and Strang give examples of rights that a government may give refugees, which include justice; security and independence; equality; and human dignity (p.175).

Strengths of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework

The main strength of this framework is that it encapsulates almost all of the aspects of refugee integration that have been raised in the literature. Moreover, the dimensions of integration of this framework are similar to some of the issues that are important to the needs of abused women, such as housing, employment, social networks, and citizenship (MacLeod & Shin, 1990). One other strength of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework is that it can be adapted to meet various uses including in conducting qualitative research (Phillimore & Goodson, 2008; Ager & Strang, 2004, 2008). In addition, other studies have successfully employed it in assessing the integration of refugees. For example, Phillimore and Goodson (2008) found it useful in evaluating the

means and markers dimension to refugee integration (for the application of the integration framework see also Beirens et al., 2007).

Limitations of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework

One limitation of Ager and Strang's framework is that it lacks a gender dimension. From the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, it is clear that gender shapes the entire process of migration (Freedman, 2007; Creese, 2001). For that reason, I was compelled to incorporate a gender lens in carrying out this study. To do so I employed feminist theory to understand the integration of participants into Canadian society, with a special focus on how their integration was influenced by gender and power hierarchies. Putting gender at the centre of this study allowed me to get a unique perspective on the integration of study participants into Canadian society.

Boyd and Grieco (2003) challenge the use of established frameworks or theories of migration for lacking a gender analysis. They argue that adding gender as a mere variable without questioning the epistemologies and methodologies does not make a gendered analysis of migration. According to Boyd and Grieco (2003) gender shapes the entire process of migration, including the reasons women migrate or flee, what they experience in flight, or during migration, and how they are received and treated in the receiving country. Therefore, they propose a framework that accounts for gender differences throughout the analysis of the migration process, consisting of three distinct areas of analysis: pre-migration stage, migration stage, and post migration stage. Boyd

and Grieco (2003) contend that their framework renders itself applicable to the analysis of other immigration categories including refugees.

A Gendered Analysis of Migration

I draw lessons from Boyd and Grieco's (2003) framework for a gender sensitive approach to international migration, by accounting for the influence of gender and power hierarchies in the integration of participants in this study. A feminist theoretical framework allows such an analysis, and is defined as "a framework whose purpose is to "understand women's oppression in order to change it" (Kelly, Burton & Regan, 1994, p. 28). There are many feminisms, among them, first, second, third feminism, liberal feminism, socialist feminism, structural feminism, black feminism, essentialist feminism, non-essentialist feminism, radical feminism. Despite this diversity of feminism, the central principle of feminist theories is to understand women's unique experiences, owing to their gender and social positioning as 'the other' (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003; Miedema & Tastsoglou, 2000; Mason, 1997).

In order to incorporate gender into this study, I use Boyd and Grieco's (2003) gender based approach to migration, which calls for a gendered analysis of the entire migration process. This entails putting gender at the centre of the analysis of women's experiences of migration including their integration into the host society. Boyd and Grieco believe that the final stage of migration is often characterized and defined by gender hierarchies between refugee women and men. This is because upon arrival in the host country, refugee women are faced with various gender-based challenges. A gender-

based analysis of the stage of final settlement in the host country requires one to question the influence of gender hierarchies on aspects such as women's legal status, opportunities available to refugee women, and the role women play within the family (ibid).

Accordingly, in analysing the data, I questioned the role of power and gender hierarchies in participants' experiences of male partner violence and integration into society. Such an analysis allowed me to see not only the barriers that male violence created, but also those that were created by systems.

Theories of Male Partner Violence against Women

According to Sev'er (1997), theoretical perspectives on violence against women can be put into three main categories: psychological theories, sociological theories, and feminist theories.

Psychological Theories

These theories tend to pathologise the perpetrator by looking at the behaviours and traits of the perpetrator. Sev'er goes on to challenge these theories by citing scholarship that assert that the pathology of abusive men are not played out on random people, rather, on their female partners (Bograd, 1988, as cited in Sev'er, 1997).

Social Learning Theories

According to Sev'er (1997), these theories attribute partner abuse to socialisation of children and the transmission of violent behaviours in the social environment. Empirical findings have shown that one in two perpetrators of male partner violence against women

were victims or witnesses of domestic violence in their childhood (Lent, 1991 as cited in Sev'er, 1997, pp 571). A study by Murrell, Christoff and Henning (2007), investigating the relationship between childhood exposure to violence and adult male violence against women found that those who had witnessed and experienced abuse had higher mean levels of frequency of committing adult domestic violence than those who had neither witnessed nor experienced domestic violence in childhood. Additionally, severity of domestic violence was lowest among those who had neither witnessed nor experienced abuse as a child. Several studies have also shown that domestic violence witnessing children are more aggressive than those who are not, (e.g. Adamson & Thompson, 1995 as cited in Currie, 2006). Currie (2006) found a positive correlation between witnessing domestic violence and abusing pets. These findings point to the relevance of social theories of male partner violence against women.

Critics challenge these theories on the grounds that not all men who witnessed abuse in their childhood abuse their partners. Therefore, these theories may explain some but not all the reasons behind male partner violence.

Feminist Interpretations of Male Partner Violence

Based on feminist theory, violence against women is a result of the inequalities that exist in society because of patriarchy (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993), and “the gendered constructions of masculinity and femininity” (Freedman, 2007, p.57). Feminist theories perceive violence against women to be a reflection of the gendered distribution of power in society (Sev'er, 1997). Inequalities between men and

women are imbedded in all structures of society, and manifest in the form of violence, unequal treatment of women, and unequal opportunities for women in such spheres as employment and education (Freedman, 2007; Sev'er, 1997). Sev'er (1997) sees the main tenets of feminist theories of male violence against women to be the connection between the structures of society and the personal. These theories draw from empirical findings that have identified men as being in the majority of perpetrators and women in the majority of victims of male violence. For example, Statistics Canada reported that in Canada the victims of violence in the home were more likely to be women than to be men (Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2004, 7% of women (653 000) were victims of spousal violence in Canada. During this same period only four percent of men experienced spousal violence. In addition, in a 2004 violence statistical report, the most frequently reported form of victimization was spousal assault at (62%), women comprised 85% (Smith, 2004, n.p). For these reasons, male partner violence is considered to be gendered. The United Nations' upholds this view of violence against women in declaring that

Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men (United Nations, 1993)

Critics of feminist theories of violence against women have cited feminist theories' focus on patriarchy as a weakness because it appears to exclude all other variables that explain male partner violence (e.g. Dutton, cited in DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007).

According to DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz (2007), however, such criticism of feminist explanations to violence against women, cite old feminist scholarship that precedes the developments of feminist theory. Feminist theory, DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, argue, has evolved, and now incorporates various dimensions. Such developments have resulted in multiple approaches to feminism whose analyses incorporate consideration of various forms of oppression (ibid).

Contemporary feminist analyses of male violence against women acknowledge the role of a diversity of oppressions such as class, race, and sexuality in women's experiences of male violence (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007). A Feminist analysis of violence takes into account the diversity among women; the understanding that women experience violence differently based on their various social locations of privilege and oppression, such as ability, sexual orientation, race, age, class, etc. Such locations also determine the responses to women's experiences of abuse (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993). For example, Larocque (1994) uses feminist theory to explain the violence that aboriginal women experience in Canada. She attributes violence against aboriginal women to sexism as well as racism; 'sexualised racism'. Similarly, MacLeod and Shin (1990) assert that for immigrant and refugee women, racism and sexism contribute to the male partner violence they experience in Canada.

Interpretations of Male Partner Violence against Refugee Women

The post flight stage may also involve reunification of husbands and wives separated due to persecution. For some refugee women, this stage may be marked by

intimate partner violence (Lacroix, 2006; Moussa, 2002; MacLeod & Shin, 1990). There are various explanations for male partner violence against refugee women in the host country. These include stress from the refugee experience; shift of gender roles between men and women; and cultural values of refugees' source countries, which condone the use of violence. The gender hierarchies in the host country have also been blamed for the abuse of refugee women by their male partners.

The refugee experience is for the most part a traumatising experience, which can cause the dynamics of a marital relationship to change. The changes can be exacerbated by the experiences of having to adjust to being in a new country. In a study of Ethiopian immigrant couples living in Toronto, Hyman, Teffera and Tizazu (2004) found that there were changes in areas such as in decision-making and authority. Some of these changes caused strains, marital conflict, as well as male partner violence.

Shifting of gender roles in host country can also be the cause of the violence that refugee women experience from their male partners. Being in a new country may involve a renegotiation of roles within the relationship (The Canadian Council for Refugees, 2006; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 1999). Scholars have argued that the powerlessness that refugee men face in the host country and the reversal of gender roles due to non-recognition of credentials could cause men to be abusive towards their partners as a strategy to reassert their power (Sharma, 2001). For instance, if the man was the breadwinner in the country of origin, the shift in roles can cause him to feel less powerful. The man's role as breadwinner can be weakened by unemployment and

marginalisation in the new country, causing tension in the household. This tension can result in partner violence (Hyman, 2004; Shirwadkar, 2004; Menjivar & Shalcido, 2002).

Cultural values from the country of origin that condone violence have also been implicated in the violence that refugee women experience in the host society. Some scholars have argued that immigrant men from patriarchal societies may resort to the use of violence to control their wives (Sharma, 2001). However, the validity of this claim is questionable, considering the prevalence of male partner violence in Canada where the use of violence is not condoned. Statistics Canada (2006) reported that immigrant and refugee women experienced decreasing rates of violence from 1999 to 2004 compared to aboriginal and Canadian born women. Similarly, Brownridge (2006) found immigrant women to be the least affected by male violence compared to aboriginal and Canadian born women.

The most commonly held explanations for violence against refugee women are gender and power hierarchies due to patriarchy. For example a gendered analysis of the immigration process reveals that the immigration experience creates gender hierarchies, in which women are at a disadvantage (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). For example, research shows that refugee women are overrepresented in the dependant class of the immigration process in Canada (Vanderplaat, 2007). As a result, women are left in subjective positions, as dependents of the main applicant, often the male partner. Being a main applicant brings privileges such as access to language training and employment. In some cases, male partners use the dependency conveyed by the application process to abuse

women. For example, abusive men have been reported to threaten women with deportation if they did not comply with their control and abuse. In other cases, men who are the main applicant threaten to withdraw the refugee/ immigration application. This form of abuse, Raj and Silverman (2002) refer to as immigration related abuse. The gendered natures of labour markets, which confine women to the domestic sphere (Miedema & Tastsoglou, 2000) exacerbate the isolation of refugee women, which is also a risk factor for male partner violence (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Refugee women are also often racial minorities and the intersection of race, gender, class causes them to be vulnerable to abuse (Sharma, 2001).

The above discussion has raised enough support for the use of a feminist theoretical framework for this study. Not only does a feminist lens put gender at the centre of analysis, but it also acknowledges the influence of power hierarchies that may be a result of other social structures such as culture, social policies that may contribute to the oppression of women in various social locations.

Feminist Research Framework

I chose qualitative research methods that were guided by feminist research principles in carrying out this study because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Jensen and Rae Davis (1998) who advocate the use of feminist methods of inquiry when researching sensitive topics, characterize sensitive topic research as research in which the researcher "... attempts to understand subjective experiences and meaning of the experiences for vulnerable groups, such as traumatised people" (p.290). By this

definition of sensitive topic research, abused refugee women in this study qualify to be considered a vulnerable group. Abuse is not only traumatising experience, it is also stigmatized and often abused women are blamed for experiencing abuse. Some victims/survivors may even blame themselves for the violence. Speaking of Sudanese refugee women in the Netherlands, Tankink and Richters (2008) argue that silence about experiences of domestic violence is a strategy to avoid the shame that comes with disclosure. I made similar considerations in this study and decided that feminist research principles and values would be most appropriate in pursuing this inquiry.

Feminist research is research that is guided by feminist principles and values (Mason, 1997; Cook & Fonow, 1986). Mason (1997) cites several scholars (e.g. Dueilli-Klein; Harding) who define feminist research as research for women, which attempts to understand women's life experiences for the purposes of changing them. According to Mason (1997), feminist research captures women's experiences in whole and gives meaning to women's experiences. Despite the diversity of feminist theories, the same principles guide feminist research.

Cook and Fonow (1986) identify five key principles of feminist research as follows: (1) accepting the influence of gender in social relations, (2) putting an emphasis on empowerment and transformation, (3) focusing on consciousness raising, (4) examining ethical concerns, and (5) rejecting the subject/object separation (p.5). This study successfully observed all five principles.

Accepting the influence of gender in social relations

Feminist research applies this principle by focusing on the experiences of women, particularly experiences pertaining to their oppression because of patriarchy. This study observed this principle in the ways in which the research question was formulated, in the data collection, and in the data analysis. By investigating the impact of male partner violence on integration, this study acknowledges the oppression that subjects refugee women. This study also aimed to understand how gender and power hierarchies influenced participants' integration into Canadian society.

Putting an emphasis on empowerment and transformation

This principle is premised on the fact that research into the oppression of women has to be done with the purpose not only to understand women's lived experiences of oppression but also to change it (Mason, 1997). In this study, I upheld this principle by recognising the strengths and agency that participants had exercised in their lives. In addition, participants commented that their interest in taking part in this study was so that they could help bring awareness to the issue of violence against women. All participants stated that they hoped participating in this study would not only raise awareness to this issue, but also help bring changes to practice and policies for violence against women.

Focusing on Raising Consciousness

Raising consciousness is another key principle of feminist research. This principle comes from the understanding that feminist research is research intended to understand women's oppression in order to change it. In this study, interviews allowed participants

to realise the structures that shaped their oppression and where solutions to some of their oppression lied.

Examining Ethical Concerns

Feminist research values the importance of making ethical considerations when doing research. This helps ensure that participants are not exploited, but are treated with dignity and respect, and their input is valued. In feminist research, the researcher remains aware of the power differentials between them and study participants. Such awareness allows the researcher to go beyond the steps that research ethics require. A detailed discussion on the steps I took to ensure that I was conducting this study ethically, and about how I observed feminist research ethics principles is presented under *Ethics*, and *Informed Consent* sections in Chapter Four: Methods.

Rejecting the Subject/Object Separation

Another principle of feminist research observed in this study is the rejection of the subject/object separation. Feminist researchers reject the notion of researcher objectivity or subject/object separation (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003; Mason, 1997). Instead, in feminist research, the researcher places herself in the context of the research study, making her biases open for scrutiny in the study (Mason, 1997). This allows the reader to evaluate the work of the researcher, using the researcher's bias as evidence in the study (ibid, p. 24). This is consonant with feminist research methodology, which espouses the formulation of research questions from the researcher's subjective experiences of oppression, especially because of gender (Kelly et al., 1994). The subjective location of

the researcher may cause the researcher to have certain biases. These biases can be mitigated if a researcher engages in reflexivity; “a process through which a researcher recognises, examines, and understands how his or her own social background and assumptions can intervene in the research process” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.141). Reflexivity is a common feature of feminist research, especially in the research of violence against women (Hume, 2007).

In summary, this chapter discussed the two theoretical frameworks that guided this study; Ager and Strang (2004) and Feminist theoretical framework. Ager and Strang’s framework is used to provide a lens through which areas that are important for integration are viewed. Feminist theoretical framework guided the analysis of gender and power hierarchies and how they affected the integration of participants into Canadian society.

CHAPTER FOUR - METHODS

This study used a qualitative research design to collect data from eight participants living in the Ottawa area. A semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct individual interviews. Data were analysed using grounded theory techniques. The following section explains the research design and methods followed in conducting this study. In addition, the reasoning behind the use of the research design and method are discussed. This section also addresses ethical consideration, issues of informed consent, and risks to participants. Finally, factors that enhanced the study, as well as limitations of the methods used in the study are discussed.

Research Design

In this study, qualitative research design which was guided by feminist research principles and values was used, to collect and analyse data. Qualitative research design is a design through which information is gathered in an open-ended manner to answer exploratory or descriptive questions (Brun, 2005; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). In other words, the researcher asks questions that allow participants to inform her/him about issues that are important to them.

Qualitative designs allow the researcher to gain deep knowledge about the experiences of participants (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). Interviews are an effective tool employed to gather data in qualitative research. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight refugee women who had experienced violence from their male partner. Interviews were audio taped and were transcribed verbatim. The

qualitative analysis program Nvivo was used to code data. I analysed data using grounded theory techniques. Grounded Theory Methodology is a qualitative approach to data analysis, where theory emerges from the data (Neuman and Kreuger, 2003). Later on in this chapter, I will elaborate on how I used these techniques to analyse data.

