A WARM WELCOME IN COLD PLACES? IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT AND
INTEGRATION IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Immigrant regionalization initiatives that encourage new immigrants to settle outside of metropolitan centres are increasingly common in Canada and often proposed as an aid to revitalize growth in smaller centres. This thesis considers the potential implications of such initiatives on the settlement experiences of immigrants who move to smaller cities. The research is based on interviews with service providers and immigrants in Northern British Columbia. Immigrant respondents described their experiences settling into the small city of Prince George, and service providers from Prince George, Fort St. John and Terrace reflected on their communities' ability to welcome newcomers. Results revealed the flexible approaches to settlement that immigrants employed to feel more comfortable in relatively isolated and culturally homogenous cities and towns. Findings also emphasized the pressing need to consider the socio-economic and cultural geographies of the welcoming town or city. Both sets of respondents were also asked to give meaning to the term integration. The results of this query showed that service providers were more able to put meaning to integration than where new immigrants, despite the fact that service providers saw themselves as less active than immigrants in the process of integration. Service providers often approached the term conceptually, and gave definitions bound up with ideologies of multiculturalism, acceptance and tolerance. The usefulness of the term for immigrant respondents was very limited. Similar to the concept of regionalization, integration is an interesting idea that requires more grounded research. This thesis helps explore a new area and challenges some generalizations about immigrant settlement and community identity that are often made about places seemingly far away.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Northern British Columbia is a region familiar to researchers who study landforms, natural biology and resource economies. Attention from someone studying global immigration, however, is relatively new. In recent years rural areas and non-metropolitan cities have become of interest as possible sites of immigrant reception. This thesis looks into whether smaller cities in the North of British Columbia are capable of welcoming international immigrants and what the experiences are of those who choose to settle far from the concentrations of their fellow immigrants.

Over several decades in Canada immigrant settlement became concentrated in the large urban centres to the South, where established ethnic communities supported newcomers (Bourne & Rose 2001). In 2001 federal policy began to shift towards "regionalization", a more even geographic dispersal of immigrants. Dennis Coderre (Immigration Minister of the day) presented regionalization as a key federal priority for the first time in October 2002, when he met with provincial Ministers responsible for immigration. The meeting prompted more focus on the conceptual framing of the topic as government officials sought a clearer definition of regionalization. Citizenship and Immigration Canada worked with provincial and local counterparts to establish an understanding of the issues and Ministers began to work on regional strategies for immigration. Since that time, politics have changed and actual implementation means regionalization has played out differently in each province, especially since Provincial governments in particular have taken a lead role in shaping regionalization initiatives. As a public and policy issue, momentum around regionalization continues to build. By the time my fieldwork began in the summer of 2007, initiatives to encourage regionalization were just reaching the desks of municipal governments and local service providers in non-metropolitan communities in Northern British Columbia.

The choice to study immigrant settlement in Northern British Columbia is based on a premise that government programs can and do alter lives and create new community dynamics. Accordingly, my first research question asks "are regionalization policies sensitive to the experiences of immigrant settlement?" In the field I asked immigrant participants to share their settlement stories and recount daily enactments in their new environment. What helped them settle, what was missing, and were those needs being addressed? Successful regionalization policies mean both attracting *and* retaining immigrants. One term increasingly used to measure

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successful settlement is integration. A second research question is "What does immigrant integration mean to different people and what are the determinants of successful integration?" With these research questions I hope to bridge the divide between policies generated in distant capital cities and the social experiences that are affected by policy and settlement programming in these specific places over the long-term.

What follows is an account of my investigation of regionalization in the context of three cities in British Columbia's north. The thesis is presented in six sections. The second chapter contextualizes the research work in two distinct ways. First, the development of "regionalization" initiatives and policies are situated within Canada's broad immigration discourse. This includes the ways in which regional immigration policies fit within neoliberal frames of reference concerning individualism, self-sufficiency and economic reform. It also places regionalization within geographic discussions about settlement concentration and the unevenness of national space.

The third chapter develops the theoretical context behind this investigation of regionalization. Moving on from ideas established in the first section, I examine the multiple meanings of integration. The term is in common parlance now, sometimes used to smooth over a dissonance between cultural concepts of multiculturalism and assimilation. Integration is also amorphous and understood in various ways. This ambiguity results in an unclear set of expectations on the part of policy makers, communities and most importantly immigrants themselves. In this section, I lay the groundwork for an exploration of just how varied the understanding of integration is across space and between people. This theme will emerge more fully in analysis of interview data.

In preparation for such a conversation, the fourth chapter looks more specifically at the geographies of Northern British Columbia. A lot hangs in the balance between place and people in this work, and while the project generally examines immigration to 'the North', it also reflects the physical, economic and social diversity of the three communities studied. Research was conducted in Terrace in the Northwest, Prince George in North Central and in the bustling city of Fort St. John in the Northeast. The main locus of research was in Prince George, but interviews with service providers in two other smaller cities yielded a greater depth to the findings. In these accounts I look at general economic and immigration conditions to relate the ways regionalization initiatives have been implemented by the provincial government of B.C. In a

project such as this, where much of the reason for study is the different setting of settlement, a description of the region is essential background information.

The fifth chapter explains the research methods, including the structure and size of the project, the selection of subjects and the rationale for choices made. Principles of biographical, interpretive and performance-oriented method theories were employed to overcome logistical and representational hurdles. I also explain the use of descriptive and analytic coding for analysis of the materials that I gathered.

Findings are presented in chapter six where I explore how these results help to answer the research questions that guided the project. I discuss how immigrants and service-providers alike create expectations of immigrant integration – though their understandings of this idea vary. Participants share the importance of personal beliefs and material accomplishments in achieving a sense of satisfaction. Immigrant responses value small cities in a different and fascinating way, looking to the benefits they accrue from being cultural pioneers. Findings move towards a more complete understanding of integration's role as active and personal rather than conceptual or societal, as a useful verb that encourages individuals to set goals and envision their own role in creating healthy and diverse communities.

The seventh and final chapter reviews the work and considers what contribution it makes to understanding the phenomenon of immigration to small places, within the context of recent regionalization policies. Vibrant and inclusive communities are the most ideal outcome of regionalization policies and integration alike. Communities will not organically transform into places where all people are welcomed and accepted; "Diversity is not a sufficient condition to bring about the sustained inclusion of the different groups that populate a city" (Ray 2003). Popular appreciation of cultural diversity is not fixed and its balance relies on bedrock social policies, the availability of public services and the countless interactions that occur among individuals, social groups and institutions. Everyday interactions take place against a tapestry of values and policies, and they colour the first impressions that people form of one another – and first impressions matter. Once established, personal views are hard to change. Years of qualitative research on the experience of immigrants and their settlement into receiving communities reminds us that social harmony can not simply be defined by the perspective of the host society but must also incorporate the perspective of those who bear the greatest burden of change – immigrants themselves.

2 IMMIGRATION & REGIONALIZATION

Living in metropolitan Vancouver, the social impact of immigration and diversity is evident in everyday life. Living in Prince George the same is true. Everywhere in British Columbia, public schools introduce concepts of diversity to children and prejudice to teens. Knowing about difference and the importance of acceptance is officially encouraged. These attitudes seem especially necessary in a country founded on First Nations land, where population growth has been largely dependent on net international migration for over thirty years (Beaujot 2003).

The importance of immigration, measured in sheer population numbers, is clearly reflected in the composition of the country. Results from the latest Canadian census show that because of immigration levels Canada has the largest population growth rate of all G8 countries despite low natural increase (Statistics Canada 2007). In 2006, immigrants constituted 19.8% of Canada's population. At this rate by 2011, immigration will account for all net labour force growth and by 2026, for all net population increase (Metropolis 2003). Especially at this time, when concerns about labour force shortages run through nearly all sectors of the economy, immigration numbers are bound closely to a national vision of growth and health.

The Canadian government recognizes the long-term benefits of accepting newcomers by establishing a yearly immigration target that equals nearly one percent of the total population.[1] This target reflects the fact Canadian policy makers see immigration as a path to demographic stability and economic growth. While Canada maintains a humanitarian commitment to family reunification and refugee settlement, in recent years the balance in the annual immigration targets has moved to the economic classes (Ley & Hiebert 2001). For economic immigration to realize the sought-after positive effect, new immigrants must be able to integrate in order to settle and thrive in their new homes. Because regionalization policies thus far have been profoundly focused on facilitating immigration of skilled workers and are thus economically focused, an understanding of how and where people make their homes, and how the process unfolds, is essential to evaluating the policy shift towards regionalization.

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[1] This target was the official policy of the Liberal Party and equaled about 300,000 permanent residents each year (a number that was never met) (Ley & Hiebert 2001). Though federal leadership has changed hands the target remains similar.