Sampling

I used purposive sampling to recruit a sample of eight participants. Purposive sampling is the selection of cases that fit the specific purpose of the research (Brun, 2005; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). This method is ideal for qualitative research, because it allows the researcher to cherry-pick participants who best fit the experiences specified in the research question (Brun, 2005, p.130). Purposive sampling also has the advantage of allowing the researcher to obtain rich, contextual information, from the perspective of the participants (ibid, p.131). Another reason for using purposive sampling was that the population under study is hidden and hard to reach (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003).

The criteria for participating in this study were very specific as follows: The participant needed to be 1) a refugee woman (government sponsored or, who came as a convention refugee or applied for refugee status in Canada, refugee claimant). 2) Who had experienced abuse (physical, financial, psychological, verbal, emotional, spiritual, and sexual) from a male partner. And, 3) had been out of the abusive relationship for a minimum period of one year. A minimum period of one year was required in order to ensure that the participants had some experiences of integrating into Canadian society both in the abusive relationship and after leaving. This would have allowed comparisons

between experiences they had while they were in the abusive relationship and after leaving the relationship. Moreover, I assumed that a year after leaving the abuse would be an adequate time frame for participants to observe changes in their experiences from the time they were in the abusive relationship and after. There was also an ethical consideration behind this criterion, which was based on the assumption that after a year, participants would have had some distance from the abuse such that talking about their experiences would be less traumatic.

Recruitment

I contacted diverse service providers in the Ottawa area including women's services, sexual assault centres, community houses, women's shelters, settlement services, and community centres. The reason for involving these organisations in the recruitment process was that these organisations might have the trust of individual women and more knowledge about the population; which made recruitment much easier. Moreover, my work in the Ottawa community as a violence against women worker privileged me with contact names for workers in various service agencies who could help to promote the study and identify potential participants. My thesis supervisor, Professor Behnam Behnia of Carleton University's School of Social Work was also instrumental in providing me with his contacts, especially within settlement service agencies in the Ottawa area.

I used these contacts to advertise the research project by first, contacting, and explaining the study's purpose and objectives, second, asking their assistance in

recruiting study participants, third, explaining the study criteria and fourth, upon their expression of interest and support, I emailed the letter of information. In the letter of information, I not only explained the study purpose, but also the criteria for participation. I also stressed the issues of confidentiality, and anonymity. Service providers used the given criteria to identify and to invite potential participants to take part in the study and to provide them with my contact details. Refugee women who were interested in taking part in the study then contacted me.

Upon contact with prospective participants, I explained the purpose of the research, criteria for participation and measures intended to maintain the anonymity of participants and confidentiality of all information about participants. I also explained the limits to confidentiality (e.g. if a participant were to disclose about harm to a child, I would be obligated to report that to the appropriate authority). I made potential participants aware of their right to refuse to answer questions, to refuse to be audio taped, and the right to withdraw without penalty at any time during the study. Once a potential participant had expressed interest and I had determined her qualification to take part in the study, the participant and I proceeded to book the interview time and location that was safe and convenient to both of us.

Data Collection

Data were collected using qualitative individual interviews from eight refugee women who had experienced abuse. In doing so, this study gave women a chance to speak to their own experiences, rather than have someone else speak on their behalf.

Moreover, an open-ended manner in which the interview questions were designed allowed participants to speak as experts on their experiences. In fact, most of the participants stated that prior to the interview; they had neither the courage, nor the opportunity to speak about their experience as a whole life story. The interview gave them the courage and the opportunity to tell their own story which was empowering to them.

Shulamit Rinharz contends that interviewing is a way through which “feminist researchers have attempted to access women’s hidden knowledge, through women’s words rather than those of the researcher or those of men” (1992, as cited in Hesse- Biber and Leavy 2006, p.119). Interviews are consistent with feminist research principles because they break the hierarchies between the researcher and the researched, and allow collaboration between the two (Hesse- Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 119). Interviews were a preferred method for data collection for this study also because there was not much known about the impact of violence on the integration of refugee women. Rubin and Rubin (1995) advocate for the use of interviews in exploratory studies, as in the present study, because they allow the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

Interviews took place at various locations within the Ottawa area. Three interviews took place in participants’ places of residence; the rest took place in various service agencies. I used an interview guide comprising open-ended questions and close-ended demographic questions (see Appendix C –Interview Guide). Interview questions covered the following

areas: participants' experiences of male partner violence, how participants dealt with male partner violence, their lives after leaving abusive relationships, and how male partner violence affected different aspects of their lives in Canada in areas such as employment, education, housing, social networks. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All eight interviews were audio taped with the written and verbal consent of each participant. One interview was conducted with the assistance of a language interpreter, in which case I explained to the language interpreter the confidentiality needs of the participant and asked the interpreter to sign a confidentiality agreement form (see Appendix E - Confidentiality Agreement Form for the language interpreter). I also sought the verbal consent of the participant to use a language interpreter. Participants received honoraria of \$30 each as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Treatment of the Data

I transcribed each interview verbatim. This process allowed me more exposure to the data. I removed names and any information such as the number of children, gender of children, country of origin, names of male partners, because I considered this to be identifying information. After transcribing all interviews, I read transcripts several times in order to familiarise myself further with the data. Once I was familiar with the interviews, I moved on to data analysis. I also listened to tape recordings several times throughout the data analysis and writing stages of this thesis.

I used a grounded theory technique to analyse data. Grounded theory is a technique in which the researcher “allows theory to emerge from the data rather than from pre-

existing knowledge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12). This method, Strauss and Corbin contend, “Offers insight, enhances understanding, and provides a meaningful guide to action” (ibid). This technique allowed the issues that were important to participants to emerge as themes rather than use predetermined categories to interpret participants’ experiences. This was also preferred because of the exploratory nature of the study, which is the first one intended to offer insights, and understanding of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women into Canadian society. I analysed data in three stages, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open Coding

The first stage of data analysis was open coding, where conceptually similar data were organised into categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this stage, I used Nvivo, software for analysing qualitative data to organise data into categories. At this stage, I organised data using three strategies: first according to interview questions and responses; I used each category on the interview guide as a parent node in NVivo; the questions that came under each category were then coded as child nodes. In Nvivo parent, nodes are “connecting points for subcategories” (Bazeley, 2007.p.83). For instance, the introduction section was coded as a parent node *Experiences with your partner*. A question such as *when did you meet your partner?* was coded as a child node. Interview responses to each of the questions were then coded to the respective parent and child nodes. Coding by responses to questions gave me the advantage to pull similar data from all eight interviews together under one subheading.

The second strategy I used to organise data during open coding was the use of the chronology of events in participants' lives. Several questions on the interview guide specifically asked for information that required a time reference: experiences before coming to Canada, experiences of abuse, experiences of leaving the abusive relationship, and experiences after leaving the abusive relationship. Therefore, I identified these as the four distinct categories into which I coded the responses.

The third strategy I used in open coding was categorising data according to Ager and Strang's Integration Framework domains: Markers and Means; Social Connections; Facilitators, and Foundations. I used these four domains as parent nodes in Nvivo, and I coded the ten dimensions as child nodes. I coded interview data about *learning the language* into the child node *Language and Cultural Knowledge*, which was a child node under the tree node *Facilitators*. Data about *friends, relatives, family, social support*, were coded into the parent node *Social Connections*.

I further created subcategories for the categories identified from the stage described above. For example, under the main category of *leaving the abusive relationship*, I identified *under what circumstances, for what reasons, and what factors, or barriers participants encountered*, as subcategories. These three *open coding* strategies gave me the advantage to pull similar data from all eight interviews together under one subheading. They also allowed me to read data horizontally thereby allowing me to familiarise more with interview data. This is consistent with grounded theory in that data is first organised according to predetermined categories thereby reducing data to

manageable chunks (Neuman and Krueger, 2005). Once I had identified subcategories, I went on to look for patterns, common themes, differences, and similarities between and within categories and subcategories. During this first stage of data analysis, some patterns began to emerge; I recorded these as memos in Nvivo and saved them for later review and exploration.

Axial Coding

Axial coding was the second stage of data analysis. In Axial coding, the researcher determines links between categories and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.124). The purpose of this stage is to get a deeper understanding of emerging concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.125). This stage is guided by questions such as, where, when, how, why and with what consequences (ibid). Accordingly, I determined the links between categories and subcategories identified in open coding above. Some of the themes that began to emerge at this stage include the centrality of children and of immigration status in participants' experiences.

Selective Coding

The third stage of data analysis was selective coding. In selective coding, the researcher determines how themes identified at the previous two stages of analysis are related (Neuman & Krueger, 2003). I used the two major themes identified in axial coding as the central issues and I determined how other coded data were related to them. For example, I went through the data looking for how children influenced women's

experiences during the abusive relationship, while they were leaving and after they had left. I also looked for similarities and differences in participants' experiences between the times when they were in the abusive relationship and after they had left.

Ethics

Feminist research principles guided this thesis. Feminist research requires that the researcher make necessary ethical consideration throughout the research process, especially regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity (Cook & Fonow, 1986). Such considerations are important because they require the researcher to respect and not to exploit participants. Feminist research ethics require the researcher to be reflexive of the power differentials between themselves and study participants.

Adherence to feminist principles required me to take the necessary steps to ensure that I was conducting the study in a manner which was respectful to participants and which valued their input as experts in their own experiences. Therefore, before gathering data I sought and received approval to conduct research with human participants from the Research Ethics Committee at Carleton University. I made special ethical considerations about the specific needs of participants, who because of their refugee status, language barriers, and their experiences of male partner constituted a vulnerable population. I made provisions for language interpretation for the participants who needed it. When I interviewed a participant with the assistance of a language interpreter, I explained to the language interpreter the confidentiality needs of the participant and asked the interpreter to sign a confidentiality agreement form.

In addition, throughout the research I was attentive to the confidentiality and anonymity needs of research participants. As such, I transcribed interviews myself and removed all identifying information. I also kept tapes and interview transcripts in a locked cabinet, to which only I had access.

Informed Consent

Upon meeting the participant, I explained the purpose of the study, and the procedure. I emphasized the rights of the participant to refuse to answer questions, and to withdraw from the interview or study without penalty. I also explained the measures I had in place to maintain the participant's anonymity (no names or any other personal information were to appear in the final report; quotations were not attributed to individual participants). I sought the permission of the participant to audio tape the interview, and explained that I would keep tapes in a locked file cabinet to which only I had access, and that at the end of the study, I would destroy all audio recordings of the interviews. I informed participants that they had the right to refuse to be audio recorded without penalty, and that they could choose not to have parts of the interview audio recorded. I then gave a participant five to ten minutes to review and sign the consent form. I proceeded to activate the recording device and start the interviewing process after a participant had given written and verbal consent to be audio recorded.

During the interview that I conducted with the help of a language interpreter, I explained the role of the language interpreter to participants, and the measures that were

in place to ensure the interpreter would keep all information confidential. I then sought the verbal consent of the participant to use a language interpreter.

The steps that I took in conducting the study ethically are not unique to feminist research. However, what made the steps consistent with feminist research was the reflexivity I engaged in while I took them. I was conscious to the power differentials between the participants and I, and I made that clear to the participants at the beginning of the interview. I explained the power that I had as a researcher and their vulnerability as research participants. I remained aware of these differences and how they might be a hindrance to informed consent. To minimize the effects of power differentials on informed consent, I explained that I was aware of how these power differences might cause them to do things against their will. When I asked participants to sign the consent form, I gave them a chance to express their fears and reservations regarding taking part in the study. By doing so, I gave them a chance to raise their concerns ahead of consenting to participate. I validated their concerns, and reassured them that I would take the necessary steps to keep their information anonymous and confidential.

I was also aware that power differentials gave me the power to ask questions, and to later on decide what was important for analysis of the findings. In non-feminist research, participants' powerlessness relegates them to the role of answering the researcher's questions, and to not have any influence on what the researcher considers in the analysis. For this reason, I explained to participants that they had the permission to ask me questions during the interview. I also let them know that they had the permission

to review their interview transcripts, and to determine what would be considered for the study. One participant expressed interest in reviewing the interview transcript, however, I failed to reach her through the contact information she had given me.

Risks

The interviews required participants to reflect on the impact that experiences of abuse from their male partner had on their integration into Canadian society. For some participants, such reflections triggered past painful and traumatic memories. To mitigate this, at the beginning of each interview, I gave each participant names of counsellors in the Ottawa area who provided free counselling, whom the participants could contact if they needed counselling (see Appendix D - Resource list for free counselling services in Ottawa). I also reminded each interview participant about her right to refuse to answer any questions and even to completely withdraw from the interview. Moreover, during the interview, I was attentive to a participant's reaction, to questions. When there were signs of distress in the interview participant, I stopped immediately, and only proceeded at the participant's request.

Two participants showed signs of distress during interviews. In each of these interviews, I immediately stopped the interview and proceeded a few minutes later at the participant's request. In either case, I made it clear to the participant that she would not suffer any consequences if we ended the interview at that point. I also let either participant know that we could reschedule the interview to another date if she chose to do so. However, both participants asked me to proceed with the interview. At the end of

each of the eight interviews, I reminded each participant about the availability of free counselling should they choose to use it.

CHAPTER FIVE - PRE- TERMINATION STAGE: ABUSE AND ENDURANCE

This chapter presents findings on the effects of abuse and structural barriers on the integration of study participants into Canadian society. I present study participants, the different forms of abuse they experienced, and issues that were of significance for participants at this stage. I also discuss the impacts of abuse on participants on the various areas of Ager and Strang's framework.

About Study Participants

I interviewed eight female participants, whose age ranged between thirty and forty nine years. Participants came to Canada from diverse regions of the world as follows: Africa, Asia, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. While all eight participants fit the criteria of refugee women outlined in the sampling section of the research methods, the ways in which they became refugees were diverse. Three participants were convention refugees upon arrival in Canada. Two participants came to Canada to seek refugee protection. Two other participants were under diplomatic visas upon arrival. However, for fear of persecution in their countries of origin by the government because of disclosing male violence by their husbands in Canada, they sought refugee protection. One participant had come to Canada to visit her Canadian husband, while she waited to be sponsored by him. As part of the abuse, her husband threatened to send her back to her country of origin and harm her and her children once they had returned. She feared returning, and felt safer in Canada; therefore, she filed a refugee claim.

The length of time participants had been in Canada at the time of the interview ranged from less than two years to over twenty years. Two participants had some post secondary education, three participants held a college diploma, and the other three held one or more university degrees. All eight participants had children whose ages ranged between one year and over twenty years.

Six participants had married their partners in their countries of origin, and two met their partners in Canada. Three of the participants who married their partners before coming to Canada had experienced abuse prior to coming to Canada; the abuse continued after they arrived. For the other three, abuse started soon after they arrived in Canada. For two participants who met their partners in Canada abuse started when the relationship started. The length of the abusive relationships ranged between a few months to several years. Four participants experienced abuse during the entire marital relationship, a period that ranged between seven years and over twenty years.

Forms of Abuse

Participants reported having experienced the following different forms of abuse.

Verbal abuse:

- *I tried to avoid all the arguments with him, I used to leave and go to the basement to do laundry or to do something else but he followed me all the time and continued calling me names.*
- *He started to abuse me verbally by calling me very bad words.*
- *Everyday he would come home and scream at my daughter and me.*

Physical abuse:

- *He was very aggressive; I remember he pushed me to go outside.*

- *He would just hold my hair and punch my head to the wall, and push me down the stairs.*
- *I was nine months pregnant it was almost my due date. He was drunk, he came in he started to beat me up, and he was yelling and screaming.*

Sexual abuse:

- *He started to abuse me sexually, by forcing me to have sex with him. I was just out of my mind I did not want this man to touch me anymore.*

Financial abuse:

- *Abuse started by him drinking, abusing alcohol, and the minimum financial resource we had.*
- *My children went to school without lunch for several days. I told the school that I didn't have money; my husband didn't give me any money.*

Control and manipulation:

- *He told me that I had to stop training and working, and that the only important thing for me was language training. He told me to stay at home "you are a young lady maybe you find another man" he said.*
- *He forced me to breastfeed my child, he told me if I didn't do it I was a bad mother.*

Some partners manipulated participants to further their own gain. One participant for example, was opposed to her partner's political views but was forced to campaign for his political party and to influence people in her social network to support his political beliefs.

Psychological, Emotional abuse:

- *He was very jealous; he said I was a prostitute. He said to my children I was not going to school but going to meet other men; he found ways to shut me down.*
- *He discredited me all over the place, in the church with the people that we both knew. He told them that I was a bad mother.*
- *He said everybody don't use perfume, deodorant lotion, he dumped it in the garbage.*

Isolation:

- *He did not want me to be in contact with my children so he did all the possible to cut communication with me.*
- *He turned my family away from me.*
- *He stayed at the office, because at his job there was an apartment, he lived there.*
- *He never came into my room; he did not say anything to me.*

Participants also reported various forms of neglect including not being provided with necessities such as food, health care or a healthy living environment. One participant reported that her abusive partner neglected to provide food, “he didn’t go to buy groceries, and there was no food in the house.”

Consistent with various studies of male violence against immigrant women, participants in this study reported having experienced immigration related abuse. Abusers perpetrated immigration related abuse in a variety of ways including threatening participants with deportation, “he said that he will take me to the airport and return me to my country.” Abusers also perpetrated immigration abuse by withholding their power to process immigration documents. For example, one participant’s partner did not submit application forms for sponsorship, causing her to remain undocumented and ineligible to access essential settlement services.

Key Factors during the Abusive Relationship

Two key issues that emerged to be significant about participants’ experiences during the abusive relationship were the influence of immigration status, and the presence of children.

Immigration Status

This study found that immigration status was a key factor in participants' experiences during the abusive relationship. While most participants came to Canada to seek protection from persecutions, some participants had come under different immigration visas which were dependant on their relationship with the abusive partner. In other words, participants' right to stay in Canada depended on the male partner's immigration status. For example, one participant was on a visitor's visa while she waited to be sponsored by her husband, a Canadian citizen. She depended on her husband's status to remain in Canada. This dependency created a power imbalance between participants and their partners and caused participants to be vulnerable to abuse. Two participants for instance were threatened with deportation if they disclosed abuse. Another participant's partner withheld his responsibility to process application forms for sponsorship, leaving the participant undocumented and helpless.

Immigration status influenced participants' responses to abuse while they were in the abusive relationship. Participants who were in the midst of the refugee determination process were reluctant to act on the abuse because they feared that it would negatively affect the outcome of their refugee case. For example, one participant was afraid to call the police because she feared deportation. Another participant was afraid that leaving the abusive partner would affect his refugee case, which was dependant on her case. Therefore, she feared that if she left him, his claim would be invalid, and he would be deported.

Motherhood

All eight participants were mothers. They had children before leaving the abusive relationship. The number of children ranged between one to nine children whose ages ranged between less than one year and over twenty years at the time of abuse. It therefore did not come as a surprise that for all eight participants, motherhood was central in their lives.

The concerns and issues that came up about children differed from one participant to the other based on the age of the children at the time of abuse. Both young and older children played a role as the source of strength for participants, even when children were used by the abuser to perpetrate abuse. In cases where participants experienced abuse from children, participants understood this to be part of the dynamics of the abusive relationship where the abuser was using children to further his cause, and therefore did not hold anything against their children.

Participants who had older children reported that some of the roles their older children played included intervening and defending them from abuse. However, some older children were even manipulated by the abusive partner to abuse their mothers. A participant who had children between the ages of sixteen and twenty four years reported that her children were manipulated by the abusive partner to abuse her. "He took all my children and made them revolt against me." Participants experienced different forms of abuse from their children, including physical and verbal abuse.

Older children also played a role in intervening when participants were experiencing abuse. One participant recalled that her older child intervened when her husband was abusing her, “When the child heard that we were arguing ... my older child said mom you come to my bedroom and sleep in my room.”

Children were also part of strategies participants used in order to stop the abuse. One participant for example was experiencing abuse before she had children with her husband; she considered having a child a solution to the abuse. She had thought that the value her husband’s culture placed on children would make him stop abusing her. In fact, she had thought that his parental responsibilities to a child would make him change his behaviour. “I decided to get pregnant because I knew that in my culture when men have children the cultural value for children is very high, I said okay this is the best way to stop his behaviour.” To the contrary, when she became pregnant, the abuse continued. She continued to experience abuse during pregnancy and after the child was born. Consequently, the abuse she experienced during pregnancy caused medical complications for her newborn child.

Participants expressed how strongly they felt about their children, and how devoted they were to their children. For these reasons, participants reported that while they were in the abusive relationship, their role as mothers made them strong. One participant recalled of the times when the abuse was taking a toll on her mental and physical wellbeing. The only reason she had survived and went on living was her role as a mother.

- *I wanted to sleep and not wake up anymore but every morning, I would think okay I have to wake up, I have to prepare lunch bags, and I have to send the children to school.*

For these reasons, she stayed strong and remained in the relationship.

Impacts of Abuse

The impacts of abuse on participants were explored along the dimensions of refugee integration of Ager and Strang's (2004) framework outlined in Chapter Three. In the following section, I will present the findings about the effects of abuse on participants in pre- termination stage on safety, enrolment in education/training, employment, social networks, language training, cultural acquisition, housing, and health.

Impact of Abuse on Participants' Safety

All participants reported that while they were in the abusive relationship, they lived in the fear of violence from their partners. For some, this was the main reason why they left the abusive partner. Participants also feared for the safety of their children, and friends. One participant reported that no day would go by without the abuser physically assaulting her. Another participant's husband threatened to kill her if she reported abuse. Therefore, male partner violence was a barrier to their sense of safety.

Abuse and Language Skills

Participants' accounts suggested that abuse had a negative effect on their ability to learn the language. Six participants did not have knowledge of either official language when they came to Canada. At the time of abuse, only three participants were familiar with either of the official languages.

Abuse caused participants stress. This stress was compounded by their limited English language skills. One participant reported that the abuse was an addition to the stress she was already experiencing because of her lack of English language skills, the trauma she had experienced in flight, loss of family members due to persecution, and forced displacement.

- *I was in so much depression because ... I had to deal with many things at the same time. Being in a new country with no family, no language, nothing, and having a partner that was so abusive were very difficult. I could not take it anymore.*

Abusers affected participants' language learning in one of four ways; by preventing them from enrolling; by stopping them from continuing with language training, causing them to attend language erratically, and the stress from abuse caused them to perform poorly in ESL. One participant was isolated and could not enrol into ESL. Another participant's abusive partner caused her to attend ESL training sporadically, which affected her language acquisition. Another participant reported that her concentration and performance in ESL was affected by the abuse, she could not understand what the ESL teacher was teaching, could not think straight, and she could not do her homework well, she recalled:

- *Of course, it affected me at school. When the [ESL] teacher used to say things at school, I could not concentrate. I could not understand what he was saying. When he gave us homework to do I knew that I could do the homework but I couldn't think. My teacher sometimes looked at me and asked "What happened to you? I know you can do it."*

Some participants suffered from the pressure of learning the language and carrying out other responsibilities, especially housework and child rearing duties. One participant was overwhelmed by motherhood and the demands of attending ESL because she got no help from her partner. As a result, she was always late for ESL classes. This finding corroborates previous research of immigrant and refugee women on how gender roles interfere with women's ability to learn the language of the host society (Beiser & Hou, 2000).

Impact of Abuse on Acquiring Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge is defined in this study as familiarity with the Canadian system, and services. Only one participant was familiar with the Canadian system when she was in the abusive relationship. The rest reported limited to no knowledge of the Canadian system. Abuse directly affected participants' ability to learn about the system. One participant reflected back on the difficulties she experienced getting from one place to another and using Canadian money, or writing cheques. Several participants reported that at the time of the abuse, they had no knowledge about the existence of abused women's services. This was particularly the case for participants who were isolated or were not participating in activities outside the home. One participant explained how she pleaded with the abuser to be allowed to leave the house and get around so she could know her way around, but her partner prevented her. As a result, she had no knowledge of where she could get help.

In contrast to those who were isolated, participants who were enrolled in ESL, university, or college, or who were employed, reported having some knowledge about how to get around, and some knowledge about violence against women services, shelters, police services, and counselling services. One participant gave an account of how she became aware of the police at her job before her abusive partner stopped her from working. In her place of work, her coworkers were telling a joke about 911. Because she did not know what 911 meant, she asked for clarification. “I wrote it in my diary,” she recalled. This same participant went on to explain how she became aware of shelters. Her coworkers were talking about someone who was living in a shelter. “It’s a safe place for abused women... that is a safe place, the abuser can not touch you,” they advised her.

Limited knowledge about the Canadian social service system negatively influenced participants’ responses to the abuse. Some participants knew some of the options they could have used, but did not have all the information about how to use those options. For instance, one participant had intentions to call the police on her abusive partner, but did not know how to go about it. Therefore, her limited knowledge about the way the police worked in Canada prevented her from contacting the police. Her knowledge about the police was based on the police in her country of origin, which would not have responded in a helpful way to the abuse, had she reported the abuse.

- *When my husband was aggressive with me, I didn’t know about the police, I did not call the police because the only police I knew were in my country, who don’t help abused women.*

Other participants who were not familiar with the Canadian system during the time they were in the abusive relationship also would have responded to the abuse a lot sooner and in different ways, had they been aware of the Canadian system and the services that exist for women who have experienced abuse.

Impact of Abuse on Education and Training

Findings from this study suggest that male partner violence affected participants' education and training. Because of abuse, some participants were forced to stop, or were prevented from engaging in education and training. In addition, abuse negatively affected the performance of participants in the areas of education/training. However, a surprising finding was that because of abuse, some became more involved in their education and training activities, and even performed better.

Some participant's narratives indicated that abuse prevented them from enrolling into educational or training programs. For example, one participant wanted to pursue nursing training, but the abusive partner forced her to work in menial employment instead. She considered the abusive relationship to have been an obstacle in her career pursuits. She also thought that leaving the abusive relationship could have allowed her the chance to achieve her goals.

During the time of the abuse, one participant who was in a skills training program was forced by her abusive partner to stop her training altogether. A participant who was in college training faced pressure from her husband to stop her training; however, she

resisted. The performance of another participant who was in university was negatively affected. She lamented that her grade point average dropped from as high as 95% to 75%. Not only did she end up reducing her course load to the bare minimum permitted by the university, she also could not get into the program of her choice upon completion.

Experiencing abuse encouraged some participants to improve their performance in education. For example, one participant who was in college training reported that the abuse made her work harder at her studies, as a result, her performance improved. In other words, working on upgrading her skills was her act of resistance against the abuse. Her abusive partner had used his power and control to prevent her from going to college. She resisted his control and continued with her education. The escalation in the abuse made her realise that by gaining an education she was empowering herself, and that her abusive partner was threatened by this empowerment. Therefore, her education was a way of fighting back. In addition to that, working harder at her studies was her way of coping with the abuse. Her performance in her studies was outstanding; she even received an award as recognition for her outstanding academic performance upon graduation.

Impact of Abuse on Employment

The data supports the observation that male partner violence was a barrier to labour force integration. Participants were prevented from engaging in employment. In some cases, abusive partners managed to do this by manipulating immigration documents, thereby keeping participants ineligible to work in Canada. For example, one participant

reported that her husband had not sent her application papers for permanent residence to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for processing. As a result, she could not work in Canada, she lamented, “I couldn’t work because I didn’t have a work permit, my husband didn’t send my papers to the immigration department.”

The findings from this thesis seem to indicate that abuse caused participants who were already in the labour force to stop working. One participant reported that her partner forced her to stop working because he was afraid going to work would expose her to other men. “Stay at home you are a young beautiful woman, maybe you will find another man.”

Not all participants who were working were forced by their abusers to stop. Even though some participants continued to work while they were experiencing abuse, their work performance was tremendously affected. None of the participants ever missed work because of the abuse, but they had low spirits, sadness, depression, and were tardy. Two participants talked about how they used to go to work sad and depressed, which were noticed by both coworkers and employers. One participant’s co-workers noticed that something was bothering her; nonetheless, she remained mum about the abuse. Another participant’s employer noticed, and when she disclosed the abuse, her employer supported her emotionally and gave her information about available services and about her rights in Canada.

Some participants were forced by their abusive partners to work more than they normally would have. For example, one participant's partner refused to work, but forced her to work more shifts. Disturbingly enough, this was regardless of the fact that she was pregnant and was working a physically demanding job.

Some participants were pressured into working jobs that were not of interest to them. For example, one participant was forced to start working menial jobs soon after arriving in Canada. Her preference had been to learn English and to get Canadian training in order to get recognition for her foreign credentials. Working in menial jobs was a draw back to her pursuits to work in her career field.

All the findings discussed above led me to conclude that while participants were in the abusive relationship, abuse affected their participation in the labour force and the employment dimension of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework.

Impact of Abuse on Housing

Abuse seemed to have had a negative effect on participants' quality of housing. It also caused participants some housing instabilities. Some abusive partners subjected participants to sub-standard and unhealthy housing arrangements. For example, one participant's abusive partner neglected to make necessary repairs and maintenance to the house in which she lived with her children. She explained how repairing and maintaining the house had been his responsibility over the years. However, as a form of neglect and financial abuse, he deliberately absolved himself of these responsibilities. She was not in

a financial position to take on this responsibility of repairing and maintaining the house. As a result, the quality of the house continued to deteriorate to a point where the health authorities' inspection results deemed the house unsafe for human habitation.

Some participants attributed the housing instabilities they encountered while they were in the abusive relationship to the abuse. These instabilities occurred because of evictions, and financial abuse by the male partner. One abusive partner's behaviour caused a participant several evictions. He was abusing their financial resources; and could therefore not afford to pay rent.

Impact of Abuse on Health

Participants' narratives suggest that male partner violence affected their health. They made connections between the abuse and their experiences of depression, insomnia, and physical injury, abuse during pregnancy, eating disorders, weight fluctuations, stroke, paralysis, migraines, and muscle pain.

Three participants received treatments for depression during the time they were in the abusive relationship. Two participants received psychological assessment and treatment. Three participants experienced abuse during pregnancy, for one of these participants, abuse caused medical complications for her newborn child. Another suffered a miscarriage at some point during her on-again off-again relationship with her former abusive partner. Considering that literature makes a connection between abuse during pregnancy to occurrences of miscarriages (Oxman-Martinez, Krane & Corbin,

2002; Statistics Canada, 1999; Sev'er, 1996) one could be led to the conclusion that the miscarriage was a result of abuse.

Some participants sustained injuries as a direct result of physical abuse. For example, one participant described the nature of the physical abuse she experienced and its effects on her physical wellbeing in the following interview excerpt:

- *He would hold my hair and push me to the wall. He threw me out from the stairs...I could not walk for a long time. The permanent effect it had on me is a permanent knee injury.*

Abuse prevented participants from accessing healthcare. Financial and immigration related abuse were the two main forms of abuse that caused this effect. One participant's abusive partner deliberately stopped paying for her medical insurance and that of her children; therefore, they could not access health care. Because of her immigration status during the abusive relationship, she did not have provincial health coverage; therefore she required private health coverage. As a result, when the participant and her children needed health care, they were left in debt, and were deterred from accessing health care later on.

- *He did not pay for me at the hospital and we did not have any insurance. When we went to the hospital we had to pay \$300- \$400. It was very expensive.*

Another participant's abusive husband did not file her immigration documents with Citizenship and Immigration Canada for processing; therefore, she could not apply for the provincial health plan. Consequently, she did not have access to health care.

- *My children and I had no doctor. One time my child hurt his/her toe, my husband did not take the child to the doctor because it was expensive, he went to the pharmacy instead. My child did not receive the proper medical attention.*

Participants' narratives revealed that they had paid little attention to their own health especially at the time of the abuse. This was evident in the ways in which this section of the interview required most probing for all eight participants. Most participants commented on how their focus had been on their children's wellbeing rather than on their own health. "I don't even think about my health," reported one participant. Another participant explained how she had chronic muscle pain which required medical attention; however, she considered seeking attention for her own medical needs a lesser priority than the welfare of her children.

- *When I have a cold I never think that I should go to the doctor because I always tell myself you should forget yourself.*

This is consistent with the assertion by Jiwani (2002) that women's care-giving roles often take precedence over their own needs including health care needs, which causes them to care about other people and to trivialise their own health care needs. This can be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of refugee women whose health may already be compromised by their experiences during flight (ibid).

Impact of Abuse on Social Support Networks

From the eight participants in this study, it appears that abuse directly affected participants' ability to form social support networks while they were in the abusive relationship. They had few social networks when they were experiencing abuse. None of

them had relatives in Canada. Their networks consisted of friends, and acquaintances. The reasons for small networks include the fact that they were new to Canada and away from their family and friends in the country of origin. Some participants however, chose to limit contact with other people as a way of coping with the abuse. For other participants, the isolation that they were subjected to by their abusive partners was to blame.

All participants in this study reported that coming to Canada had cost them their social networks, which consisted of friends, relatives, and acquaintances.

Limited/ few social networks seem to have had an influence on the ways in which participants dealt with the abuse. One participant explained how having no relatives in Canada limited her options for dealing with abuse. She recalled her helplessness at the time of the abuse when the only person she knew was her abusive husband:

- *In my country I had so many relatives, but in Canada I have no one except this guy. I came with him, so where do I go now? I wondered.*

Alienation from Community

The effect of abuse on participants' connections with their community groups, cultural, religious, or other social group seems apparent in this thesis. One participant's abusive husband spoke badly about her to their community. The community then sided with him, which forced to withdraw from the community altogether. She described her experiences of being treated as an outcast from the community "I went perhaps twice or three times to the church in the community [name] but every body looked at me like I

was the bad one. Because of that, for years I didn't relate with anybody from the community.”