2.1 Canadian trends in the geography of settlement

There was a near constant blitz of updates on immigration-related trends as the results of the 2006 census were released during the period of this project. The unfolding of this process allowed me to watch how statistical analysis, policy adjustments, and the framing of issues developed in reaction to the trends that were reported. While each new release from the Census generated keen media interest, a common focus was clear: a strong interest in the concentration of immigrants and visible minority populations in Canada's largest urban centres. The numbers illustrate this clearly. In 2006, 94.9% of all immigrants in Canada (regardless of period of immigration) and 97.2% of recent immigrants (those arriving between 2001 and 2006) lived in either a census metropolitan area or a census agglomeration, compared to 77.5% of the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada 2007). A full 68.9% of recent immigrants settled in Canada's three largest cities, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Comparatively, these three cities are home to only 34.4% of the total population and 27.1% of the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada 2007). Within B.C. the metropolitan concentration of immigrants is strongly apparent. The four largest urban areas in the province (Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna and Abbotsford) are home to 93.3% of recent immigrants, the vast majority in metropolitan Vancouver. This pattern is not only present among the most recent arrivals. In fact, of all immigrants arriving since 1991, an equally high percentage, 93.6%, live in these four urban areas, compared with 67.3% of the total population and 60.0% of the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada 2007b).

In March of 2007, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) reported the first of these census results, concluding that "two main forces determine the way Canadians live: immigration and urbanization". Census findings showed that the national population grew by 5.4 per cent between 2001 and 2006. New immigrants accounted for 1.2 million of the population added during this period, while new Canadian-born births were just 400,000 (and many of these were born to recently-arrived newcomers). The Census also showed that Canadians as a whole are urban dwellers, with roughly 80% living in cities.[2] The dominant immigration trends identified by the CBC are not, of course, the only factors affecting the ways Canadians live their lives. Bourne and Rose (2001, 107) stress the growing centrality of the 'the population question' writ large in Canada. They identify unevenness of settlement and the population's rising ethnic

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[2] In this article, "cities" referred to the 33 metropolitan areas with a population of 50,000 or more as determined by population counts from the 2006 Census.

diversity as the two most *visible* aspects amidst "waves of social transformation" in the last half of the 20th century. Other trends include changes in family structure, domestic relations and household composition, and shifts in the linkages between the domestic sphere and the sphere of work and production (i.e. labour markets). How Canadians live is inevitably affected by a host of factors, but great emphasis is placed on immigration and concentrated settlement both separately and in relation to one another.

Recently, the association between increasing international diversity and settlement concentration has drawn a good deal of attention within Canada. This is likely related to the largely negative media attention associated with the perception of ethnic segregation within parts of Canada (see Ley 2007). In August of 2008 riots erupted in the streets of Montreal North after a police shooting left a teenage Afro-Hispanic immigrant dead. The violent protest prompted conversations about segregation (the area is largely immigrant and working-class) and racial profiling (CBC, August 11 2008). Inevitable comparisons were drawn to the race riots that spread from Paris throughout France two years earlier. In 2007 the town council of Herouxville, a small town northwest of Montreal and home to just one visible minority family, caused much public outcry when the local council created a code of conduct directed towards would-be immigrants delineating "standards" expected of newcomers (among them, "a woman can…drive a car, sign cheques, dance, decide for herself, speak her peace, walk alone in public places, study, have a job" and that "killing women in public beatings, or burning them alive are not part of our standards of life"). The town council created this document in reaction to the debate over reasonable accommodation in Quebec at the time, and revealed the fear held by many that religious and cultural accommodation for newcomers threatened a Canadian way of life. General anxieties about ethnic and classed segregation become further embedded in Canada's immigration discourse. Before elaborating on the significance of these issues, I will first review more generally some theories that explain the spatial concentration of immigrant settlement.

2.2 Theories of immigrant concentration

In this section I consider theories of concentration derived from neoclassical economics, historical analysis of urban settlement patterns, globalisation theory and network theory. I also consider research-based findings about concentrated settlement made by several geographers. The search for work and economic opportunity is perhaps the strongest force drawing immigrants to cities.

From the perspective of neoclassical economists, migrants are economic actors who seek to maximize their wellbeing and who move to improve their situation (Sjaastad 1962; Borjas 1990). In Canada, as in many major immigrant-receiving industrialized countries, immigration has been historically highest in periods of labour shortage and used to facilitate major national economic imperatives. In 1899, Clifford Sifton made his historic petition to the House of Commons that Canada should welcome immigrant men regardless of language or religion; "If he is law-abiding, if he will go on that land and make a living for himself and for his family, he is a desirable settler for the Dominion of Canada" (Sifton 1899, cited in McIsaac 2003). Though at the turn of the 20th Century Sifton sought people to work the land, in the postwar economy of the 1950s there was a high demand for blue-collar workers in resources, manufacturing, and construction. Along with most other industrializing nations, demand for workers was greatest in centres of industry – in cities. Many of these jobs did not demand high language proficiency or education, and adult male immigrants were able to fill these shortages and were paid enough to settle with their families. Typically they settled in the inner-city. Thus, every major immigrant-receiving Canadian city had immigrant districts that functioned as cultural, social, and commercial cores for migrant communities, communities that "became symbolic of the settlement process itself" (Hiebert 2005).

A similar, though slightly different story was true of more remote places in British Columbia. The British Columbian economy is historically rooted in forestry and other resource industries. Cycles of resource extraction brought people with aspirations for work or wealth. Their struggles through a rugged landscape shaped much of the modern human settlement of this province. These pioneers were not just European "explorers" or American prospectors, but also, for example, immigrants working to construct the transcontinental railway or providing services in frontier villages (Barman 2000). It is

important to note the ethnic diversity of those involved in the early mineral exploration and industrial development of the province.

Globalisation theory offers a contemporary economic perspective on the tendency toward the settlement process. The theory's main tenet is that the concentration of immigration in global gateway cities is directly related to economic restructuring (Castells 1989; Sassen 1988, 1991; Morawska 1990). In global cities, declining industrial sectors and the increase in service employment create labour shortages in the highest and lowest paying jobs. Foreign workers looking to better their economic and social condition readily fill the gap. According to this theory, migrants, as rational actors, concentrate in global cities because that is where they will find the most opportunity for economic and social gain. Their decisions to do so, however, are structured by changes in the global economy that have driven demand for both highly skilled, and low-wage labour into cities with global economic connections, so-called world-cities or global cities.

The immigrant districts that were established in urban cores created access points for new immigrants looking for particular goods, familiar languages, and in many cases, jobs. Network theory emphasizes the economic, social and demographic factors behind concentrated settlement. In network theory, immigrants concentrate in gateway cities where family, friends or acquaintances are already settled. Rooted networks reduce the costs and risks of movement for new migrants, making it easier to find a place to live, a source of employment and a community from which to draw support (Massey 1990, Taylor 1986). Networks sustain themselves, and each act of migration alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made (Massey et al. 1993). Immigrants and refugees are also likely to settle in areas where they can maintain transnational connections with their home country (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

Other geographical perspectives suggest that the concentrated settlement of ethno-cultural groups has just as much to do with the acceptance of the receiving society. Duncan and Duncan (2004) relate the spatial unevenness of socio-cultural settlement to a politics of aesthetics that develops into a force for exclusion. In their study, the planning policies and ordinances that reproduce the aesthetic identity of a wealthy American suburb, simultaneously ensure the exclusion of affordable housing. These are not

necessarily tactics to mask the ulterior motive of excluding others/strangers; rather, such aesthetic dispositions are fundamental markers of identity (particularly among the elite), and as such provoke sincere emotions that act to naturalize class privileges and tastes. The very idea of migrants in such a scenario goes against the aesthetic sense held by people that identify with what to others might seem like homogenous landscapes (see also Ley 1995, and Walks 2006). These themes have also played out in the Canadian context where the presence of "monster homes" built by immigrants from Hong Kong offended not only the aesthetic tastes of long-term residents in affluent Vancouver neighbourhoods, but also brought to the fore a social tension generated by accepting one aspect of immigration (large economic benefits) while not embracing the aspect of visible socio-cultural change (see Ley 1995 and Mitchell 2004). Institutional and infrastructural provisions, like access to language training, processing centres, and transportation networks, also direct migrants to cities. Asylum seekers also typically settle in the points of entry where they wait for the processing of their claims to be completed (Robinson 2003, Bauder and Sharpe 2003). Research by geographers shows that the concentrated settlement of migrant and refugee communities is certainly no longer limited to inner-cities or the establishment of 'homogenous' ethno-cultural enclaves (especially in the Canadian context); immigrant settlement is increasingly spreading to the outer suburbs of major cities (Hiebert 1999), and ethnic villages are increasingly defined by linguistic, not visible, minorities (Peach 2000).

2.3 Concentration pathologized

Governments in Canada and abroad have suggested geographic dispersal of new immigrants as an alternative to metropolitan concentration. The reasons people move to cities are generally better understood than are explanations of why concentration is a problem. There are conflicting views as to whether governments should intervene through strategies of settlement dispersal. Arguments for regionalization policies generally fall into two categories: those which see concentration in urban areas as contributing to a socio-political rift between cities with high numbers of immigrants and visible minorities and a mainly 'white' non-metropolitan Canada; while others see

immigration as an important factor for meeting the economic and demographic challenges facing small places (Walton-Roberts 2005).