Literature reports that when women are a part of a social/cultural/religious community their networks may be the same as those of their abusive husband's, which may play a positive or negative role in the abuse. The community may play a positive role by supporting the abused woman or by stopping the abusive partner from abusing her. The community may also play a negative role by ostracizing the abused woman for disclosing abuse or for leaving the abuser.

Participants, whose social networks were limited to the abusive partner's immediate family in Canada, had this social network severed. Upon arrival to Canada, they had contact with the relatives of their abusive husband, however, as abuse continued, the abusive partner severed these connections.

- *I used to talk with my mother in law. One day she didn't want to talk anymore, because he had told her that I was going with other men.*
- *His sister [stopped talking to me] because he talked to her about me... She never talked to me anymore she was discrediting me all over the place. At the beginning she was showing us where to go like to make appointment with a social worker, to go to the health system for the vaccination for the children, and things like that... But I remember that one day I needed translation I called her and I asked if somebody from her family could come with me. She said "Nobody can come with you, and I have to tell you that from now on you are on your own."*

Even when participants had established social networks before getting involved with the abusive partner, abusive partners severed these connections. One participant had friends at some point during the abusive relationship; however, the abusive partner alienated her from her friends. Another participant described how her abusive partner used very subtle control tactics to sever her ties with her friends, for example by not giving her telephone messages from them. Another abusive partner did not allow the participant to invite her friends to the house. Severing connections with friends and family is a control tactic that abusive partners use in order to isolate women from networks (Abraham, 2000; MacLeod & Shin, 1990).

Reasons for Remaining in Abuse

Having heard from participants about the forms of abuse they suffered and about the impact of the abuse, I was curious to learn why they remained for as long as they did. One main reason participants remained was the hope that abuse would end. “I was hoping he was going to change,” commented one participant. Another hoped that the abuser’s maturity would make him realise the impact of his behaviour on his family. This hope was sustained by participants’ efforts to make the abuse stop. For instance, one participant had hoped that having a child would make him change his behaviour. As a result, she remained during the entire pregnancy.

Other reasons for remaining include motherhood, a lack of knowledge about the Canadian social service system, cultural considerations about the family unit, lack of support, language barriers, and because the abuse was at a level they could tolerate.

Given that abuse affected the four domains of Ager and Strang's framework, it is reasonable to conclude that reasons for remaining in the abusive relationship were barriers to participants' integration into Canadian society. Some of the reasons for remaining were also the barriers they faced when they decided to leave, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter Six.

In summary, this chapter presented participants' experiences prior to leaving. These findings suggest that male partner violence and structural factors such as immigration status, and language barriers presented challenges for participants' integration into Canadian society.

CHAPTER SIX – TERMINATION STAGE: TAKING ACTION

Chapter Five presented participants experiences of the abusive relationship. This chapter examines participants' experiences of leaving the abusive relationship or the termination stage. It discusses the reasons for leaving; barriers encountered in leaving, and factors that facilitated leaving.

The termination stage was a stage of transition in participants' interpretation of the situation. The hope that the abuser would change was replaced by the hope for a better life without violence. Despite the hope and the attempts they made to stop the abuse pre-termination stage, most participants came to the realisation that the abuse was not subsiding. In fact, most participants reported that the abuse was escalating. For instance, one participant left when he started to abuse her sexually in addition to other forms of abuse he had used previously such as verbal, financial, and emotional abuse,. This was an indication to her that abuse was getting worse; therefore, she decided to leave.

At this stage, participants started to think about ways of escaping the abuse, and the barriers they might encounter. Participants' narratives suggested that leaving the abusive relationship was significant to them because for most, it marked the end of the power and control that abusive partners exercised during the relationship. This was replaced by participants' own control over decision-making. Leaving the abusive partner, for some, also opened up different opportunities such as to work, learn the language, and to make friendships. Leaving also disrupted the household structure and regular household routine. For instance, some participants had to stop their work or education when they

left the relationship. For these reasons, participants reported that leaving the abuse affected their integration into Canadian society.

Taking Action

From the participants' narratives about experiences in the relationship, and barriers to leaving, it appeared to me that escape from abuse was very challenging. The fact that all participants left despite these challenges, demonstrated the significance of leaving. Driven by hope, and other factors, all participants, took control of their lives by leaving abuse. Leaving was symbolic of the shift in power dynamics from the abusers to the participants.

Circumstances of Leaving

Two participants went to social service agencies, while the abuser was away. From there, they were referred to shelters. One participant disclosed abuse to a person she met in a shopping mall, who then referred her to a settlement agency. Another participant fled to the neighbour's house, following an incident of physical abuse. From there, she went to a shelter. Yet another participant was taken to hospital, for complications resulting from abuse during pregnancy. From the hospital, she went to a shelter. One participant asked the abuser to leave after an incident of abuse.

Reasons for Leaving

Participants reported three main reasons for leaving the abusive relationship: first, considerations for children's wellbeing; personal strength; and diminished external pressure to stay in the abusive relationships.

Considerations for Children

Participants made it clear in the interviews that they were aware of the effects that abuse might have on children who either witness or experience it, hence, their decision to leave. Other studies have reported similar findings on participants' considerations for their children's safety and wellbeing as a reason to leave or stay in an abusive relationship (Ballantine, 2005).

Concerns for children's safety were one of the reasons for terminating the abusive relationship. Even though some participants might have stayed in the relationship for the sake of their family unit or for the wellbeing of their children, it was only for as long as the children were safe from the abuse, they left when abuse compromised the safety of the children. Participants took the responsibility to protect children from witnessing abuse and from victimisation. The following excerpts from two participants' narratives demonstrate this finding:

- *He became so mad and grabbed the child by the collar and wrestled [child] at the door... I said to him, leave the house now.*

- *And after one month he hit me and hit my children, I called the police... the police came to my home and ...took me and my children to [name] shelter.*

Personal Strength

Shifts in participants' perspective about the abuse were also reasons for leaving the abusive partner. Some participants used to blame themselves for the abuse, however, their perspectives on the abuse shifted from blaming themselves, to the realisation that it was the abusive partner's fault.

Participants recognized/acknowledged their own strength. One participant reported that the abuse had caused her to believe that she was powerless. However, the older she became and the longer she experienced abuse, the wiser she became about ways to break free. For most participants, it was the recognition of their own strength that gave them a sense of control over their own lives and the reason to leave.

Another reason for leaving was when participants could not endure any more abuse. They left because they felt that their threshold for tolerating the abuse had been reached.

- *And I said to him enough is enough, you are not worth anything, and then I grabbed my baby and ran out of the home to the gas station.*

Experiences of previous abusive relationships were also reasons for leaving. For instance, one participant attributed her decision to leave to her experiences of abuse in a prior relationship. She reported that not leaving an earlier abusive relationship had been

a mistake she lived to regret and did not want to repeat. Therefore, when the later relationship turned abusive, she decided to leave immediately.

Participants' hope and optimism about their future in Canada facilitated leaving. "It was a challenge but I had hope for the future. My future was bright," commented one participant. Leaving was with the hope that they would be able to participate in activities that abuse had prevented them from participating.

External Pressure

Participants who experienced male partner violence before they came to Canada did not leave the abuse then because of pressure from their family, as well as from religious and cultural values. However, in Canada, they experienced less pressure from their family, cultural, and/or religious values, therefore, they left.

Barriers to Leaving

Similar to what I found in the literature, for these women, once they decided to leave, they faced barriers to leaving the abuse. Barriers such as lack of information regarding rights and services, lack of immigration status; and child welfare authorities, prevented them from leaving.

Lack of Information: Participants who lacked information about their rights and about available services faced barriers to leaving the abuse. Access to information was particularly difficult for participants who were isolated, who relied on the abusive partner

for information about life in Canada, services, and rights and entitlements. Often, this information was untrue and a threat to their help seeking endeavours. For instance, two participants reported that their abusive partners told them that they would be deported if they sought help. As a result, these participants found it difficult to seek help and to leave the abuse.

Immigration Status: Immigration status was another barrier to accessing services and leaving the abuse. Participants whose immigration status depended on their partners faced this barrier, because of the probable repercussions of leaving the abuser on their immigration status, and for some on the abusive partners' status as well. The dependence of participants on their partner's immigration status created a barrier to accessing services and to leaving. For instance, one participant who was under a diplomatic visa at the time of abuse explained how her immigration status stood as a barrier. She also reported that this barrier made her doubt whether she was ever going to leave the abusive relationship.

- *I tried to explain my problem to so many places but when they discover that, I am a diplomat they said ohh god we cannot do anything. I did not have anywhere to go. No one could help me.*

Immigration status was a barrier to accessing help when abusive partners used their power to block the immigration process. A participant whose partner did not process her immigration papers for the one-year period she was married to him and living in Canada, faced this barrier. When she tried to get help to deal with the abuse, the various services she contacted told her adamantly that she was not eligible to receive their services because of her undocumented status.

The only way participants who faced immigration status barriers could access services was by changing their immigration status. At the time of the interviews, seven participants had been granted refugee protection, one was still waiting for her refugee hearing.

The processes involved in changing status often caused delays and created barriers to accessing essential services. Immigration status is the eligibility criteria for accessing services such as social assistance and social housing. Therefore, delays in the processing times of immigration documents also delayed access to these services. Two participants stayed in shelters for four months before they could move into permanent housing.

- *I was in the shelter for 4 months; it took time because I had to change status to refugee claimant.*

Even when participants' status was not dependent on their partner, immigration status played a part in the abuse. Abusers took advantage of participants' refugee claimant status to instil fear and intimidate participants, especially if they were to seek help. For example, one participant's abusive partner prevented her from seeking help by misinforming her about her rights as a refugee claimant.

- *Because I was a refugee claimant, I was scared to call the police I did not want this to go inside my file. The first time he hit me and I reached for the telephone, he said yeah call now, and they will handcuff you back to your country. I was scared.*

Participants who were not dependent on their abusive partners' immigration status, also faced barriers to seeking help due to their immigration status. Two participants were

on the same file of the refugee application as their partners. As a result, they were concerned about interfering with the application process. They delayed accessing services, for fear of jeopardizing refugee claims.

Cultural and Religious Beliefs: Participants also attributed some of the barriers they faced to their cultural and religious beliefs. One participant mentioned that her religious upbringing influenced the way she thought about divorce, and therefore thought she had no choice but to stay. Considerations about the upbringing of children were another cultural barrier to leaving the abusive relationship. Participants reported the cultural importance of raising children in a two-parent home, rather than a single parent one.

Fear of Child Welfare Authorities: Some participants' fear of losing children to authorities was another barrier to leaving. One participant recounted her encounters with the child welfare authorities, who apprehended her children because she had disclosed abuse. Her awareness of the child welfare's response to her experiences of male partner violence prevented her from leaving the abusive relationship later on.

Some participants reported that they had never had any encounters with the child welfare authorities, but had heard about how the authorities would respond to disclosure of male partner violence by apprehending children. A few participants reported this misinformation to have been a barrier to leaving the abusive relationship. For instance, one participant sought counselling but could not open up to the counsellor because she

was afraid of losing her children. Another feared for her life because of the abuser, but could not report to the police because she feared they might apprehend her children.

Children: Children were also a barrier to seeking help and to leaving because they wanted to be with both parents. For instance, when one participant went to a shelter, her children went with her but insisted on going back to their father. Another reason why children were a barrier to leaving was because services for abused women did not make the necessary provisions to accommodate children. For example, one participant was not provided with childcare while she attended college. As a result she contemplated returning to the abuser.

Factors that Facilitated leaving

Five factors facilitated participants' ability to leave the abusive relationship: (1) knowledge about their rights, (2) the availability of social support, (3) being in Canada, (4) the hope that leaving the abusive relationship would lead to better outcomes, (5) a sense of control over their own lives.

Knowledge about rights: The immigration status of some participants remained a central issue while they were in the process of leaving. Some participants found their immigration status as a reassurance of safety that they might not have received elsewhere. Participants responded to the abuse by leaving because they felt that as convention refugees, they were entitled to protection under Canadian law.

Being in Canada: Being in Canada facilitated the leaving of some participants.

The fact that they were in Canada gave them the foundation to consider leaving the abusive relationship. They would have found it difficult to leave the abusive relationship had they been elsewhere, such as in their countries of origin, or other parts of the world. They reported that even if they had been able to leave the abusive relationship prior to coming to Canada, the culture, society, religion, or government of their country of origin would have heavily sanctioned them. These sanctions would have included the stigma attached to being a single mother, or from a broken marriage, and losing children to the partner following a divorce. Therefore, being able to leave the abusive relationship is something they attributed to being in Canada. In particular, participants considered the democracy, human rights record, and women's rights upheld in Canada to be anchors that made it possible for them to leave the abusive relationship. One participant who had considered leaving her abuser before coming to Canada commented:

- *In [name of country], they don't have women's rights...but when I came here it helped me a lot because many years I had been thinking about how to leave abuse, but I did not have the environment. It is important if you have the environment, it can help you to realise your dream. That is what happened when I came here to Canada. I can say that Canada helped me to be independent (from abuse).*

Another finding was that being in Canada allowed participants who had experienced abuse before coming to Canada to gain a different perspective on the abusive relationship, which contributed to their ability to leave. One participant had attributed the abuse to the differential social status in her marriage, where she had higher social standing than her husband had. When abuse continued in Canada, despite the equality

they shared in terms of their social status as refugees, and without knowledge of either of the official languages, she could no longer attribute the abuse to power differentials in their relationship, because there was none. She believed that the perspective that she gained on the abuse after coming to Canada would not have occurred, had she stayed in her country of origin.

- *I was hoping when we moved to Canada this would be a new beginning and both of us would be in a country starting from zero without any position for any job any language or anything. And I said well okay, it will be good for the whole family to start again. Unfortunately, it was worse.*

Hope: Even though participants' hope for the abusive partner to change was a reason to remain in the abusive relationship, the hope for a better future motivated them to leave. Leaving was with the hope that they would be able to participate in activities to which abuse had been a barrier. The decision to leave was supported by the hope that life without the abuser would be better. The evidence that hope was a facilitating factor was the frustrations and disappointments they expressed about the structural barriers they experienced upon leaving, which they did not anticipate.

Support: Support from social services facilitated leaving. Support came from the police, women's shelters, counsellors, and violence against women's services. For some participants, friends and family members living abroad also provided material and emotional support.

Seeking Support

Earlier on in this chapter, I discussed how participants realised their own strength and took action by leaving the abusive relationship. Another way they took action was by seeking help to leave the abuse.

Awareness about Services

The availability of information about services was crucial for participants' help seeking endeavours. Sources of such information include service providers and informal networks of friends, classmates, or acquaintances. The most common source of information was social services that participants were in contact with, such as family doctors, hospitals, counsellors etc. These services then became the source of more information about other services and resources. This snowball effect for instance occurred to a participant who was not aware of any services for abused women. She went to the hospital following a medical emergency that was a direct result of neglect from her abusive partner. The doctor who treated her advised her about going to a shelter.

Participants who were studying in school/college/university received information from classmates and/ co-workers, counsellors and employers. One participant received information from her coworkers during informal discussions about life in Canada in general. Another participant received information from her employer. Another participant who was in college training saw posters with information about counselling at

her college campus. When she went to seek counselling she also received information about other service providers.

Some information came from informal networks such as friends, acquaintances and from their children. One participant reported that her child told her about the role of the police in domestic abuse cases. She later on called the police after an episode of physical abuse from her abusive partner. Another participant relied on her neighbours for information about services available in the community.

Use of Services

Participants took action to leave the abuse by seeking help from women's shelters, reception houses, counselling services, violence against women's services, settlement services, medical services, and police services. Participants considered a service helpful when they were either served in their language of choice, or provided with language interpretation services. Participants reported that some policies and procedures as well as language were barriers to accessing help.

Counselling: Seven participants reported that they used counselling services, which were to some extent helpful. They characterised their counsellors as attentive and caring. Counsellors provided referrals to other services and gave relevant information. However, two participants reported that they could not open up to the counsellor because of fear of losing their children to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). Another participant found the scheduling and procedures for seeing a counsellor too restrictive to work with.

Some participants received counselling from counsellors from their countries of origin. They reported dissatisfaction with the responses they received regarding the abuse. For example, one participant's counsellor advised her to go back to the abuser because the abusive partner "seemed like a nice man." She was also advised not to call the police because CAS would get involved and apprehend her children.

Some counselling services were inaccessible to some participants because of their connection to people within their own cultural/language communities. One participant found that the service she was accessing was also serving a person who was close to the abuser, who then told the abuser about her use of the service. As a result, the participant had to stop using the service altogether. Another participant was seeking counselling from a renowned professional from her community, but the abusive partner also wanted the services of the same professional. When the professional chose to help her, her partner made false infidelity allegations about her. As a result, her standing in the community was compromised; she withdrew from involvement in the community and stopped getting help from the professional.

Police Services: Participants called the police because they feared for their safety and wanted to leave the abuser. Three participants called the police following an incident of violence. Four participants received police assistance to leave the abusive partner. One participant's abusive partner was taken into police custody and charged with wife assault.

Some participants were not pleased with the help they received from the police. One participant found that her immigration status (diplomatic visa) was a barrier to getting help from the police. They could not remove her abuser from the diplomatic residence, to ensure her safety. Therefore, she considered the police ineffective in addressing her safety concerns.

Language was also a barrier for one participant when she contacted the police. The police did not make any effort to provide language interpretation. She found it difficult to explain why she needed help.

One participant's experiences with the police were negative because of her abusive partner's run-ins with the law. When she needed their protection from the abuser, they used that as an opportunity to investigate her abusive partner's criminal involvement. She described several incidents when the police ignored her concerns for safety, but threatened to make allegations of child abuse to child welfare authorities if she did not co-operate with their investigation.

Abused Women's Shelters/ Reception Houses: Seven participants went to women's shelter at some point during the abusive relationship, or when they left the abusive partner. Three of them reported having used shelter services more than once. Two participants reported having had positive shelter experiences; however, five participants had bad experiences.

Positive experiences were about supportive workers, safety from the abusive partners, and the opportunities for making friends. Negative feedback was about shelters' policies and staff's conducts.

Positive Experiences from Shelters

Participants generally felt that the shelter provided safety from the abuser. One participant stated that being in a shelter made her feel protected, "The shelter was not that much cozy but it was very safe."

Living in a shelter allowed some participant to form social networks and to improve their language skills, "Living together with women from different parts of the world was very nice especially for learning the language and exchanging culture."

Participants also expressed the feeling that the shelter facilitated their transition into life away from the abuser. Shelters gave participants a place to stay while they sorted their lives out, for instance finding permanent housing, changing immigration status. Some participants received material resources such as school supplies, "The shelter was good for the children. They were given school materials and other donations."

Five participants received housing help from the shelter. Housing workers assisted them in finding permanent housing and other necessities such as furniture. One participant was helped to relocate from one city to another.

Staying in a shelter helped some participants to build their social networks. They regarded their experiences of meeting other participants and sharing their culture and life experiences as positive aspects of their stay in the shelter. In fact, for some participants, the networks they made in the shelter became part of their social support network after they left the shelter. For one participant, her positive experience in a shelter was because she received counselling, information, emotional support and advice for the first time. In her view, the shelter facilitated her integration into Canadian society.

Negative Experiences from Shelters

Five participants had negative experiences in shelters. Two types of negative experiences from shelters were reported: first, those that were a result of policies and procedures of the shelter, and second, those that had to do with the practices of workers.

Policy related experiences include the lack of counselling services in the shelter to help them deal with the abuse they had fled. Most participants felt that the shelter of all places should have given them a counsellor to help them deal with the trauma from the abuse. Instead, participants relied on counsellors in other organisations, or simply did not have any support to deal with the trauma of the abuse.

Displeasure with policies regarding finding permanent housing, time out of the shelter, allocation of resources, chores, and duties were also reported. Participants felt that these policies were not enforced consistently to all residents; as a result, participants felt unequally and unfairly treated. For example, two participants spoke about the

housing policy that stipulates that each shelter resident get three options of houses to choose from when looking for permanent housing. However, when it was their turn to find housing, they were pressured to taking the first or second option that became available, regardless of their interest in it. They were even given an ultimatum to either take the option that was available or leave the shelter.

- *Finally, the supervisor said this is our policy everybody has to take the first offer, and after me, everyone took the first offer. But in the policy I read, it says each person has to have three options. I was very hurt at that time.*
- *They gave televisions to some clients but not to others. They did not give the donations properly they were not fair.*

Time restrictions regarding the length of stay allowed in a shelter were also a shelter policy that participants expressed dissatisfaction with. Participants who went to shelters where there were time limits to the length of stay; found this to be a major impediment to their endeavours to leave the abuser. These participants felt that this policy was enforced whether or not participants had found alternative accommodation to move to. Instead, some participants found themselves on the street, with no other option but to return to the abusive relationship. It came as no surprise when one participant reported that she returned to her abusive partner when her length of stay in the shelter had lapsed and had nowhere to go.

The living arrangements in shelters were also another cause for concern. The space limitations, the arrangement of the living space, cooking, and sleeping areas contributed

to feelings of discomfort. One participant complained that there was no privacy, and there was no dining area, therefore after cooking, she had to eat where she slept. She found these living arrangements uncomfortable, “Of course, the shelter is not that much comfortable, you cook, you eat there, you watch TV there, you sleep there, and everything is in this small area. That was bad.”

Another participants’ discomfort from the shelter’s living arrangements was the way in which space was allocated to families. Her children were given a separate room from where she slept. She was not comfortable being separated from her children. When she complained and insisted that she share her room with her children, she was expelled from the shelter. On the other hand, another participant was uncomfortable sharing one room with her child.

Shelter staff was a cause for dissatisfaction for some participants. participants reported that they found workers in the shelters uncaring, and unsympathetic to their experiences of abuse, “They treat people like children.” commented one participant. Some participants characterised the attitudes and demeanour of the staff of the shelter in which they stayed as having been abusive.

Participants felt that the workers seemed oblivious to the trauma they had experienced due to abuse, and the refugee experience. Participants shared several accounts of shouting, yelling, and unfair allocation of resources, such as bus tickets by shelter staff. “I told them that someone who came to work for the women in the shelter

must be caring, but the lady talked to women in the shelter without any respect,” one participant commented. Participants also reported an overall lack of support from the shelter staff. For example, participants who needed information about their refugee application did not get information or referrals to services that could provide these services. Participants also felt that shelter staff was insensitive to their predicaments.

Some participants experienced language barriers in accessing shelter services. However, for some, children broke the language barrier by providing language interpretation. For example, one participant found her children useful in providing translation especially during her stay in the shelter. Therefore, she did not consider her limited language skills a barrier. However, the use of family members in translating for abused women may be a barrier in serving abused women because women may not be at liberty to talk about male violence to family members (MacLeod & Shin, 1990).

To sum up, in this chapter I presented findings about the second stage or the termination stage. I presented the barriers that participants faced when they were ready to leave. I also presented factors that facilitated leaving.

The barriers that participants faced when they wanted to leave the relationship had an impact on their integration into Canadian society. This is because barriers that prevented them from leaving caused them to remain in the abusive relationship where their integration was hindered by male partner violence. In this stage however, the

impact of abuse on integration was not apparent. What was apparent was the impact of structural barriers to leaving.

CHAPTER SEVEN - POST-TERMINATION STAGE: FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE

Chapters Five and Six presented the pre-termination and termination stages and the implications of these stages on participants' integration into Canadian society. In this chapter, I will discuss the termination stage, during which participants took action to leave, and also during which stage they left the abusive relationship.

In order to show the impact of this stage on participants' integration into Canadian society, I will discuss the positive and negative outcomes of leaving the abusive relationship. I will also discuss the significance of motherhood.

One might assume that because participants had left the abuse, the path to integration became smoother. However, to the participants, and the researcher's surprise, this was not the case. The post termination stage was characterised by barriers to integration similar to those experienced in the previous two stages.

The Significance of Motherhood

Motherhood carried considerable significance for participants' integration during post-termination. The safety and well-being of their children was a priority for all participants. All, except two participants, had primary custody of all their children after leaving the abusive partner.

After leaving the abusive partner, motherhood influenced participants' decisions about housing, employment and training. As discussed in other parts of this report,

participants' mothering roles often took precedence over their career goals. For instance, some participants felt that they had to make difficult choices between studying and/or working, and child rearing roles. When some participants had opportunities to pursue their education or career objectives, child-rearing roles made it difficult for them to do so. Work schedules or career options were also dependant on what they considered best for their children. Similar pressures forced one participant to give up her language training and to focus on her parental responsibilities.

However, participants' narratives indicated that after leaving the abusive relationship, motherhood facilitated their integration because of involvement in their children's education. For instance, some participants were compelled to learn English faster because of the responsibility to help children with their schoolwork.

Outcomes of Leaving the Abusive Relationship

There were positive and negative outcomes of leaving the abusive relationship. Positive outcomes included safety from the abusive partner, control over resources and decision-making. Negative outcomes from leaving were harassment from the former partner, loss of privileges, poverty, and other structural barriers. All these outcomes affected participants' integration into Canadian society.

Positive Outcomes of Termination

In post termination stage, most participants were free from the abusive partner's power and control. This allowed participants to gain a sense of safety, to regain control over their lives, as well as opportunities to participate in Canada.

A Sense of Safety from Abuse: Some participants felt safe during post termination. This was mostly because they had left, and were not in a relationship of any kind with the abusive partner. Some participants felt safe because they lived in a shelter. Others felt safe because of the geographic distance between their former partners and them, such as different cities, countries, and provinces.

The change in immigration status from 'dependant' to 'independent' status caused other participants to feel safe from the abusive partners. Three participants, who changed their status after leaving the abuser, gave this as a reason for their sense of safety. They felt protected by the Canadian government. When asked about how she felt about her safety after she left the abusive relationship, one participant replied:

- *I am protected now as a refugee claimant, but before I changed my status, I was not safe. I was scared, I feared for my safety. I was very scared. When I went to the store, I thought every man looked like my husband. Now this is like my country, because I am under the government of Canada.*

To elaborate further on why she felt safe after leaving the relationship, she gave an analogy of a *hen and her chicks*.

- *My child and I are chicks and Canadian Government is a hen, we are under her wing. The abuser is a cat, which tries to attack a chick, but the hen hides them under her wings.*

Opening up of Opportunities for Participation: Leaving the abusive partner also opened up opportunities for participants to build their social networks. Some participants formed friendships during their stay in the shelter and continued to maintain them after they left. For participants who had been prevented from engaging in ESL, employment, training, and recreational activities, after leaving the relationship, engaging in these activities allowed them to opportunities to build their networks. However, three participants felt that the abuse had caused them to be less trusting of other people; therefore, they had a reluctance to form networks even after leaving the abusive relationship.

Gaining Control: After leaving the abusive partner, most participants gained a sense of control over their lives. Some of the control allowed participants to make career decisions, decide on living arrangements, and decide on how to use their resources. For most participants, this was the first time they had gained such control in their lives. One participant for instance, who had never made major decisions in her life, referred to the time after leaving as the beginning of her life as an autonomous being. Another participant felt that she was not his puppet anymore; she could live her own life.

Gaining control was a positive factor for participants' integration into Canadian society. This was because they used this control to engage in areas that the abusive partner had prevented them while they were in the relationship. For example,

participants exercised control over decisions regarding language training, employment, education, and housing.

Participants' narratives about this stage in their lives carried undertones of control. The enthusiasm they showed in describing the decisions they made and the outcomes of those decisions was evidence to me that a sense of control was a positive outcome of leaving the abuse. They also took ownership of the outcomes of such decisions, whether they were negative or positive. This sense of control allowed participants to gain a perspective on the structural barriers they faced. This was because even though participants took control of their lives, they continued to face some barriers to their integration into Canadian society. As a result, they realised that in addition to abuse, there were other structural barriers to their integration into Canadian society.

Negative Outcomes of Termination

Leaving the abusive partner created obstacles for participants' integration into Canadian society. Some of the obstacles were similar to those they faced in the previous stages, for example, fear of violence, immigration status. Structural barriers such as poverty, family break up, lack of childcare, and loss of privileges were felt during this stage.

Fear of Violence: This thesis found that even though for some participants leaving abusive partners resulted in freedom from control and abuse, some, abusive partners

continued to be abusive by means of threats, harassment, stalking, and a variety of control tactics. Half the participants remained fearful of their former abusive partners.

Sev'er reviewed several studies of male partner violence and concluded that women were at a higher risk of violence upon separation (Sev'er, 2002). Anderson and Saunders (2003) also made the same conclusions from their review of literature and empirical studies.

One participant fled her former partner to another city. Another participant received death threats. Her former partner also threatened her lawyer, social worker, and other helping professionals she was in contact with. Three participants commented on their concerns about their safety after they had left the abusive partner:

- *Safety wise, I never felt that safe even after I left him. I was running.*
- *I was scared, I feared for my safety. I was very scared.*
- *Whenever I was on the bus I had to look at each one of the faces to see if he was there.*

Former partners used the contact they had with children as opportunities to harass participants. "Sometimes he was calling me ten times at night at home and then I kept talking to him, he wanted to control me." One participant described how her former partner harassed her by making false allegations of child neglect, and threatening to take the children from her care, "Abuse was worse when we separated because he started to harass me and threaten to take my children away. He accused me of not taking care of the children."

For another participant, harassment was in the form of child abductions. Although she had sole custody of the children after she left the abusive relationship, her abusive partner would from time to time take the children from her to different parts of the country without her knowledge. The participant found these experiences very traumatising.

Family Break up: Another consequence of leaving the abusive relationship was the end of the marriage, and the break up of the family unit. Most participants children remained in their custody, however for two participants, children were separated from either parent. These two participants considered the separation of children one of the worst consequences they suffered for leaving the abusive relationship. The value they placed on a two-parent family caused participants to consider this a negative result of leaving the abusive relationship. The break up of the family unit was also a barrier to integration because of the challenges they encountered raising children as single mothers, with little or no financial support from their former partners.

Loss of Privileges: Change of immigration status and a loss of entitlement to certain privileges that came from being in a relationship with the abusive partner were also reported as consequences to leaving the abusive relationship. While in the abusive relationship, participants were enrolled in skills training, language training, working, or receiving financial support. However, engagement in these activities and financial support were based on the participants' relationship with the abusive partner, and on their immigration status. Therefore, leaving the partner signified the end of their access to

these resources and programs. Two participants' study permits were dependent on their marriages to their abusive partners. As a result, when they left the abusive relationship, their study permits became invalid.

Poverty: Living in poverty was another negative outcome of leaving the abusive relationship. After participants had left the abusive partner, they did not receive financial assistance from their former partners towards raising their children. Even though former partners were in comparatively better financial positions, they did not contribute to the welfare of the children in meaningful ways, such as providing for food, or other necessities. As a result, participants were left with no choice but to shoulder most responsibilities of raising children. To add insult to injury, former partners would buy material things such as luxury cars, or live frivolous lives, while the participants struggled to put food on the table. Four participants even considered going back to the abusive partner due to financial hardships.

Because of financial hardships, participants were on some form of government assistance such as social assistance and/or working part-time, as well as raising children. Some participants relied on student loans. Participants raised concerns that such government assistance was inadequate, that there were too many restrictive conditions for eligibility, and that there were too many controls and limits on how they could use the money. Most participants reported that social assistance was not sufficient to cover their living expenses and other costs associated with raising children. One participant expressed frustration at how social assistance could not help her transition into a stable

life after leaving an abusive relationship. She also expressed her frustrations with the demands of having to pay back her student loan. She felt that as a single mother, she did not have enough support to stand on her own two feet after she had left the abusive relationship.

Most participants used the family court system to recoup child support from their former partners but got either very little support or nothing at all. Participants explained how their partners worked in jobs that paid them in cash, which they would not report, for tax purposes. As a result, partners' income tax reports reflected lower incomes than what they earned.

Literature suggests poverty to be a form of exclusion that prevents newcomers from integrating into a new society (see for example, Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Castles et al., 2002). Living in poverty affected their wellbeing. Participants reported that they worried constantly about financial resources during post termination stage. Even though I did not ask whether they were better off financially prior to this stage, it appears poverty was not a concern for them before they left abusive relationships. This led me to conclude that for participants in this study, the poverty they experienced upon leaving abusive relationships was a barrier for their integration into Canadian society.

Post Termination Integration Experiences

After leaving the abusive partner, participants encountered structural barriers, owing particularly to their gender, social class, and immigrant status and to

responsibilities of sole support parenting. These barriers affected participants in such areas as employment, education, housing, and health.

Education and Training

Participants faced barriers to education and training while they were in the abusive relationship. However, leaving the abusive relationship did not automatically guarantee women's ability to engage in education or training. Rather, women encountered a set of barriers because of care giving duties, immigration status, and poverty.