There is a prevalent viewpoint that too much concentration is undesirable and can lead to the formation of urban ghettos and spaces of exclusion. Ceri Peach, however, explains that there can be both good and bad segregation. Social segregation "carries a whiff of apartheid and is generally dismissed as a totally negative and abhorrent phenomenon" (Peach 1996), but the pathologized landscape of the urban ghetto is not the only kind of segregation. The positive aspects of segregation include the strengthening of social cohesion, networks and cultural values (Musterd 2003). In Canada, concentrated immigrant settlement in metropolitan regions has been strongly linked with positive effects; for example, access to critical social networks and community resources (Hiebert and Ley 2003, Ray 1999). The Longitudinal Survey on Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), for example, clearly identifies the proximity of family and friends as the most important factor influencing immigrants in their choice of settlement location (Walton-Robert 2003). Peach (1996), argues that failure to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' segregation has led to severe misunderstandings of the social processes underlying spatial patterns in cities. Andersson further reasons that if ethnic residential segregation is understood as congregation, enacting policy to reduce segregation becomes morally problematic (2003). Such policies would effectively deny immigrants the social supports they could use to adapt to a new environment. And, as I point out below, identifying segregation or concentration as the *cause* of social problems masks their deeper or structural causes, and only focuses on one, highly visible, component of 'bad' segregation.

Regionalization policies in immigration are also based on a long held assumption that dispersal is correlated with integration (Peach 1996). This assumption is rooted in the three generational model found in American literature on immigration. In this model there is a direct equation between spatial and social patterning; immigrants become more dispersed over the generations after settlement, and they also become further assimilated into mainstream society. While to some extent this may have been the case in the past, the context into which immigrants are moving now is very different. With the intense concentration of economic growth in large cities which function as hubs in an

increasingly globalized economy, patterns of immigrant settlement appear to be reacting to new economic realities (Brender et al. 2007). These new realities mean that the dispersal model cannot be expected to operate as in the past. Indeed this challenges the validity of using dispersal patterns as a measure of integration.

Canadian dispersal policies attempt to encourage integration through social services and language education. Such integration experiences also depend on the municipal context, integration into the labour market and the presence of social connections and cultural networks (Abu-Laban et al. 2003; Walton-Roberts 2005). Boswell (2001), Robinson (2003), Sherrell et al. (2003) and Andersson (2003) have found that dispersal reduces tensions in the areas where refugees are dispersed from, but creates far more acute problems in new receiving areas. Especially in ethnically homogeneous host-communities, a sudden and visible increase in numbers of asylum-seekers, for instance, can provide a trigger for resentment and aggression (Boswell 2001).

The second set of reasons behind the introduction of regionalization includes the connections made between immigrant dispersal and regional development problems in sparsely populated countries like Canada (Andersson 2003). In the Canadian context, "… communities are recognizing that immigrants are an important source of employment and business skills and investment dollars, and can play an important role in bringing a community's economic development plan to fruition" (CIC, 2003). Sherrell et al. (2003) also stress the connection between dispersal and rural development, but argue that "while the idea of encouraging immigrants and refugees to settle outside the central metropolitan areas may be appealing as a way to repopulate smaller centres, sending refugees to repopulate low employment cities does not enhance the economic well-being of either party." Walton-Roberts (2005) agrees: "The solution to rural depopulation, however, is not to be found in immigration policy, but in regional development policy."

2.4 The emergence of regionalization

The Canadian federal government has expressed increasing concern with uneven settlement patterns. Walton-Roberts (2005) argues this concern is founded on the assumption that metropolitan areas cannot manage such rapid and ethno-linguistically

diverse population growth. There is also a fear that smaller urban areas cannot survive without population growth and skilled workers. Immigrant dispersal, or "regionalization", has been envisioned as a possible solution to such challenges (CIC 2003).

Other academics suggest regionalization might benefit immigrants as well. Though non-metropolitan regions struggle to provide the same set of supports and resources, recent literature highlights the potential benefits of settling in smaller centres. The first, and most often cited, is that immigrants in non-metropolitan regions are faring better economically than their urban counterparts:

> The newcomers' average income is higher in smaller communities than in Vancouver. Recent immigrant men averaged well above $22,000 in places outside of Greater Vancouver, as opposed to only $17,350 within it. Recent immigrant women in Victoria earned almost $16,000; their counterparts in Vancouver made on average slightly more than $12,000
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> Bauder (2003a)

Reduced cost of living is another consideration. Home ownership, for example, is a milestone strongly associated with feelings of establishment and belonging which is more readily achieved in housing markets outside of metropolitan areas. These findings make a powerful case for regionalization in light of a steady decrease in overall immigrant economic outcomes since the 1980s (Beshiri 2004; Bauder 2003b) and at a time when the economic performance of new immigrants is declining significantly compared to previous immigrant cohorts and Canadian-born workers (Hiebert 2006). Bauder's study, however, does not include an analysis of labour force participation by immigration class, which may show that more family class immigrants settle in Vancouver while a higher proportion of economic immigrants settle outside of the metropolitan region. It may be the case that immigrants more often move to the peripheries only if they have a job prospect to follow. Furthermore, his study does not account for the different labour market experiences of visible minorities, and visible minority immigrants settle more frequently in metropolitan centres (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2007). We could easily overlook the importance of self-selection (who decides to move where) and the structures that shape those choices by considering income earnings alone. Although, in a recent

survey, Preston and Ray (2008) found that while 47% of visible minorities living in big cities felt some degree of racial discomfort, only 40% of visible minorities in small towns (<10,000) had the same discomfort. Their study suggests that residents of small towns are more likely to know their neighbours, and that racial discomfort is lowest where people feel connected to those around them. As interest in this area grows, hopefully more research will elucidate more and more aspects of rural or non-metropolitan settlement, particularly in the areas of settlement experience.

The majority of immigrants already know where they will be living when they land in Canada (Ruddick 2004). Location choice is strongly connected to the presence of family or friends (Hyndman and Schuurman 2004; Ley and Tutchener 1999). The economic incentives and social factors that work against settlement in Canada's smaller regions are powerful and difficult to compete with. Each community, however, possesses a unique set of benefits and challenges in attracting immigrants and encouraging them to stay.

Interest in regional immigration has grown over the last decade. In 2002 it was on the meeting agenda of Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial immigration ministers. Former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Denis Coderre strongly supported investigating the benefits of regional immigration during his time in office (2002-2003). Though at first Coderre proposed immigrants sign "social contracts" of commitment to settle (for a time) in a smaller community, the federal government has since presented less coercive, choice-based initiatives to encourage regionalization (Bauder 2003a). Unlike European discussions on the geographic dispersal of immigrants and refugees that speak of "spreading the burden" (Robinson et al. 2003), from the beginning, Canadian dialogue has supported the notion of "sharing" or spreading the benefits of immigration (Denton 2004).

2.5 Regionalization programs in British Columbia

In Canada, government jurisdiction over immigration is complex, and is constitutionally split between the federal and provincial governments. Studies stress the importance of collaboration between federal, provincial and municipal governments,

along with local service providers (Di Biase and Bauder 2005). It is particularly difficult to synthesize policies and initiatives related to regionalization that connect the authorities of the different levels of government. In British Columbia two regionalization initiatives have, together, included the efforts of all three levels of government. These initiatives are the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and the Welcoming Communities program.

Provincial Nominee Program

Probably the most symbolic program related to regionalization of immigration was the creation of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Policies of immigrant dispersal in Canada were heralded by the Cullen-Couture Agreement of 1978. That agreement granted the province of Quebec the jurisdiction to select skilled immigrants to suit the particular economic needs and interests of the province (in Quebec's case, French-language skills). In 1996, the Provincial Nominee Program was introduced in Manitoba and over the past decade all provinces and most territories have signed similar agreements with the federal government enabling them to select immigrants independently.

Since the introduction of Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP), provinces and territories play a more direct role in immigration. The programs are principally directed towards skilled workers or business class immigrants and they allow employers or (in some cases) prospective immigrants to apply directly to the provinces that have independent criteria for admission.[3] These criteria often address problems of labour shortage in skilled fields. One stream of British Columbia's PNP focuses specifically on attracting immigrants with pre-arranged work placements and investment dollars to settle in non-metropolitan regions. They have also been used to provide permanent admission to visitors holding temporary visas (for example a foreign student who has completed a program in a highly demanded field) (Hiebert 2006).

PNP immigration "represents a small step towards increasing immigrant populations outside of Canada's largest cities" (Krahn, Derwing, & Abu-laban 2003, p. 5). A potential immigrant may prefer to enter through a PNP rather than as a federal

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[3] Though in all cases, admission is processed by the federal government.

economic immigrant in order to save time because applications are processed more quickly through this program (Huynh 2004). The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) was developed in part to give Provinces more power to address specific labour market needs. Provincial Nominees coordinate employment with employers before moving and are accorded priority at missions abroad. CIC is committed to processing Provincial Nominees for permanent residence at a faster rate than other economic applicants in order to help meet the timely needs in the labour-market (CIC 2008). As the PNP expands however, a backlog of applications might occur and longer processing times would cost the program some of its appeal. Recent numbers published by CIC and the Government of British Columbia, show significant growth in the numbers of PNP immigrants across the country, although the overall scale of the programs are relatively small compared with the number admitted by the federal government. The number of immigrants arriving through the PNP in B.C. has increased more than 5-fold since 2003, from 441 to 2,519. The shares of economic immigrants and total immigrants to B.C. associated with the Provincial Nominee Program have also increased substantially. In 2003, Provincial Nominees made up 2.2% of economic immigrants and 1.3% of total immigrants to the province, and by 2007 this had risen to 10.8% of economic immigrants and 6.5% of total immigrant arrivals (Government of BC 2008). Of course once immigrants gain their permanent resident status, they are able to move of their own free will and are no longer bound to a particular province or locale.