Sole support parenting was a barrier some participants faced. One participant explained how after she left her partner, she reduced her university course load to the bare minimum because she had to work part-time to supplement her income. The stress of work, school, and raising a child as a single mother negatively affected her performance. She thought that her career prospects were undermined. It had been her hope to go to medical school; however, her reduced performance reduced her grade point average and prevented her from enrolling into medical school.

- *Honestly, if I did not have abusive husband, I would definitely have my PhD in medicine.*

Immigration status prevented some participants from enrolling in training.

Participants whose immigration status was dependant on the partner lost the eligibility to study when they left the abuse. For example, one participant stopped ESL when she fled the abusive relationship because her permit to take ESL became invalid. She resumed ESL after filing her refugee claim.

Poverty was also a barrier some participants encountered in accessing education and training. For instance, one participant had every intention to go to university; however, because she was raising her children without help from her former husband, she could not afford to go to university. She decided to put her career training goals on hold and concentrate on working menial jobs to supplement her social assistance allowance, in order to raise her children. She explained how her own objectives to enrol into university and acquire Canadian credentials had to wait until her children had graduated from high school and/or could take care of themselves.

- *Now I need the money and I need to work in the house like cooking and cleaning (for my children). Therefore, I stopped studying I am just working. I will go to university after my child graduates from high school, and goes to university.*

Despite these barriers, at the time of the interview, two participants had completed university studies, another was seeking enrolment into university, and another was hoping to get into a training program within a short while of the interview.

Employment

The previous two stages revealed the barriers that prevented participants from integrating into the labour force. Leaving the abusive relationship opened up opportunities to participate in the labour force. Participants whose performance had been affected by the abuse reported drastic improvements. However, leaving the abusive relationship exposed women to new challenges with employment. Such challenges include the hardships of finding adequate childcare, the demands of other parental

responsibilities; non-recognition of foreign credentials; language barriers; and immigration status.

Sole Support Parenting: Sole support parenting responsibilities reduced participants' capacity to work. The demands of caring for children fell on most of participants' shoulders because they had primary custody. Lack of childcare resources contributed to this barrier. Even though most participants had been the ones in charge of caring for children before leaving the abusive relationship, some of the responsibilities were shared with their partner. After leaving, all the responsibilities were left to the participants. As a result, participants' financial needs increased, but their capacity to work declined. One participant faced many restrictions in the number of hours she could work, and on the shifts she could work.

- *I think my work capacity was reduced. Because for example, I could not take shifts at night, I had to take care of the children. I couldn't, for example, work extra hours to gain a little more extra money at my job because I had to come back to cook for the children, and to help them with their homework.*

Another participant's work schedule was organised around her children's school hours.

Her children went to school from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon.

Therefore, the only shift she could work was one that fit between those hours. As a result, she had to depend on the discretion of her employer to have a flexible work schedule. She was fortunate that her manager sympathised with her situation and accommodated her unique needs.

- *I told the manager that I could only work from 9am to 4pm. I am very lucky because my manager is good.*

Non-Recognition of Foreign Credentials: Participants' labour market integration was prevented by the non-recognition of foreign credentials. This barrier was evident during this stage because prior to termination, the direct effects of abuse prevented the participant from participating in the labour force. It was only after they left the abuse when participants faced barriers getting jobs in their career field. Four participants were foreign-trained professionals who had hoped to get Canadian recognition for their foreign credentials, and work in their fields upon leaving the relationships. However, during post termination, their credentials were not recognized by employers. As a result, they worked in areas outside their profession at lower incomes. "In my country I was a (Professional) and here in Canada I am a cleaner..." lamented one participant. "In my country I had a bachelor's degree, and I finished university, I was working a government job but now I work in the kitchen (restaurant,)" commented another.

Language Barriers: During post termination, language barriers prevented some participants from integrating into the labour force. These language barriers were a result of barriers encountered in the first stage, during which access to language training was prevented by male partner violence. Language barriers were also a result of the negative outcomes of leaving the relationships, whereby participants' sole support parenting limited their opportunities to participate in language training. As a result, limited language skills stood in participants' paths to labour force integration. For example, one

participant reported that she could only work as a cashier because her English skills were not good enough for administrative work for which she had been trained in her country of origin. Another participant was working in the fast food industry because of her limited English language skills; some participants delayed seeking employment until they were comfortable with their language skills.

Immigration Status: Participants' ability to engage in the labour force was hindered by lack of legal status. Participants who applied for refugee status upon leaving had to wait until they had been issued a work permit. Until then, they could not work.

Access to Healthcare

Participants experienced barriers to accessing healthcare after leaving the abusive partner. Some participants reported that single motherhood was a barrier to accessing health care, especially for regular medical check ups. This was because of lack of childcare, and the demands of work. One participant whose foot had required surgery for a long time could not take time to do so. As a result, she did not get the necessary attention required to address her problem.

- *I have a chipped bone from the bottom of my foot... so since last year I have been walking on it because I cannot go to have it looked at.... Because who is going to take care of the kids for three months. And I am busy so I cannot make the appointment to go to the doctor.*

Three other participants gave similar accounts regarding obstacles they faced in accessing health care during post termination stage.

Housing

Leaving the home to flee abuse caused housing instability for participants. Most participants left the home where they lived with their partner and went into a shelter, a friend's house, or a hotel room. In other words, abuse removed participants from a stable home to temporary unstable living arrangements. Often, participants left their belongings and had to start again from scratch.

In the post termination stage, immediate accommodation, whether temporary or permanent, was a necessity. All but one participant, whose abuser left the house, fled their homes either to go to a shelter or to live with a friend. Temporary or emergency housing was a foundation for their ability to find permanent housing. Temporary accommodation addressed their immediate safety needs; permanent housing afforded them stability.

Judging by the amount of time participants spent talking about their experiences with housing after they left, it appeared to me that housing carried the most significance. In fact, it was the participants focus on the barriers they encountered in housing in the post termination stage, which led me to this conclusion. The barriers they faced in temporary/ emergency housing were discussed in Chapter Six. Some of the barriers they faced in permanent housing include affordability issues, and safety concerns in social housing.

Permanent Housing

Permanent housing was a top priority during post termination. Participants referred to moving into permanent housing as a new beginning and a significant factor for their integration into Canadian society. Permanent housing was symbolic of them regaining control over their lives and independence from the abuser. Participants took pride in having their own place to live. As an example, participants made constant positive references to their home as a sign of their freedom from abuse.

The influence of Motherhood in Housing: Motherhood was an influencing factor for participants' access to housing. They set higher standards for the type of accommodation they sought. Decisions about the type, location, and size of housing all depended on what they perceived to be in the best interest of their children. One participant was concerned about her child's health condition; therefore, she was particular about the conditions of the house she was looking for. Two participants reported that they were concerned about the safety of the neighbourhood and the influence it might have on their teenage children. The locations of the house with respect to children's schools were also considerations participants made in deciding where they were going to live upon leaving the shelter.

Safety: According to Ager and Strang (2008), safety contributes to the integration of newcomers. However, some participants were concerned about their safety during the post termination stage. Participants who lived in social housing raised this as a concern

more than those who lived in private market housing. For instance, two participants who lived in social housing reported that their neighbourhoods had a reputation for drugs and criminal activity, and that they were not conducive for raising children. In fact, one participant's house had been broken into twice in the previous year. For these reasons, a lack of safe housing was a barrier to their integration into Canadian society.

Affordability: Affordability of housing was another issue participants grappled with after leaving abusive relationships. All eight participants experienced housing problems as single mothers with limited incomes, often from social assistance and part-time work after leaving the abusive partner. "You work just to pay for housing," lamented one participant. Another participant paid market rent for her one-bedroom apartment, her social assistance, and her part-time job could barely cover her living expenses.

- *I pay for my one bedroom \$800 (market rent). It's very hard. [Compared with the time I was with him] the rent was better, but now, it is hard for me.*

Another participant could not afford to pay rent; she ended up living in a small room in a basement, doing household work as payment. For this same participant, the conditions in the basement triggered a pre-existing breathing condition to resurface and worsen.

- *I asked if I could baby-sit, I had my own child. They showed me a room in the basement it was a toys room and then a little room, which was only one bed set up for the student... I was doing the baby sitting, cooking, and cleaning for them in order to get some money.*

Delays in Accessing Social Housing: Four participants moved into social housing from abused women's shelters. They faced barriers due to the length of time it took before they could find suitable accommodation. This was despite having priority status on the housing registry due to abuse. Some of these delays were a result of the barriers caused by eligibility requirements for accessing social housing. Participants who did not have legal status when they fled abuse had to wait until they had filed their refugee claim. Therefore, the delays they encountered in the processing of their refugee claims, delayed their access to social housing.

Coping Strategies

From participants' narratives, it was interesting to learn that despite the hardships they encountered in post termination stage, they considered leaving the relationship a positive factor for their integration into Canadian society. They continued to have hope for the future. Their ability to cope with barriers after leaving the abusive relationship was because of the hope for a good future in Canada. For example, one participant whose children had repeatedly been apprehended by the Children's Aid Society (CAS) maintained the hope that she would be at a stage when she would have a happy life in Canada. Another participant hoped that after completing her university education, she would start her own business. Yet another hoped to do career training, get a job, and get off government assistance.

Participants' Strengths

This thesis explores the impact of abuse on the integration of refugee women. However, such a focus may run the risk of obscuring the strengths and agency of participants. Therefore, it is important to highlight that they were not passive victims of the abuse. In fact, participants had agency in the ways in which they coped with abuse, resisted the abuse, or were resilient to the abuse.

Narratives about participants' experiences of leaving the abusive relationship and how they confronted the barriers they encountered along the way showed their strengths. Participants resisted abuse, by challenging the abusive partners' behaviours, talking back and/or not succumbing to their controlling and manipulative behaviours. They also used various strategies to cope with the abuse. In addition, they were creative in how they dealt with the abuse. One way was to bury themselves in their roles as mothers. One participant coped by getting more involved in her education. Yet another participant disconnected any feelings she might have had for the abuser, so that the abuse would not hurt her emotionally. Most participants attributed their coping strategies to their faith.

They attributed some of their survival through these experiences to their hopes and optimism about their future in Canada. "It was a challenge but I had hope for the future. My future was bright," commented one participant, concerning her ability to face the challenges of abuse.

It was also evident that all eight participants were reflective about the abuse and its impacts on their integration into Canadian society. Although they may have had a different interpretation while they were in the abusive relationships, at the time of the interviews, their understanding was that abuse was result of unequal power distribution. They differentiated between the direct effects of abuse and the effects of oppressive social structures that they encountered upon leaving. Most participants located the source of the problems they encountered in poor policies, at the government level or within social service agents. For example, participants who experienced immigration related abuse, raised questions about the immigration system and the way in which it gives spouses power over their dependents.

My observation from this finding is that experiencing abuse allowed study participants a different perspective on social issues in general. In addition, experiencing abuse helped to raise participant's consciousness about the various oppressions they faced because of their social location as immigrants, women, racial minorities, and how these different social locations are interlocked. While some participants had considered abuse their personal problem when it first began, by the time they left the abuse, they also understood it to be a structural problem. My understanding was that the extension of perspective occurred because of their lived experienced of male partner violence.

Participants' perspective on the impact of abuse was that it was a catalyst for their personal growth. They believed that experiencing and leaving abuse had made them much stronger than they were before the abuse.

- *Without an abusive husband, I would not be as ambitious; I would not be as assertive as I am.*
- *I came out of the abuse a stronger woman.*
- *Abuse made me stronger.*

One participant strongly believed that abuse helped her become aware of services that were available for refugee women. She found the services useful not just in dealing with the abuse but also in her overall integration into Canadian society.

To sum up, this chapter presented what participants experienced in various areas of their lives after they had left the abusive relationship. They continued to face structural barriers to integration during this stage.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women has not been explored in the literature in Canada. In this thesis, I attempted to contribute to this gap by exploring the impact of male partner violence on the integration of eight refugee women, using a feminist theoretical framework and Ager and Strang's Integration Framework. Ager and Strang's framework provided the domains that were looked at in studying the impact of male partner violence on the integration of participants into Canadian society. On the other hand, feminist theoretical framework was a lens through which barriers and obstacles to participants' integration were viewed. I interviewed eight refugee women who had left abusive relationships. I coded and analysed data using N-Vivo and grounded theory techniques respectively.

Summary of Findings

Four main findings came out from this thesis as follows: First, the relevance of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework for the study of the integration into Canadian society, of refugee women who have experienced male partner violence; Second, the relevance of using a feminist lens in this study; Third, participants went through three stages in responding to male partner violence, at which they experienced obstacles that challenged their integration into Canadian society: pre-termination, termination and post termination stage. These three stages corroborate Bostock, Plumpton & Pratt et al.'s (2009) findings about the stages abused women go through when they experience and leave abusive relationships; and fourth, the presence of factors that affected participants'

decisions to leave the abusive relationship, and to participate in Canadian society. These factors were: hope, a sense of control, and motherhood.

In addition to these four main findings, this thesis confirmed previous research findings about the barriers faced by refugee women who have experienced male partner violence when they attempt to leave the abusive relationship or seek services (e.g. Mosher et al, 2004; MacLeod & Shin, 1990). It contributes to this existing knowledge by making the connections to show the impact of these barriers on the integration of refugee women.

Reflecting on Ager and Strang's Integration Framework

This thesis observed the impact of abuse and of structural barriers on participants on all four domains of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework (markers and means, facilitators, social connections, and foundations domain). It indicates the significance of this framework for the study of refugee women's integration because all four domains were significant to participants at all three stages.

Markers and Means: Education, employment, health, and housing constitute the *markers and means* domain of Ager and Strang's (2004) Integration Framework.

Participants' narratives indicated that male partner violence and structural barriers affected their involvement in education, employment, health, and housing in all three stages. For instance, in the pre-termination stage, participants' ability to integrate into the labour market was constrained by the abusive partner and immigration status.

Similarly in post termination stage, participants' ability to participate in employment was limited by structural barriers such as the lack of child care and the non-recognition of foreign credentials.

Social Connections: Social bonds, social links, and social bridges constitute the *social connections* domain of Ager and Strang's (2004) framework. Participants reported the effects of abuse and structural barriers on their social connections in all three stages. For instance, in the pre-termination stage, abuse prevented participants from forming friendships, and from joining any activities that could create opportunities for making relationships with people from their own communities, or with Canadians in general. Participant's networks were an important source of support and resources at all three stages. For example, at pre-termination stage friends and acquaintances gave participants information about their rights and about services.

Facilitators: The Facilitators domain comprises language and cultural knowledge as well as safety and stability dimensions. Male partner violence and structural barriers compromised participants' ability to gain knowledge about the Canadian system and to learn the language. Participants' reported poor performance in ESL, which was a direct result of male partner violence. Their senses of safety and stability were also affected by male partner violence at all three stages. For instance, participants lived in the fear of violence in the pre-termination stage; this fear was a barrier to their integration into Canadian society. Some participants were harassed by their former partners during the

post-termination stage. Participants' stability in housing was compromised by leaving an abusive relationship because leaving involved moving to a different community.

Foundations: The integration of refugees into a new society according to Ager and Strang (2004) is influenced by their citizenship and rights. Immigration status defines refugee's rights and eligibility for various aspects of life in Canada, such as financial assistance, access to the labour market, housing, or education. Refugee claimants are not entitled to many of these rights. For instance, one participant could not work until her refugee claim had been filed with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and after she had been issued with a work permit. In addition, when refugees lack correct information about their rights, they may not enjoy them.

The effects of both male partner violence and structural barriers on participants, with respect to the four domains of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework, led me to conclude that male partner violence and structural barriers hindered participants' integration into Canadian society. I also concluded that Ager and Strang's Integration Framework was an appropriate framework in carrying out this exploration because it highlighted some of the areas that are important for the integration of participants.

Reflecting on Feminist Framework

This thesis shows the relevance of a feminist analysis in studying the integration into Canadian society, of refugee women who have experienced abuse. Findings from

this thesis also support the use of a feminist lens in the interpretation of male partner violence against refugee women.

A feminist framework allowed me to reflect on my biases and consider them in the entire process of doing this thesis. Feminist perspectives allow the researcher to be reflective of their own biases in an attempt to understand participants' experiences. Reflexivity allowed me to observe the role of systemic barriers in participants' lives. When I embarked on this thesis, I was hoping to make a comparison between participants' experiences before and after the abusive relationship, from which I could then conclude if and how abuse affected participants' integration into Canadian society. The findings of this study challenged this expectation. This was because overall, there was no difference between participants' experiences of barriers to integration before and after they left. Participants continued to face barriers in the post termination stage, which were in some ways similar to those in the previous two stages.