Provincial Nominee Programs are based on twin assumptions: First, that skilled immigrants are of great value to provincial and municipal economies and, second, that the dispersal of skilled immigrants will help undo the spatial and regional imbalance of settlement. These assumptions place *expectation*s upon migrants in the hope that they will benefit both the host community and the country as a whole. Less attention is paid to the benefits received by migrants themselves (beyond any initial bonuses or reduced wait times). How immigrants expect life to be in Canada often clashes with the reality of the situation (Walton-Roberts 2005; Henin 2003). The Welcoming Communities initiative begins to deal with reception at the local scale.

Welcoming Communities

The Province of British Columbia supports the concept of a "welcoming community". The term represents the proclivity of a given city's population to *welcome* and *accept* new immigrants (Hiebert, 2003; Reitz, 1998). The emphasis on "welcoming communities" exemplifies the value placed on immigrant settlement and highlights that the responsibility for successful settlement does not rest solely on newcomers' shoulders, but also on the communities that "host" them. The initiative suits smaller communities since it focuses on how a place can *create* a more welcoming community, and not exclusively on the existing features and services.

> What makes for a welcoming community includes appropriate housing, availability of initial accommodation, medical services, social services, education (language and general) for all ages and skill levels, access to arts, cultural, recreational and leisure programs, cross-cultural and anti-racism resources and voluntary support programs (CIC 2003).

A constellation of effective and local settlement services makes a place more welcoming, in addition to the general receptivity of residents. Media representations may also affect public opinion and have a role in the creation of more welcoming societies (Mahtani and Mountz, 2002).

In 2004 the *Agreement for Canada – British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration* was renewed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and British Columbia's then-called Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS). At that time a commitment was made to the Regional Immigration Initiative (RII) in B.C. The initiative focused on the potential of attracting business entrepreneurs, skilled workers, international students and investment dollars. The initiative had three main goals:

1) To facilitate the attraction and retention of immigrants to communities outside the Greater Vancouver Region.
2) To support the economic development of rural communities within British Columbia
3) To develop strategies to improve the ability and capacity of smaller cities and communities outside of the Greater Vancouver Area to attract and retain immigrants.

Consequently, the immigration division of MCAWS put out a call for proposals from

mid- and small-sized communities in British Columbia. A competitive process selected eight British Columbia communities/regions to work in close partnership with the community and contractors to identify and develop resources needed to attract and retain immigrants. The regions and communities chosen were Abbotsford, Alberni-Clayoquot, Nanaimo, Powell River, the Okanagan, Prince George, Revelstoke and Vernon. Each of the communities assessed their local ability to host newcomers and developed an action plan to make their area more welcoming to new immigrants.

Similar community-led research in many provinces has resulted in the output of manuals or guides for small cities on the topic of receiving newcomers more effectively. For example, CIC funded the production of a 2nd edition of *Attracting and Retaining Immigrants; A Toolbox of Ideas for Smaller Centres*. This guidebook was prepared by the National Working Group on Small Centres Strategies, and put together through the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria. Efforts to equip communities are being made at many levels.

Following the Regional Immigration Initiative studies, the Province announced WelcomeBC, "a strategic framework that unites B.C.'s comprehensive settlement and integration initiatives under one umbrella" (Ministry of Attorney General, 2007). WelcomeBC was launched by the present Premier, Gordon Campbell, on June 13, 2007 and funding, using mainly federal funds through the Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration. WelcomeBC provided funding for settlement services and programs throughout the province.

The Province has also launched a WelcomeBC web portal with information specific both to prospective immigrants and potential host communities. The portal invites people to consider immigrating not just to B.C., but to the province's eight regions, which are as "unique and diverse as our people" (from www.welcomebc.ca). The shift to advertising community attractiveness to immigrants, especially online, is an interesting twist to local boosterism.

In addition, the Province of BC launched the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program in 2008 to improve access to settlement and integration services for immigrants, as well as to help make BC communities welcoming and inclusive. The program focuses on public education, knowledge development

(through analysis, asset mapping, workshops and other interactive exchanges), community partnership development between key groups and demonstration projects for to show innovative approaches to create welcoming communities. Small cities as well as Provinces are thinking more and more about how they present themselves to the world.

2.6 The structure of regionalization initiatives

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and the Welcoming Communities initiatives address two very different aspects of regionalization. The PNP is focused on economic imperatives, including recruitment of skilled workers, and workers to fill positions in sectors with acute labour shortages. The Welcoming Communities initiative on the other hand is dedicated to the integration of newcomers and the prosperity and possibilities of small places. The structure of immigration and diversity responsibilities within the Provincial Government reflects this division. Until recently, the Ministry of Attorney General dealt with issues of immigration policy and settlement, as well as multiculturalism and anti-racism programming, while the Ministry of Economic Development was responsible for administering and managing the PNP. Through the PNP and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (another program run by the Ministry of Economic Development) an immigrant's geographical placement is directly connected to a proven employment contract. This implicitly limits the choice of first place of destination. The dual foci of these immigration initiatives (one economic, the other social) indicate a broad divide between competing views of the purpose of regional immigration.

The Provincial Nominee Program gives companies and employers the ability to attract people specific to fill their economic needs with a broader goal of supporting regional economic stability and development. Immigrants becoming permanent residents through the PNP in turn make a commitment to place (though they are not legally bound to stay there). Meanwhile, the Province's commitment to helping towns offer a more friendly welcome is manifested by funding community programs and encouraging advertising campaigns. Social settlement responsibilities are put into the hands of existing community services. At first glance this seems reasonable. On closer

investigation though, we see that many of these communities have no base of immigration services upon which to build. Few of these organizations or small local governments are even capable of putting together appropriate funding applications. Furthermore, funding is often by short-term grant, which hinders long-term planning or larger projects, like organizing regional cooperation. The policies in general ask a great deal of communities often already stretched beyond capacity. These communities must then deal with the greater responsibility to create social services, apply for funding, create websites and use toolboxes. These demands require a shift in the way small places operate; self-actualization, independence and competition are qualities stressed in the effort to attract and retain immigrants. For employers, the PNP might help fill an important gap in their roster, however there is no direct, government-coordinated communication between employers and social service providers. A great deal of local change, not just economic and social but ideological and organizational, is required to create a welcoming community that will facilitate immigrant integration.

3   INTEGRATION

Before entering the field, a simple question constantly recurred as I read of immigration settlement issues in academic work, news articles and policy documents: What is meant by 'immigrant integration'? At first I assumed the answer would depend on the speaker; a multiculturalist would use multiculturalism to define successful integration, an assimilationist would regard integration using their own standards of assimilated settlement and so on. What I increasingly found, however, was that integration was being used not simply as the means to a prescribed goal, but as a goal itself.

Integration is a term more and more commonly used by politicians and policy makers in North America and Europe (Baubock 2001; Li 2003 p. 4; Favell 2005; Joppke 2007). It is also a term used in the implementation of socially-focused regionalization initiatives. On a large scale, it is so regularly applied and with such emphasis that it begins to replace concepts such as multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. The purpose of this section is to investigate the meaning of the term integration and ultimately, what implications its broadened use may have in the Canadian context.

3.1 The "catch-all" term that caught on

Like most broadly used concepts integration remains loosely defined in the literature, despite the efforts of several authors to bring clarity to the term. The quotes below illustrate the problem:

> "Integration has often been used as a catch-all concept, designating both processes and objectives of inclusionary strategies" (Jentsch 2007 p.2).

> "Although the term is widely used, it is rarely subjected to careful analysis. As a result, it lacks focus and conveys a disparate body of ideas. It avoids the two extremes of assimilation and segregation, and seems to have caught on because of this virtue" (Parekh 2005 p.7).

"…a treacherous concept, resting on a mathematical metaphor, which assumes that the social processes of group interaction can be likened to the mathematical processes of making up a whole number" (Banton 2001 p.151).

Integration, as suggested above, describes both action and object. It is both something to do and something to be achieved. It may also act as a modulating term, shifting place between the polarities of assimilation and multiculturalism. In this chapter I will examine the cultural assumptions underlying the ambiguous concept of integration. In the Canadian context, Peter Li has been the first to take on a serious deconstruction of integration's usage and theory in the Canadian government, the media, and academia.

> It is used liberally by policy-makers, immigration critics, and academics without a vigorous theoretical explanation… in reality the assessment [of successful integration] is often based on a narrow understanding and a rigid expectation that treats integration solely in terms of the degree to which immigrants converge to the average performance of native-born Canadians and their normative and behavioural standards (Li 2003 p.316).

Here I build on Li's enquiry into the meaning behind integration. Authors Ong (1999), Mitchell (2004) and Brown (2006) pushed me to consider integration within the context of the nation-state, taking into account the political and ideological significance of state boundaries and the influence of neoliberal globalism on evaluating successful integration. These ideas comprise the second section of this chapter. The assumptions embedded in the word integration are ultimately acted out in the theatre of everyday lives. The final section of this chapter will bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality and it transitions into a discussion of real life investigations done in the field.

In a detailed examination of a single term, Derrida's idea of 'iteration' is helpful. In his work on the philosophy of language, he suggests that by repeating a term we will never produce a replica of its original usage and its intended meaning, rather we produce iterations. An iteration transforms meaning, adds to it, enriches it in ever-so-subtle ways, and ultimately means there is no original to conform to (in Benhabib et al. 2006). This poses a dilemma in trying to trace the term's meaning; therefore, I prefer to point to the junctures at which integration's iterations most commonly diverge.

The word integration existed long before its association with immigration policy in immigrant-receiving countries. Historically, integration is powerfully associated with

racial integration – especially of black and white people in the United States. The term is also used in describing macro-economic integration of trade regions and the regional integration between nation-states that facilitates co-operation on major policy issues (e.g. the European Union). Integration has multiple other meanings and associations, but is ultimately a part of common vocabulary referencing the coming together of disparate parts. The fact that the term is inexplicit arguably makes it useful. Integration is a term commonly appropriated into Canadian discourse on immigration. On one level, both familiarity and ambiguity become advantageous in the ongoing debate over immigrant settlement in Canada.

3.2 Context for the ascendance of 'integration'

Consider a nation where debates over the immigrant settlement process are well worn. Canada *is* such a nation formed by waves of diverse immigrants since the colonial era and by assimilation of the immigrants to the dominant Anglo-French languages, politics and cultural norms since confederation. In the 1970s however assimilation was cast aside as a foundation for national identity and intercultural relations and multiculturalism became the dominant theme of immigration discourse in Canada. As assimilation lost favour in an era where personal rights and freedoms became salient, some researchers and policy makers used the term integration as a more acceptable alternative to assimilation (Hiebert and Ley 2003). The concept of integration became adopted as an inoffensive way of saying much the same thing as assimilation.

Since the introduction of an official policy of multiculturalism in 1971 by the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, multiculturalism entered the national lexicon, and has since evolved through many iterations. Multiculturalism grew from its liberal ideological roots in Canada and served to provide a more inclusionary discourse around Canadian citizenship, particulary for growing numbers of immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities (Abu-Laban 2002). Canadian society began to reorient its concepts of citizenship rights, integration and social respect as part of the multicultural project (Kobayashi 1993). For example, social, health and financial institutions began to offer services in languages other than English or French.

As previously alluded though, the celebration of *diversity* in multicultural society and the emphasis on individual rights has been overshadowed by other less agreeable manifestations of difference on the global scale: protests, riots and assaults (Amin 2002). "Increasingly common shocks creating national hypertension" have set a stage of unease, and social policies of multiculturalism across the world are under intense questioning (Ley 2007 p.3). The efficacy of multiculturalism as a tool for positive integration has met with growing criticism. Academics and policy makers from the right question whether multiculturalism is divisive and destructive, reinforcing racial tensions and separateness. Critics from the left alternatively suggest multiculturalism is masking significant underlying economic and political inequalities that need attention (Ley 2005). Multiculturalism has moved into debate, and assailants gather from all points across the political spectrum. In response to the abundance of critical judgments, government lexicons (especially British and Australian) have snuck 'multiculturalism' underneath thick conceptual carpets woven from a language of integration (Ley and Hiebert 2001). Whether or not the attack on multiculturalism is justified, the term integration has gained popularity as a more acceptable moderator acting variably to promote expectations of assimilation, multiculturalism or something in between.

Though some authors argue that the proliferation of "problematic" diversity (where ethnic difference sits uneasily and results in conflict) is widespread even in Canada (Day 2000), it is important to note the strong defence of the concept of multiculturalism (Abu-Laban 2002). Compared with other immigrant receiving countries, Canada has seen less of a turn away from multiculturalism. Unlike most other countries, public sentiment towards immigration in Canada is positive (Hiebert 2006). How or if Canadian sentiments change remains to be seen.

What is most complex about the return of integration as an ascendant word in Canadian immigration discourse is the spatial scale at which its revival is cast. The recent reintroduction of integration is the product of a global conversation. In an introduction to his defence of multiculturalism, Ley reminds us of such events as the assassination of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, continued rioting in France, the cartoon crisis in Denmark, and the terrorist attacks in Spain and Britain. These events have stirred international debate about the state of intercultural relations and segregation

within nation-states. In my readings, it seems evident that integration's reformulation is caught up in public debates about assimilation and multiculturalism – debates that have ping-ponged across the Atlantic. Canada has been defined as "the 'place where multiculturalism exists'" (Hinz quoted in Abu-Laban 2002), and international academic writings about multiculturalism frequently allude to the Canadian experience. As other Western countries become disenchanted with the social experiment of multiculturalism, the success of multiculturalism in Canada is also thrown into question.

If multiculturalism is a boomerang Canadians helped cast, integration is the term that has taken a ride back with it. Integration is not a new concept in Canada; however its importance as a *process* is a critical response to the perception of multiculturalism's 'problematic diversity'. Integration's adoption as a social policy is the direct response to an urgent need within immigrant receiving countries to learn how to deal with the unpredictable consequences of diversity. Integration's forte is its ability to at once seem a reasonable, flexible concept and to suggest action or change. Governments seek to maintain social order while upholding liberal democratic policies. I will return to this theme after exploring how the Canadian government shows interest in legitimating and defining integration.

3.3 Integration as a two-way process

In March of 2001 the Integration Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada defined the term integration as a "two-way process that requires accommodations on both sides" (CIC, 2001). This definition implies a two-way adjustment process whereby immigrants and the host society together create a new culture (Hiebert and Ley 2003). The explanation of integration as a 'two-way process' is common in academic and ministerial writings (Ray 2002; Castles and Miller 2003; Li 2003a). It appeases critics that claim integration is a process barely separable from assimilation by emphasizing that newcomers can maintain cultural differences in Canada. But what is the significance of framing integration in this way?

First, integration becomes a relationship and not a firm outcome. The process is made to seem organic, as though it is something to be negotiated between individuals in

the time and place of their meeting. Critics argue, however, that while this not only burdens the individual with the responsibility to sort out social cohesion, it inevitably translates into a relationship where immigrants bear much of the burden of change (Kobayashi 1993). Secondly, a meeting point halfway still suggests the necessity to change (even if it does acknowledge that change is necessary for both native and newcomer). Some argue that by pressing cultures to coalesce into a new integrated culture, integration goes against the principles of multiculturalism that values a society where many cultures co-exist, with none dominant (Abu-Laban 2002). By this argument, integration is not a choice on the spectrum from assimilation to multiculturalism; integration inherently rejects the 'multi' in multiculturalism.

In an effort to legislate effective integration equally and fairly, the Canadian federal government has taken a structural approach to ensure the equal meeting of diverse minds in public institutions. The Department of Canadian Heritage has spearheaded the Multiculturalism Program, a line up of programs and initiatives designed to meet the policy framework set out by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988 (the latter has since been amalgamated into the former). Three of four of the priority areas of the Multiculturalism Program show an explicit self-conscious acceptance of the two-way process of integration on the part of the federal government, and its use in keeping multiculturalism strong:

- **Helping public institutions to break down systemic barriers to diverse populations** (institutional change).
- **Helping federal institutions to integrate diversity considerations into policies, programs and services** (federal institutional change).
- **Encouraging communities and the broad public to engage in informed dialogue and sustained action to combat racism** (anti-racism, anti-hate, cross-cultural understanding).

These goals take the shape of the National Action Plan Against Racism, the Diversity at Work program, federally sponsored prizes for television programming that reflects the cultural diversity in Canada, a designation of "multicultural champions" in federal institutions to advance the principles of multiculturalism in their offices, the funding of Tolerance.ca and other specific informational websites and research projects for provinces (Canadian Heritage 2006 p.12). For both policy-makers and academics,

however, part of being able to legitimize integration as a concept is an ability to measure its success.

3.4 Measuring successful integration

Quantifying successful integration is complicated. In 2002 Citizenship and Immigration Canada explains integration as a strategy that "aims to enable newcomers to settle, adapt and integrate as quickly and comfortably as possible so that they may become contributing members of Canadian society." Li (2003) argues that though the government makes clear that successful integration involves immigrants becoming contributing members quickly and smoothly, just what a 'contributing member' entails is unclear. It is sometimes explained as equivalent to "full engagement in Canadian society", which he points out is equally illusory (319). In immigration discourse, integration has been broken down to better qualify its expectations. Geddes identifies a three-way split in determining aspects of integration: economic, social and political/civic (2001). Though it seems a practical approach to studying a complicated topic, it could also be that various forms of integration are too easily separated when they should be considered holistically. It is often forgotten that those people who are integrated in one aspect may still be struggling in other ways. For example a woman may be employed, but unable to participate in a civic vote due to language or cultural barriers. Furthermore, an immigrant may qualify as successfully integrated but sponsoring others who are struggling in completely different ways. This is something I want to keep in mind before entering a discussion of different aspects of integration.