In order to resolve these contradictions and understand participants' experiences, I reflected on my own biases. My bias in this study as a refugee woman, who survived male partner violence was that I individualised my experiences of abuse. I also blamed male partner violence for the barriers I encountered in my integration into Canadian society. I did not locate these barriers within the larger context of gendered inequity. I also did not differentiate structural barriers from the effects of male partner violence. However, through reflexivity, I realised the differences and similarities between my experiences and those of the participants. As a result, I expanded my

attention to seeing not only the barriers to integration due to male partner violence but also due to structural barriers.

I observed that even though male partner violence was a barrier to the integration of participants, particularly at the first stage, there were structural barriers that affected their integration at all three stages. Services such as shelters and the Children's Aid Society were not helpful for most participants, and added some barriers to participants' integration into Canadian society. This shows that institutions could be a barrier to dealing with abuse and to integrating into Canadian society.

An analysis of gender and power hierarchies also allowed me to observe aspects other than those included in the four domains of Ager and Strang's framework. A feminist theoretical framework recognises the oppression of women not as an individual problem, but a systemic problem caused by power hierarchies that are maintained by patriarchy. Bishop identifies two forms of power: power-within and power-over (as cited in Sharma, 2001). Sharma (2001) argues that feminist analysis exposes the 'power-over' women emanating from social structures, and the 'power- within' women, which has the potential to help them deal with abuse. Through a feminist lens, I was able to recognise these two forms of power and their role in participants' integration into Canadian society. For example, the 'power-over' participants included male partner violence, the barriers to accessing services, and to leaving the abusive relationship. The 'power-within' participants were hope, control over ones life, and motherhood, which helped them to cope and survive the obstacles they faced. Through the feminist lens, I observed the

significance of these three key factors to leaving the abusive relationship, and to integrating into Canadian society.

Discussion of the Three Stages

Pre-termination Stage: The first stage or Pre-termination stage was when participants endured but remained in abusive relationships. Reasons for remaining in the abusive relationship included the hope that abuse would end, and the lack of information about rights and services. Some participants also attempted to get help to deal with the abuse. At this stage, male partner violence, and structural barriers such as immigration status, language barriers, affected participants' integration into Canadian society. Male partner violence prevented participants from engaging in various aspects of life in Canada such as employment, education. It also negatively affected participants' overall wellbeing. Male violence was also a barrier to learning the language and to acquiring cultural knowledge. Similarly, participants' ability to form friendships and build their social networks was hindered by male violence. Furthermore, abuse caused participants to live in fear, thereby threatening their sense of safety in Canada.

Factors that could have facilitated participants' integration included safety from abuse for them and their children, immigration status, accessible services, and control over financial resources. Participants believed that because of male partner violence, integrating into Canadian society was more difficult in pre-termination stage.

Termination Stage: The second stage or the Termination Stage was the stage when participants made the decision to leave, took action, and left the abusive relationship. This was the turning point in participants' integration experiences because the power and control that abusers exercised on them in stage one/ pre-termination stage was reduced. Participants identified a number of reasons for reaching the decision to leave, which included concerns for their safety, and that of their children, the hope that they would integrate into Canadian society, lack of pressure to stay in the relationship, and their own readiness to leave the abusive relationship.

At this stage, participants used various strategies to leave the abusive relationship, but faced barriers such as inaccessible and unresponsive services, lack of information about services and their rights, and language barriers, immigration status, and housing. These barriers to leaving the abuse could also be seen as barriers towards participants' integration into Canadian society. This is because the barriers to leaving caused them to remain in the abusive relationships where they faced barriers to their integration into Canadian society. Resources that were necessary for terminating the relationship included stable and affordable housing, information about services and about their rights, and the availability of services that could meet their needs.

Post-Termination Stage: The third stage or the Post Termination Stage was the stage after participants had left the abusive relationship. Participants attempted to start new lives away from the abuser, and free from abuse. Structural barriers such as lack of affordable housing, lack of childcare, the non-recognition of foreign credentials, and lack

of adequate financial assistance hindered participant's integration into Canadian society. For instance the lack of childcare prevented them from fully participating in employment, education and also prevented them from accessing healthcare. In addition, the poverty that participants experienced during this stage could also be seen as a barrier to their full participation in Canadian society. For participants who continued to experience harassment and abuse from their former partner, even at this stage, their senses of safety was hindered. However, despite these barriers to participating in Canadian society, participants felt that this stage was the least challenging for their integration because they were no longer in the abusive relationship. They also felt that their control over decisions was a positive factor for their integration into Canadian society because they could choose how to work within the given limitations. Participants' needs at this stage included childcare, refugee status, access to safe affordable, and stable housing, access to employment, and health care. They also needed safety from the former partner.

The practical significance of identifying these stages is that they help us to identify specific needs and barriers that abused refugee women might experience at different stages of an abusive relationship. It also helps to see how these barriers might affect integration into Canadian society. In addition, identifying the different stages allows better responses to address the needs of refugee women who experience male partner violence. Interventions could therefore focus on women's needs specific to each stage. For instance, at the pre- termination stage, participants needs for information about available services and about their rights could be addressed by doing community outreach

and making information about services and women's rights available through wider outlets such as ESL programs, and the media. Information could also be made available to all newcomers prior to arrival and/or at points of entry.

Important Factors for leaving the abusive relationship, and for integrating into Canadian society

Hope: I noticed the importance of hope at all three stages, which led me to conclude that hope was an important factor for the integration of study participants. Hope for a better future for abused women and their children allowed them to cope and survive the abusive relationship. Participants stayed in the relationship because of the hope that the abuse would end, and that children would grow in a normal family. However, when the hope that the abusive partner would change was dashed by the escalation of abuse, a new kind of hope came into place; the hope for life safe from the abusive partner and that they would be able to participate in various areas of life in Canadian society. In the termination stage, the hope that upon leaving, things would change was a facilitating factor for leaving abuse. Hope for the future helped the participants to cope with the barriers to employment, housing, and the child welfare system that they faced in the third stage (post termination).

This observation has practical significance because it shows that hope could affect integration into Canadian society. Interventions could look at ways of fostering hope for refugee women in general and those who experience abuse in particular. Barriers that abused women face after fleeing abuse might reduce abused women's hope for leaving.

Therefore, removing the structural barriers women face upon leaving, may give abused women hope for the future. Service providers may also raise public awareness about success stories of women who flee abuse.

Control over Resources and over One's Own Life: Control also appeared to be a significant factor for the integration of participants into Canadian society. While they were in the abusive relationship, their experiences were influenced by their limited control over decision-making, finances, and making friendships. Nonetheless, participants' control over resources such as information about services, and their rights, language etc, helped them to leave the abusive relationship. In the third stage (post-termination stage), participants had more control than they did in the previous stages. For example, participants had control over their decision on whether to work or to study, in considering the existing challenges.

Interventions could empower abused refugee women with the necessary resources, information, and support systems. With these at their disposal, abused women might gain the power to take charge of their lives; which might give them control over their lives.

Motherhood: This thesis observed that in addition to hope and control, motherhood was an important factor for the integration of participants into Canadian society. Children were one of the reasons participants remained in the abusive relationship, and why they left. Children were also one of the main reasons why some participants contemplated returning or returned to the abusive partner. Moreover, children played a

role in how participants organised their lives after leaving, in terms of living arrangements and career options. Therefore, I concluded that motherhood was an important factor in the integration into Canadian society, of participants.

This observation corroborates studies that have reported the significance that women place on their children when they experience partner abuse. It also raises the need for interventions to recognize this as strength and use it as a starting point for working towards the safety of refugee women and their children. In light of this observation, it is safe to conclude that the apprehension of children from their mothers by child welfare authorities could be disempowering for refugee women who have experienced male partner violence. It could also hinder refugee women's integration into Canadian society.

Limitations of this Study

I explored the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women by interviewing refugee women who had left abusive relationships. This leaves unexplored, the effects of male partner violence and structural barriers on refugee women who remain in abusive relationships. Therefore, further studies may make comparisons between women who leave and those who do not leave. Findings from such studies could shed some light into the differences between the two groups in terms of their needs and the barriers they face in integrating into Canadian society. These findings could also

help with the design of interventions that help refugee women who stay in abusive relationships.

The sample size of eight participants was relatively small; therefore, it limits the extent to which findings may be generalized for example to other jurisdictions or to other refugee women. Another limitation was that the sample was homogenous in that all participants had children. This might have biased the results to experiences of refugee women who experience abuse and have children.

Sampling bias is another limitation in this study. I used purposive sampling methods to recruit participants. This method of recruitment biased the sample to only refugee women who had accessed those services I contacted. Findings from this study do not generalise to abused refugee women who do not use services.

Factors that Enhanced this Study

Feminist ways of knowing view the researcher's personal experiences as invaluable to the research process. From this perspective, my insider positioning and the reflexivity that I engaged in for the entire duration of the study enhanced this thesis. I came to Canada as a refugee and I experienced male partner violence during my first year in Canada. My experiences of male partner violence, the challenges I experienced before and after I left the abusive relationship motivated me to carry out this study. Moreover, my work with refugee women who had experienced abuse raised my awareness of the

occurrence and prevalence of male partner violence against refugee women. Therefore, as a refugee woman who experienced male violence in Canada, I hold an insider position in this study. The insider position gives the researcher ‘access, rapport, and an easy understanding of the situation of the other, which an outsider researcher may not get’ (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

However, I am aware of the diversity of immigrant and refugee women in such ways as countries of origin, culture, class, religion among other things. I am also aware of my professional and academic positions (social worker, and graduate student), both of which confer a privileged location, which other refugee women may not have because immigrants and refugees have been denied effective participation in Canada on the grounds of lack of Canadian experience and/or education (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2006; Wayland, 2006). In this respect, as a Canadian trained and employed refugee woman, I am also an outsider. As an outsider, I may be oblivious to certain aspects of participants’ experiences. Nonetheless, according to feminist research principles, the limitations of an outsider identity can be mitigated when the researcher engages in constant reflexivity (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Therefore, I remained aware of these two positions and engaged in constant reflexivity for the entire duration of the study. I reflected on my biases to resolve the contradictions that I found in the data with regards to participants experiences while they were in the relationship and after they had left. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.

The diversity of the sample also enhanced this study. The sample was diverse in terms of the age range of participants, the length of time participants had spent in the abusive relationships, and the amount of time that had passed since they left. All this diversity enhanced this study.

Trustworthiness of the Findings

Trustworthiness of research means that research findings can be trusted to represent the meanings presented by study participants (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

Reflexivity, peer debriefing and an audit trail were used to increase the trustworthiness of this thesis.

Reflexivity: Throughout this thesis, I engaged in reflexivity, by acknowledging my position and social location as a refugee women, who experienced and left an abusive relationship, a social worker and graduate student. I also recognised my position in this thesis as both an insider and an outsider to the study. Reflexivity contributes to trustworthiness because through reflection, the researcher acknowledges how their biases influence their interpretation of the data. Lietz, Langer, and Furman (2006) found that in their study reflexivity allowed the researcher to be more diligent in the data analysis, which resulted in increased trustworthiness of their study. I believe that reflexivity increased the trustworthiness of this thesis.

Peer Debriefing: I also used peer debriefing as a way of ensuring the trustworthiness of this thesis. Peer debriefing is a process in which the researcher

“dialogues with colleagues outside the research study who are familiar with the topic, population, or methods” (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). While maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of study participants, I discussed my observations from this thesis with violence against women workers, who are familiar with both the population and the topic. Through these discussions, I was able to see different perspectives and interpretations to the findings as well as similarities to my own analysis of the findings. I also dialogued with other social work graduate students who had completed their qualitative social work thesis. Their familiarity with qualitative data analysis helped me in conducting the analysis of the data, which increased my confidence and trust in the findings.

Audit Trail: An audit trail is another way of increasing the trustworthiness of qualitative research. I kept a research journal documenting my experiences doing this thesis. The journal served as an audit trail for the entire research process. According to Lietz, Langer & Furman, (2006), the advantages of using an audit trail as a way of reducing threats to trustworthiness are that it allows a researcher to document research decisions. It also allows the researcher to document the research procedures and to follow those procedures diligently.

Recommendations

This thesis aimed to explore the effects of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women, and to provide recommendations for social work policy and practice. The following section presents general recommendations for intervention with abused

refugee women, and specific recommendations for abused women's shelters, police, and child welfare services.

General Recommendations for Intervention

- (1) This thesis observed that male partner violence is part of a constellation of the oppressions that refugee women experience in Canada, and that it negatively affects their integration into Canadian society.

Therefore, in order to remove the structural barriers to the integration of refugee women, it is recommended to address the gender inequality that currently exists in different institutions. Some of the structural barriers are highly connected to the barriers that newcomers to Canada face in general such as the non-recognition of foreign credentials, inaccessibility of programs and services. One way that could help remove these barriers is through changing the existing system of accreditation, and allowing newcomers access to training and educational programs.

- (2) Eligibility criterion was a major barrier for accessing essential services such as housing and financial assistance. This was mainly because access to financial assistance, employment, housing etc depends on immigration status.

It is recommended that services such as housing give priority access to women who have experienced abuse regardless of their immigration status.

- (3) Participants encountered barriers accessing services within their cultural/language communities and mainstream services in which people from their communities worked.

It is recommended that mainstream service providers take this into account and provide refugee women the option to be served by someone from outside their communities.

- (4) Participants blamed their vulnerability to male partner violence to lack of information about services for abused women and their rights when they came into the country. Access to reliable and accurate information about available services, and their rights were also a factor in participant's ability to seek help, or leave the abusive relationship.

It is recommended that service providers make information available to refugee women and newcomers by using different media such as ethnic media to reach out to isolated women. Other mediums of information dissemination could be the school system, ESL programs, places of employment etc. There should also be more networking and collaboration among service agencies, so that they are in a better chance to refer women to other services. Information about women's rights and about services for abused women could also be made available at points of entry.

- (5) Some of the practices and policies of the services participants used, such as shelters, counselling, and child welfare services did not appear to have been

informed about gender oppression and power relations. An example of this was when services failed to make provisions for child care or language interpretation. As a result, they failed to respond to participants' needs.

This thesis recommends gender-based and multicultural practices and policies in services for refugee women and for abused women in general. Adopting a gendered lens would remove some of the barriers that refugee women face in accessing services for abused women. For example, after fleeing abuse into a shelter, women's childcare needs should be considered a valuable asset for their ability to engage in ESL, employment, education, etc. There should also be considerations for cultural sensitivity, anti racist and anti oppressive practices.

- (6) This thesis observed that whether or not services were responsive to participants' needs had an implication on participants' integration into Canadian society. In other words, non responsive services were a barrier to participants' integration into Canadian society, while responsive ones facilitated it.

Therefore, to help ensure that services respond in a way that facilitates integration, it is recommended that services for refugee women adopt an *integration focus*. This means that services should consider how their policies and practices affect the integration of refugee women. For example, service agencies could design an evaluation tool to determine their effectiveness in facilitating the integration of refugee women. The guiding question for such evaluation could be as follows: *To what extent does the service*

hinder or promote the integration of refugee women into Canadian society? What are its shortcomings and strengths? This would help to determine the extent to which services meet the integration needs of refugee women.

It is also recommended that service organisations seek the active involvement of refugee women. Services should draw from women's own expertise and understanding of their situation in order to make services that are responsive and relevant for refugee women in general and for the integration of abused refugee women in particular. This could be achieved by means of ongoing community based needs assessment and evaluation and involving refugee women in planning and overseeing policies and practices.

Recommendations for Abused Women's Shelters

Shelter staff seemed oblivious to the challenges faced by refugee women and did not help participants.

This thesis recommends that shelters provide sufficient training to staff regarding issues of migration, refugee, and settlement, as they relate to gender and male partner violence. Such training would increase their awareness of, and sensitivities to the plight of refugee women who are fleeing male violence.

Recommendations for Police

Mistrust of the police by participants had negative implications on how participants responded to male partner violence. In fact, this mistrust was a barrier to participants' safety.

Therefore, this thesis recommends that the police revise its policies and practices and make efforts to build a positive image by responding positively to the needs of refugee women. In addition, the police needs to do more community outreach and to provide information to newcomers about its role in the community. This would help establish and build the trust between newcomers and the police. At the practice level, it is recommended that the police educate itself about abuse, review their responses to the needs of abused women and refugee women in general, and make changes accordingly. For example, studies have found the mandatory charging policy, which makes it a requirement for the police to lay charges when called to an incident of partner assault to be disempowering for abused women when they seek the help of the police (Gillis et al., 2006; Landau, 2006). One suggestion would be to repeal this policy.

Recommendations for Child Welfare Services

This thesis observed that participants' perception of and the involvement of the child welfare authorities was a negative factor for their integration into Canadian society.