In Canada, where economic migrants make up the largest percent of accepted immigrant applications every year, there is an overwhelming emphasis on economic performance as a measure of integration. Measures of economic integration depend on whose perspective is being considered. Following the economic demands of the host-country, a measure of integration may simply be, 'are immigrants adding economically to the country's treasury or not?' This question is normally measured longitudinally, where the immigrant's tax contributions since arrival to their last tax-paying day are weighed in comparison with their consumption of public services (DeVoretz 2006). A more

common approach to measuring economic integration in Canada, however, is to consider integration from the perspective of immigrants themselves. Immigrants wishing to self-assess their own economic integration ask how long it will take to 'catch-up' to the Canadian-born income level.

Labour market integration, in terms of 'catch-up' is of increasing concern to Canadian researchers in the past several years as economic integration seems to be slowing down when compared with the settlement of earlier cohorts of immigrants (Hum and Simpson 2004; Hiebert 2006). Measuring labour market integration is not straightforward. Self-employment (and immigrants as a group are more likely to be self-employed than other groups) is rarely factored into labour market analysis though it may represent an important avenue where immigrants with bleak social mobility might hope to generate a higher income than through wage labour (Mata and Pendakur 1999). The economic cost of immigration is an argument frequently touted by critics of immigration in Canada; however, the ability to generalize success or failure through statistical measures is highly dependent on the methods employed and thus highly subjective (DeVoretz 2006).

Social integration in Canada is sometimes measured by the desire of newcomers to become full participants as citizens. Researchers will check the census to see what percentage of immigrants eligible to apply for citizenship have become Canadian citizens (Ray 2002). Measures of social integration generally include cultural integration. Cultural integration is often measured as a sense of belonging to the receiving society, the occasions and qualities of cultural contact between groups, the convergence of child rearing practices, and inter-group marriages, as well as by the degree to which groups remain apart (for example separate religious institutions and schools) or the intent to return one day to a home country (Ray 2002). Over Canada's history, immigrants have changed and policies around social integration have changed with them. The widening racial and cultural composition of immigrants arriving in Canada have meant changing barriers to social integration and encouraged policy and settlement work on issues of racism and cultural acceptance (Wayland 1997).

Perhaps the most studied aspect of social integration in geography is residential integration and the study of segregation and settlement concentration. There is a common

assumption that lack of social integration is threatening the social fabric of society and that residential segregation is in part to blame (Musterd 2003). Many academics agree that this association is misplaced. The role of ethnic or linguistic enclaves in social integration is highly complex, and differs largely depending on what element of integration is being considered and who is integrating. Furthermore, the index of dissimilarity in indices of segregation used to measure residential patterns sometimes produces misleading results depending on the style of their interpretation and the scale of measurement (Simpson 2007).

This thesis treats the issue of political and civic integration only tangentially, but one interesting view from a political scientist translates nicely into the following section. Harles inquires into the role of immigrant involvement in national politics and how immigrants wed their destiny with the collective destiny of their new home country (Harles 1997). He argues that national integration – or "the shared sense of a political fate" – is key to the formation of political unity in a country and to the formation of a sense of polity for its citizenry. He argues – raising Said's concept of 'allocative integration' – that general sentiments of approval for a country and political incorporation are augmented by the provision of a certain standard of living (729). Though this article touches only lightly on the complexity of political and civic integration issues, it does raise again the importance of the nation-state in providing the prerequisites for successful integration, and in determining how a "collective destiny" can even be envisioned in a country unified through diversity.

3.5 The contradiction at the heart of the debate

Integration suggests that the host society and newcomer meet in the middle, each respecting the other enough to sacrifice a little of what they value and to open their minds to a different way of living together. Much of the theoretical debate about integration hinges upon the dilemma between concepts of social cohesion and multicultural particularism. Is it possible to integrate group rights protecting cultural diversity and the individual rights that underlie liberal democracy without constructing a hierarchy of rights that prioritizes one over the other? Such questions surface once we consider the

immigrant's rights to practice traditional law (for example religious Islamic Sharia law), to be excused from work on holy days outside the Christian calendar, or in a most recent Canadian example, to wear the hijab while voting.

Some liberal thinkers see this as a reasonable possibility. They see recognizing cultural diversity as essential to protecting equality in a civil society. Thus, they see no fundamental contradiction between maintaining liberalism and its implied universalism on the one hand, while supporting multiculturalism and its implied particularism on the other (Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2005). Critics of multiculturalism also see no conflict, as they argue that the liberal version of multiculturalism is mainly symbolic and relegates diversity to the spaces of private lives without great public effect. Others still dismiss the contradiction because they already think from an entrenched position on the hierarchy of rights, arguing that multiculturalism's characterization of difference is divisive and weakens national unity, so they prefer a version of liberalism that advocates strong shared values and individual rights (examples from Li 2003a). Cultural essentialism informs this final voice, where cultural differences are treated as primordial and unbridgeable and cultural identity as singular and not multiple (Abu-Laban 2002).

There lies a danger in admitting the term integration into Canadian immigration discourse without examining the contradiction that lies at its centre. In Canadian academic writing about immigration, Peter Li offers a most succinct criticism into integration's present use in immigration discourse (2003a). Through his analysis of integration's use by policy-makers, immigration critics and academics Li shows that the discourse endorses "conformity as a de facto empirical benchmark for assessing immigrant integration" (326). Li argues that Canada's official use of the concept of integration is operating a kind of double-speak. It has a tendency to reify specific cultural and racial differences and present them as threats to Canada's core values, while at the same time promoting conformity despite the rhetorical commitment to diversity and multiculturalism. Li argues that in upholding the normative expectation of conformity as the desirable outcome of immigrant integration, integration has become a monolithic cultural framework that preaches a kind of abstract tolerance but in truth is intolerant of a difference that lies too far out of the mainstream. The most offensive outliers in this case, are seen as those challenging the place of liberal democracy in the Canadian value set.

Why, according to Li, is conformity the hidden objective of integration? Joppke suggests that while integration is generally postulated as a 'two-way process', one should not forget its extreme improbability (2007).

> The idea that something as complex and extensive as the receiving society, a 'society' after all and not just 'people', should change in response to the arrival of by nature numerically inferior 'migrants' is unheard of. That a settled society would change as a result of migration is of course inevitable, but elevating this into an ethical maxim, a *should,* is an unprecedented stance to take. (p. 3)

This quote reflects not only the gut emotional response when an established citizenry defends erosion of what it has, but it also pertains to the core concept of society. 'Society' is what differentiates a group from individuals. Within a society people protect one another and possess a sense of belonging, a sense of shared identity. From this perspective, the maintenance of society demands a certain amount of conformity, or at least some agreed values. Canadian critics of immigration nostalgically compare the ease of integrating early generations of European immigrants through assimilation with the challenge of integrating new immigrants under multiculturalism (Stoffman 2002). Integration is expected, and it is a critical step in nation-building images of polity and unity.

Writing from a Western European perspective, Joppke describes how nation-building is bound up with integration policy and the goal of shared values. In this context, Joppke sees a convergence of state policies on immigrant integration towards obligatory civic integration courses and tests for newcomers (2007). Based on examples from the Netherlands, France and Germany, he argues that the tests and courses were developed in response to perceptions of the weakening of national identity. In the context of a Western European "integration crisis", Joppke explains that there is a shared sense that state policies have not sufficiently dealt with the accommodation of growing numbers of newcomers, and that this inadequate response poses a danger to social cohesion.

In Canada, as in the countries referenced above by Joppke, shared social identity is bound firmly to the concept of freedom within a liberal democracy. In Canada, the schism between group rights and universal individual rights is often articulated through the discourse of multiculturalism that emphasizes a unity-through-diversity.

"I would urge all Canadians to take time today to celebrate the tolerant, open and generous society we have created, which welcomes people of all backgrounds to grow and prosper as part of the Canadian family."

-Prime Minister Stephen Harper on the occasion of Canadian Multiculturalism Day, on June 27, 2006 (Canadian Heritage 67).

What binds us to one another is our acceptance of each other's differences. In Europe these values are part of the agreed upon 'common basic principles' of the EU's immigrant integration policies (Joppke 2007). In Canada, these elements of individual rights are founded in the Multicultural Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Garcea 2006). Rights to cultural and religious expression, respect and equal treatment are now an accepted and *expected* aspect of western liberal democracies. The countries in Joppke's studies are now offering courses and requiring acceptance tests of potential applicants in the source countries – presumably to ensure that new migrants understand the parameters of tolerance they will be asked to accept in the host country. This is just one interpretation of the objective of such activities; however, tolerance itself has come under critical investigation in recent years.

3.6 Learning tolerance

The attitude of tolerance associated with liberal democratic ideals can also culminate into an attitude of exclusion. "In the modern West, a liberal discourse of tolerance distinguishes "free" societies from "fundamentalist" ones, the "civilized" from the "barbaric" and the individual from the organicist or collectivized" (Brown 2006 p.177). Brown argues that tolerance, as a political practice, is always conferred by the dominant group upon the minority, and is part of the process of difference making. By proclaiming their own tolerance, people espouse qualities of "seemliness, propriety, forbearance, magnanimity, cosmopolitanism, [and] universality" for themselves, while accentuating the difference between them and the people they could not imagine themselves to be: the intolerant, those unfamiliar with the true meaning of liberal civilization (178). The idea that tolerance must be taught to newcomers (as alluded to in Joppke's case studies, or in the case of Herouxville's proposed "code of conduct") makes potential migrants seem uneducated or narrow-minded. Ignatieff, who is a proponent of

teaching tolerance, suggests that the "essential task in teaching 'toleration' is to help people see themselves as individuals, and then to see others as such" (Ignatieff quoted in Brown 2005, 185). Individuality, as opposed to collectivity, is also then a part of being a tolerant person.