Therefore, it is recommended that the child welfare authorities investigate how their policies and practices affect the integration of refugee women who have experienced male partner violence. Child welfare authorities may also educate its staff about migration, refugee, and settlement issues, so that they might become aware of cultural differences and the strategies that refugee women use to keep their children safe.

Considerations for Further Research

Further studies in this area could use some of the lessons learned from this inquiry. When I approached service providers for their assistance in the recruitment of participants, they raised concerns about the research design. Some service providers suggested the use of focus groups rather than individual interviews. The rationale for this being that their knowledge of their clientele was that they would be more willing to share their experiences in a group setting than in an individual setting. There is also an ongoing debate on whether focus groups or individual interviews yield better information from participants in this subject matter. Some scholars argue that focus groups create an environment that makes it easier for participants to share experiences that individual interviews may not, especially in sensitive topic research such as violence against women (Farquhar & Das, 1999; Kitzinger, 1994). However, studies that have used individual interviews to gather data about male partner violence found them useful (e.g. Bostock, Plumpton & Pratt, 2009; Justice Institute of British Columbia; 2007). In addition to the support from the literature, my study however, showed that participants opened themselves to me and I had no difficulty getting them to share their experiences.

Therefore, this thesis' findings support the use of individual interviews in interviewing women who have experienced abuse.

The help I received from service providers in recruiting participants, with interview space, and with other resources, taught me the value of engaging service providers in an inquiry as sensitive as this. Recruiting participants for this without the help of service providers would have been difficult. In addition, not only is it important to have the help of service providers, the stage at which the researcher invites service providers is also crucial. I found much later in the process that service providers had resources and information that I could have used. For instance, when I contacted service providers I became aware that Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO) provides free services for violence against women related language interpretation. Therefore, it is important that researchers in this area familiarise themselves with the services and resources that are available in the community earlier on in the research process.

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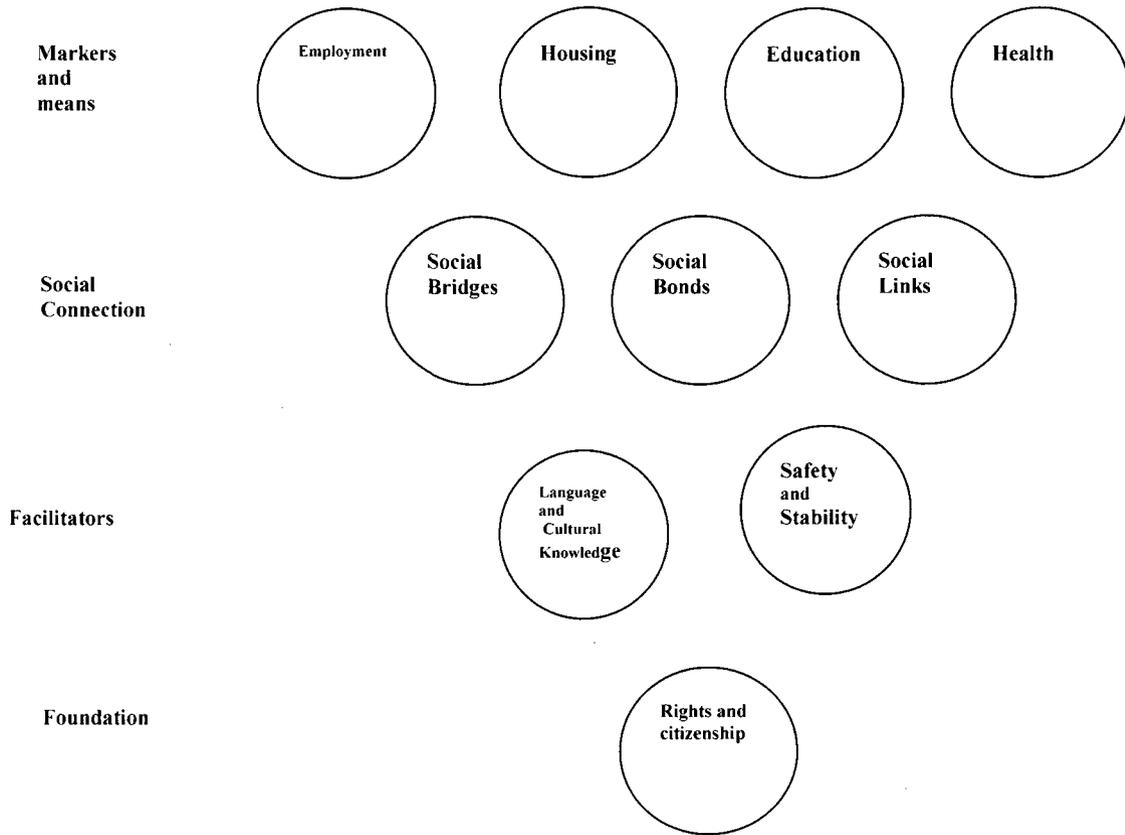
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Figures

Figure 1 - Indicators of Ager and Strang's Integration Framework



Source: Ager and Strang (2008).

Appendices

Appendix A –Letter of Information

An exploratory study of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Concillia Muonde; I am currently working on my master's in social work thesis at Carleton University. My thesis is entitled *An exploratory study of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women*. The objective of the study is to explore the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women. **I appreciate your help in providing information about this study to your service users.** I am interested in interviewing women who fit the following criteria:

1. A refugee woman
2. Who lives in the Ottawa area
3. Who experienced abuse (physical, financial, psychological, verbal, emotional, spiritual, sexual) from a male partner
4. Who has been out of the abusive relationship for a minimum period of one year

If you know anyone who meets these criteria, please explain to her the purpose and criteria of this study and invite her to participate in the study. You have my permission to give the potential participant my cell phone number

Participation in this study is voluntary. Each participant will be asked to take part in an interview that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. **The interview will take place at a mutually agreed-upon time and place. The place where the interview will take place will have to meet three conditions: it must be safe, with no interruption (from friends or family members), and where no one can overhear.** The interview will cover topics around the abuse, how a participant dealt with the abuse, and how abuse affected other aspects of her life in Canada. No personal information such as name, date of birth, home address will be asked for in this study. A participant may refuse to answer questions or may choose to withdraw from the interview at anytime without penalty or having to explain. Should a participant decide to withdraw during the interview she has the right to determine what I do with the information she already provided up to the point of withdrawal. If a participant wishes to withdraw from the study after the interview, she may inform me about her decision by contacting me by telephone at 613-884-8255 or by email at cmuonde@connect.carleton.ca. As my appreciation to participants, I will issue

each participant with an honorarium of \$30. This honorarium will be given to a participant whether or not she completes the interview.

Each interview will be tape recorded with the written consent of each participant. If a participant is not comfortable being tape recorded, I will take notes. A participant may choose to not have parts of the interview tape recorded, I will turn off the tape recorder and take notes. I will be the only person who knows the identity of each participant. I will be transcribing all of the interviews myself. To protect the confidentiality of participants, no names will appear on the tape or in the transcripts. Tapes and transcripts will be stored in a locked box in my home to which only I have access. Upon completion of the project (approximately April, 2009), all tapes, transcripts, and files will be destroyed.

Any identifying information such as name, country of origin will not appear in the final report, **therefore, no one will be able to identify participants in the thesis.** Whenever I use quotes, I will not mention a participant's name.

I hope that findings from this project will give service providers and agencies some insight into the service needs of refugee women who have experienced male partner violence. I hope to make recommendations for policy makers and service providers, which will help address the needs of abused refugee women.

This study has received ethics approval from Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. Should you have any questions regarding this study, feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor Behnam Behnia, at the Carleton University School of Social Work at 613-520-2600 ext.2665; or Prof. Antonio Gualtieri, Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Committee, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6, Tel: 613-520-2517, E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

I appreciate your interest in this project, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Concillia Muonde
Master of Social Work Student
Carleton University

Consent of agency's participation

I, _____ on behalf of _____
(name of agency) have read the above letter and agree to participate in Concillia Muonde's research project. The role of my agency in this project will be to give information about the project to service users. Service users will then voluntarily contact Concillia Muonde directly.

Appendix B -Consent Form

An exploratory study of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women

- I agree to participate in Concillia Muonde's study entitled *An exploratory study of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women.*
- I understand that this study is for her master's of social work thesis, at Carleton University's School of Social Work. I understand that participating in this study is voluntary. I will take part in an interview for 60 to 90 minutes. In the interview I will be asked about how the abuse I experienced from my male partner impacted my life in Canada.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer questions that I may not be comfortable with, without penalty or having to explain. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty, or having to explain.
- I understand that if I wish to withdraw from the study after the interview I will have to inform Concillia Muonde about my decision by contacting her by telephone at _____ or by email cmuonde@connect.carleton.ca.
- I understand that if I withdraw before the end of the interview, it is my right to determine what happens to information collected up to that point.
- I understand that taking part in this study may trigger past painful and traumatic memories that could cause me to be upset or emotional. If I get upset or emotional during the interview, the researcher will stop the interview immediately. The researcher will only continue with the interview at my request. If the researcher judges the situation to be too stressful, we will reschedule the meeting.
- I understand that no personal information such as my name, date of birth, home address, will be asked for in this study, **therefore, no one will be able to identify me in the thesis.**
- I understand that all information I will give in the interview, will be kept confidential by the researcher. I understand however that if I give information regarding harm to a child, such information will not be kept confidential by the researcher. The researcher has the obligation to report information regarding harm to a child to the appropriate authority.

- I understand that the researcher will ask for my permission to audio tape the interview. I understand that if I give the permission to be audio taped, I may ask the researcher to not record certain parts of my interview. The researcher will keep the tape of my interview in a locked file cabinet in her home, to which only she will have access.

I agree to be audio taped I do not agree to be audio taped

- I understand that only the researcher will transcribe the interviews, and will secure transcripts in a locked file cabinet. Computer files will be password protected, and only the researcher will have access to them. I also understand that results of this study will be reported in such a way that will not allow what I say in the interview to be linked to me. I understand that once the study is completed all data collected from me will be destroyed.
- I understand that I have the right to review the transcripts of my interview, and that I may choose to erase some or all of the information on the transcripts.

I wish to review the transcripts of my interview
 I do not wish to review the transcripts of my interview

- I understand that I have the right to receive/have the final report. Should I choose to do so, I will receive an electronic version of the final report upon completion of the study.

I wish to receive the final report of this study
 I do not wish to receive the final report of this study

- I understand that if I have any questions or concerns about this study, I can call Concillia Muonde's thesis supervisor, Professor Behnam Behnia, at the Carleton University's School of Social Work at 613-520-2600 ext.2665, or the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Prof. Antonio Gualtieri at 613-520-2517.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Appendix C –Interview Guide

An exploratory study of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women

Researcher: Concillia Muonde
 School of Social Work, Carleton University
 cmuonde@connect.carleton.ca

Date of Interview

Time of Interview: Start time

End time.....

Participant code

Interview questions

In this section, I am going to ask you about your experiences with your partner

1. When did you meet your partner?
2. Did you come together to Canada or did you meet him here?
3. How long after you came to Canada did the abuse begin?
4. For how long did the abusive relationship last?
5. How did you come to the decision to leave him?
6. What prevented you from leaving him earlier?

In this section I would like you to reflect on your life experience before leaving your partner, and to talk about the effects of the abuse on your health, education, employment, and housing

Housing

1. Did the abuse have any effect on your housing arrangements? Please explain
2. What has been your experience with housing since you left the abusive relationship?
3. What barriers have you encountered getting housing, after the abuse occurred?

Employment

1. During the time you were in the abusive relationship, how was your employment situation (were you working, self employed, staying at home, refugee assistance, social assistance)?
2. Did the abuse affect your employment situation in any way? (probe: stopped working, late for work, missed days of work; poor performance at work)
3. What has been your experience with employment since the abuse occurred?

Training and education

1. During the time you were in the abusive relationship, were you taking any form of training or education? (ESL, College; university)
 - If so, did the abuse interfere in any way with your training? (concentration, grades, attendance, completing your assignments)
 - If you were not in any training or education, what was the reason?
 - *Health*
2. How did the abuse affect your health (physical, mental, emotional) at the time of the abuse?
3. How has your health been since you left the abusive relationship?

In this section, I would like you to talk about your language skills, familiarity with the Canadian system, and your safety.

(language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability (facilitators)

1. During the time you were in the abusive relationship, did you need ESL/ FSL program?
2. What impact if any, did the abuse have on your learning of language skills? (probe: if you were taking ESL, if you were learning from your networks; etc)
3. Did the abuse influence how you felt about your safety in Ottawa/Canada at the time?
4. Did the abuse influence how you feel about your safety in Ottawa/Canada now?

In this section, I am going to ask you about your social network

1. During the time you were in the abusive relationship, did you have relatives, friends, and acquaintances in Ottawa or in Canada?
2. How many of these people did you feel close enough that in times of need you could turn to?
3. In your networks, who was of help in dealing with the abuse? (Probe: In what way)

4. In your networks, who was not of help in dealing with the abuse? (Probe: In what way)
5. Were any of your networks aware of the abuse when it was going on?
 - If so, how did they become aware?
 - How did they react to this knowledge?
6. In your opinion, has your experience of abuse affected the quality of your social support networks?

In this section, I am going to ask you about your immigration status, and your rights to services

Rights and Citizenship

1. During the time you were in the abusive relationship, what was your immigration status?
2. Did your status during that time influence the way you reacted to the abuse? (probe, afraid to call the police)
3. During the time you were in the abusive relationship, were you aware of the services available for abused women? (shelters, counselling, health services, the police)
4. Which of those services did you use?
5. What was your experience in using those services? (barriers you encountered, e.g. language, distance, lack of support such as child care)

Participant's perception of the impact of male partner violence on their integration into Canadian society

1. Do you think the abuse you experienced has had an impact on your integration into Canadian society?
 - If so, how,
 - If not why not? (Explain, and give specific examples from your experiences).

Recommendations

1. Other than in the areas we have covered, what barriers/ difficulties did you encounter after leaving your partner?
2. Do you think any of those barriers/ difficulties were/are related to your experiences of an abusive relationship?
3. Thinking back on the services you used after you experienced abuse, what you recommend service providers and professionals do, in order for them to meet the integration needs of abused refugee women?

Demographic information

Age range

- Between 18 and 29

- Between 30 and 44
- Between 45 and 59
- 60 and over

Source of income

- Fulltime employment
- Part time employment
- Social assistance (welfare)
- Self employed

Annual income

- Less that \$10 000
- \$10 000 to \$25 000
- \$26 000 to \$34 000
- \$35 000 to \$49 000
- \$50 000 and over

Region of origin

- North and South America
- Africa
- Middle East
- Asia
- The Caribbean
- Europe
- Australia- and neighbouring regions

Highest level of education

- No schooling
- Some elementary schooling
- Completed elementary schooling
- Some high school
- Completed high school
- Some post secondary school
- College diploma/certificate
- University degree
- Other

Length of stay in Canada

- Less that 2 years
- Between 2 and 5 years
- More than 5 years less than 10 years
- Over ten years

Number of dependants _____.

Appendix D - Resource list for free counselling services in Ottawa

Organization Name(s)	Telephone
<u>Harmony House</u>	613-233-3386
<u>Immigrant Women Services Ottawa</u>	613-729-3145
<u>Interval House of Ottawa</u>	613-234-8511
<u>Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa, Women and War program</u>	613-725-2160 ext 225
<u>Calacs francophone d'Ottawa, Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel</u>	Crisis line:613-789-9117
<u>National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA, Domestic Violence Program, Children Witnesses of Domestic Violence</u>	613-237-1320 ext 5003
<u>Nelson House of Ottawa-Carleton</u>	613-225-3129
<u>Nepean, Rideau and Osgoode Community Resource Centre</u>	613-596-5626
<u>Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre</u>	613-562-2334
<u>Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, Chrysalis House</u>	613-591-5991
<p>Community Resource and Health Centres, Individual and / or Group Counselling for abused women Individual and/or group counselling for abused women, provided at Community Resource/Health Centres</p> <p>Carlington Community and Health Services: Contact: Intake 613-722-4000</p> <p>Centretown Community Health Centre: Contact: Intake 613-233-4443</p> <p>Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre:Contact: Intake 613-741-6025</p> <p>Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre:Contact: Intake 613-591-3686</p> <p>Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services:Contact: Intake 613-820-4922</p> <p>Somerset West Community Health Centre :Contact: Intake 613-238-8210</p> <p>Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre :Contact: Intake 613-830-4357</p>	

Appendix E - Confidentiality Agreement Form for the language interpreter**An exploratory study of the impact of male partner violence on the integration of refugee women**

I hereby agree to keep confidential all information I will come across as language interpreter for this interview. Therefore, I will not discuss any of the information, or disclose the identity of the participant directly or indirectly to anyone. I understand that sharing any of the information may compromise the privacy and confidentiality of the participant.

Interpreter's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date