If integration masks cultural assumptions about the priority of liberal democratic values, does it also mask the 'othering' of new immigrants from non-Western countries? The benign intention behind hospitality may be, in reality, a reinstatement of the power to assert ownership of place and to exercise control over another's experience of that place. This school of thought, however, seems almost to condemn tolerance as the pathway to xenophobia. Racism and xenophobia, "based as it is on the purification of a national identity sits uneasily with the flows and cultural fusions which are generated by global capitalism" (Sibley 1995 p.109). In the Canadian context however, a shared identity as 'tolerant Canadian national subjects' has arguably been exchanged for "a strategic multiculturalism premised on international cosmopolitanism" (Mitchell 2004, 88). This shift in identity upholds the cosmopolitan value of unconditional hospitality, and is far more in sync with the demands of the global economy.

3.7 Flexible meanings

Strategic multiculturalism implies that what citizenship and nationality means might be amenable to change, as demanded by changing international economic or political circumstances. A flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty are strategies employed to attract capital and consolidate power for nation-states in a transnational world (Ong 1999). Just as Ong suggests that an increasingly flexible notion of citizenship (favouring practices of mobility and repositioning) has become popular, integration has been revitalized because of the flexibility of its meaning. It can support principles of equality and universal democratic rights while offering a sense of action and change for concerned audiences.

The mobility of capital is not only affecting the economic strategies of investors and urban politicians, it has also resulted in ingenious strategies of economic immigration from a wide socio-economic range of immigrants. While economic strategies of mobility

are common for immigrants from source countries, this technique differs from the options available to poor families in Western countries who are unable to respond in quite the same way and who are "staying put" or stuck in place (especially in urban ghettos) (Ong 2000, 9). The "out-of-placeness" of wealthy immigrants in the established ethno-racial order of American culture (in Ong's study) has created a parallel sense of displacement in the lives of whites and blacks who have not benefited from globalization. The possibility of meeting in-between is thus further complicated by feelings of displacement on the part of both newcomers and established citizens.

Integration is an immigration policy that has an inherently domestic focus – it always attempts to *deal* with the influx of immigrants and refugees, but does little to consider the impact of their integration on the immigrant's connections to his/her home country and on the socio-economic impact on immigrants themselves. Some reflection on the contradictory nature of diversity in a liberal society is an important step as we consider the implications of integration:

> John Stuart Mill, for instance, who worked for the India Office realized that one of the major conundrums of his theory of liberty consisted of the fact that he was a democrat in his country and a despot in another's land. For the canons of British literary culture to take responsibility for such a double forked ancestry requires a revisionary estimate of liberalism as an ideology of conquest, or as an instrument in the culture of assimilation. What has to be acknowledged – and Mill *almost* did – is that the self-contradictoriness of liberalism is an unwinnable war raging in its heart between 'universalism' as a principle of cultural comparison, and ethnocentrism as a condition of judgment, that produces a strategy of 'liberal' containment in situations of cultural conflict. It can also be an inner war that is unsustainable.
>
> <div align="right">-Bhabha 2000,138</div>

Through this thesis I hope to show how a more inclusive concept of integration may help bridge the disconnect between policy and reality. In so doing we must ask *who* is responsible for integration and what are the contradictions underlying it? At this point I will turn to a discussion of place to help characterize just what makes the meaning of integration so critical in regions of Northern British Columbia.

4 THE NORTH

British Columbia's North is a region of about 700,000 square kilometers but is home to just 260,000 inhabitants. By virtue of its enormous size and limited population, the north is often unknown and overlooked by residents of the more populous southern regions of B.C.

Despite its sparse human settlement, Northern BC boasts great diversity ecologically, economically and socially. Northern dwellers express a highly defined sense of regionalism that subdivides the great area. Northeast, northwest and central British Columbians are quick to distinguish themselves from one another. In many ways the definition of territory is more powerful in areas where a traditional dependency on resource extraction means land equals livelihood. Seasonal road hazards (ice, flooding, wildlife) amplify already massive divides and tie people to the land. Resource extraction
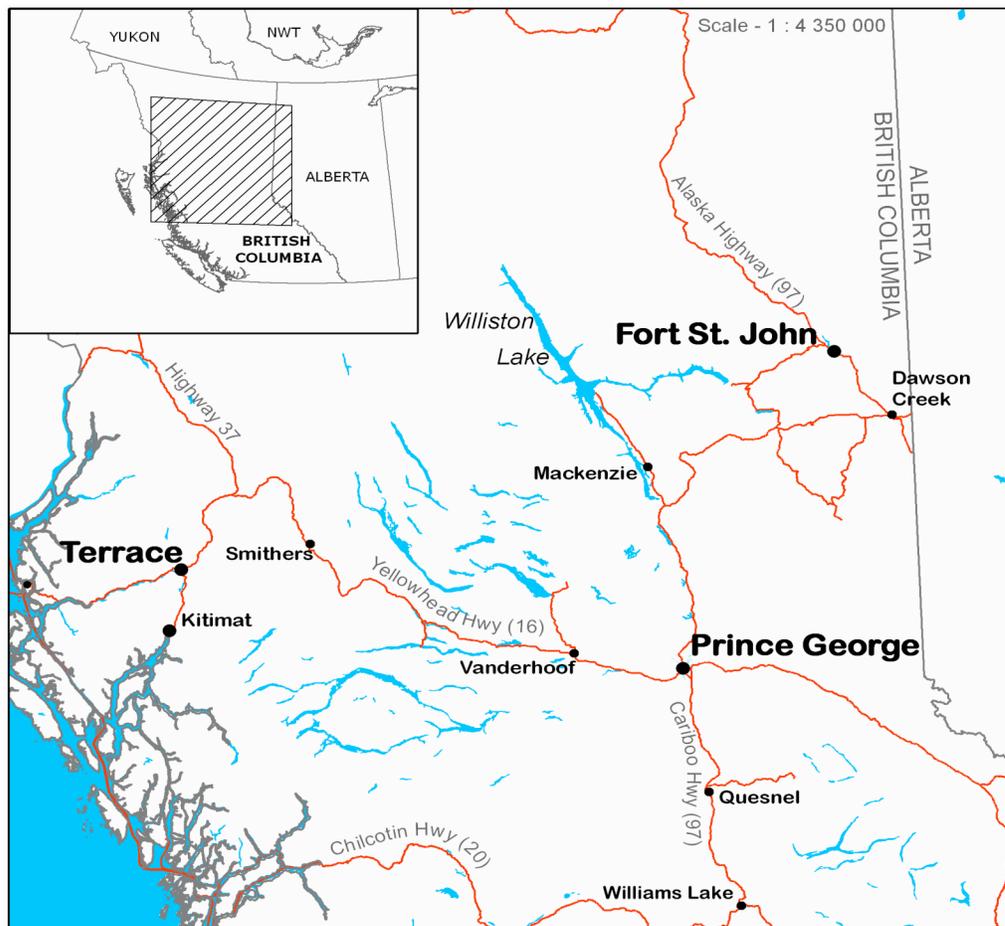
Figure 4.1 A map highlighting the three study sites in Northern B.C.

and community settlement are deeply connected in British Columbia's north. Though First Nations populations have lived across the region for thousands of years, it is unlikely the north would host the population it does now if not for the value placed on its natural resources such as forests, mineral deposits and fossil fuels.

The fragmented landscape of the North lends itself to research in three geographical zones. The map above (Figure 4.1) illustrates the locations of the three study sites; Fort St. John in the Northeast of BC (in the Peace River regional district), Terrace in the Northwest (Kitimat-Stikine regional district) and Prince George in Northcentral (Fraser-Fort George regional district). I chose to study regionalization in Northern BC largely because of an opportunity to work with the geography department at the University of Northern BC (UNBC). Two professors in the department, Dr. Nolin and Dr. Halseth, were doing fieldwork in the North and allowed me to join their team to help with their research and extend the reach of my own. Together with other researchers from UNBC I conducted interviews with service providers and focus groups with community representatives from city council, local business and development organizations. Independently I interviewed immigrants settled in Prince George, but not in the other two locales. In Prince George I spent four months sharing a house with a young family new to the city. I spent one week in the student dormitories in Fort St. John, and another week in a motel by the railway tracks on the outskirts of Terrace. The descriptions of place that follow are a combination of local news, relevant statistics and stories I heard from the people I interviewed. Through these multiple perspectives I hope to communicate a rich account of place that will help set the context for the following chapters which contain my findings from, and interpretations of, interview-based research with immigrants in the North.

4.1 Terrace in the northwest

Northwestern British Columbia, an extension of the southern coastal temperate rainforest, is lush and green – just colder than the south. The area is famous for its natural beauty and tourists are drawn for local fishing and paddling trips. As part of the

traditional territory of the Tsimshian people, the region attracts cultural tourists on their way, for example, to the traditional village-turned-museum of K'san, or to Prince Rupert and onwards to the ferry over to Haida Gwaii.

The Skeena River carves its way to the Pacific coast in this area traditionally connected to the forestry industry. In the past 10 years, however, both the forestry industry and the population are in decline, and the employment base rests principally on work in manufacturing and trade, with a hopeful eye towards proposed mining projects in the region. The area's employment trends show a gradual, but significant distancing from forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas work and jobs in those sectors dropped by about 40% in the ten years between 1997 and 2007 (see Figure 4.2). In this region, the majority of jobs held in this broad sector have been related to forestry and the decrease has been most significant for forestry workers.[4]
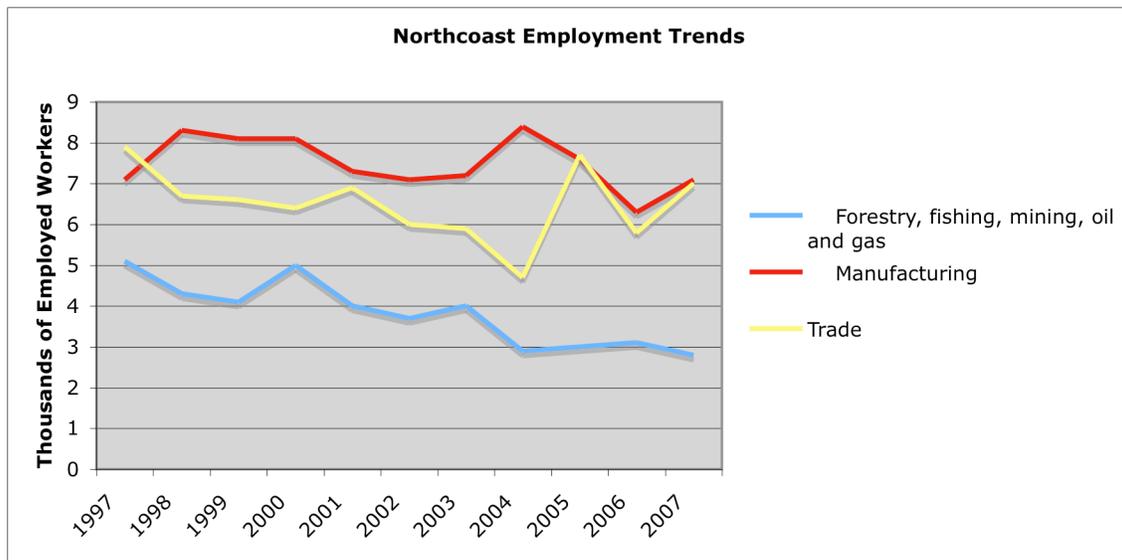
Figure 4.2 Employment trends in North Coast Development Region

At the centre of the Northwest is Terrace, a city of approximately 15,000, situated in a valley closely surrounded by the Hazelton and Coast mountains.[5] Travelers to Terrace

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[4] Community-level employment figures from 2001 BC Statistics confirms that in Terrace the majority of workers in this sector are mostly employed in logging and forest product industries (11.3%), rather than mining and mineral work (1.8%).

[5] Statistics taken from 2007 Census, provided through Statistics Canada Community Profiles. Though the Terrace Census Subdivision (municipality) hosts a population of

come either by air or by a long drive on twisting Yellowhead Highway 16.[6] CN rail tracks, transporting goods to and from the new container port in Prince Rupert to the west, bisect the city. Terrace vies with Prince Rupert as regional hub of the North Coast and the hallmarks of its claim – representatives of capitalist consumerism Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire, and the Real Canadian Superstore – have all moved in over the past five years. There are rumours of a London Drugs and Home Depot on the way. Also in the last few years, average prices for single-family homes in Terrace have risen from $162,425 in March 2007 to $182,561 in December 2007 and climbing to $210,261 as of March 2008.[7] Local officials are positive about the changing consumer landscape and real estate market, pointing hopefully towards signs of renewed investment and interest in the region. Given the world-wide economic crisis that emerged in the fall of 2008, however, it is hard to believe their perspectives have not changed.

Beneath the optimism is an apprehension of what Terrace could become. The shut down of Skeena-Cellulose (a major pulp-mill), prompted many in the community to blame the city's economic decline on the departure of the forestry company. Since that shut down in 2001, the population of Terrace has decreased by seven percent, which gives rise to serious social consequences. Five local schools were closed in 2001, and in early March of 2008 the Board of Education announced plans to close another three schools. Compared to the rest of B.C. in 2001, residents were more than twice as likely to be dependent on the social safety net (Employment Insurance or Basic Income Assistance). In 2006, 9.3 percent of the Terrace population was unemployed, compared with the provincial figure of 6.0%. Teen pregnancy rates in 2006 were more than three times the provincial average at 31.9 pregnancies per 1,000 population in the 15-19 age group. Poverty, drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness are highly visible in this small city. Just last November a homeless man, Melvin Aksidan, was found dead in a wooded lot one block from the downtown hospital – alcohol and hypothermia are thought to be the cause, though the town waits on the coroner's formal report (Pynn 2008). The

11,300, the immediately adjacent community of Thornhill is home to 4,000 people and could functionally be considered a part of Terrace.
[6] This highway was the scene of a fatal mudslide in 2007 that wiped out a portion of the road, disconnecting the Northwest from the rest of the province for over a week.
[7] Information from Multiple Listings Sales (MLS) accessed April 10, 2008.

community's social degradation has exacerbated uncomfortable race relations in this city where twenty-five percent of the population identifies as First Nations (BC Stats 2008).

As I spoke with service-providers about immigration, I found our discussions inevitably led to a discussion of race, multiculturalism and diversity. Terrace is home to small numbers of recent immigrants, but has a long-established group of early immigrant settlers. Within Terrace's total immigrant population of 2,055, most came from Portugal and other European countries who settled in the 1960s and 70s (from census figures on the Terrace census agglomeration). According to data from the Landed Immigrant Database (LIDS), just 132 new immigrants moved to Terrace between 2002 and 2006.[8] Over forty percent of recent immigrants came through the Family stream of immigration, while the remainder arrived as Provincial Nominees (34%) or Skilled Workers (20%). The proportion coming through the PNP was significantly higher than for the province as a whole (just over 2%).

In Terrace, the stereotypical small-town binary of 'local' versus 'outsider' is not entirely the story. The very concept of *who* is considered local is disputed. Racism and prejudice between First Nations people and the non-aboriginal population is still prevalent, and through anecdotal evidence I learned that prejudice exists again on another level, between those First Nations people who choose to live in the town, and those in the backcountry or reserves. The context for immigrant settlement and integration in such a mix is clearly complex.

Heavy flooding and a landslide in the summer of 2007 delayed my own field research in Terrace as the only paved road connecting Terrace to points east and south was washed out. I arrived the week after a state of emergency was lifted, and the interviews were certainly affected by the local crisis. Optimism about the city's ability to pull together charged responses. Hope was not just for economic changes for the better, but also that the community could come together through hardship.

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[8] Landed Immigrant Data System; information is based on self-reported information gathered from landing forms which only record initial intended place of residence. Secondary-migration (say from Vancouver to Terrace, or from Prince George to Victoria) adds an element of mystery to the accuracy of these numbers.

4.2 Fort St. John in the northeast

Another world away (about ten hours by road) is Fort St. John, a city literally rising from nothing, a sighting on the high plains of BC's Peace River country. The scenery is dramatic. The Peace River carves out a giant canyon through the countryside, creating breathtaking views from cliff-tops. The roads, gorgeous in summer months, are extremely dangerous and icy over the long, cold winter.

Fort St. John is a city of over 17,000 and growing rapidly. Between 2001 and 2006, the population of Fort St. John and its surroundings increased by 9.3 percent. In the last fifteen years, Fort St. John, along with other towns in the region, have bustled with growth, stretching to accommodate new people, new companies and new services developed to support the energy industries extracting oil and natural gas.

Fort St. John calls itself "the energetic city". Asked to send home a post card of an oil derrick, I was surprised to actually find one right in the tourist information centre. The town is unreserved in its appreciation for oil wealth; post cards celebrate the oil industry and expensive "dually"[9] trucks congest the city-streets, drive-thrus and familiar big box parking lots. The city logo is an image that can be interpreted either as a roadway or an oil derrick.

The provincial economy is becoming increasingly dependent on revenues from oil largely derived from this region. Royalty payments to the province from companies extracting oil and natural gas from the Northeast now outstrip income from forestry (Parfitt 2007). Despite the strong economic value placed on the region by the Province, residents of Fort St. John and the local city council seem to express a strong connection with the neighbouring province of Alberta. The local weather channel for example, displays the highway route to Grand Prairie in Alberta, but not to Prince George (and there is a highway – I took it). Regional identity is strong in the Peace. Tourism campaigns aimed at linking the Northeastern part of the province with the Alaskan Highway pull the region even closer.

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[9] A pick-up truck with four rear wheels (two on each side) which results in a broader vehicle.

Despite wealth and regional pride, the form and pace of growth are hotly contested in Fort St. John. The city has expanded like the landscape – horizontally. The city council recently "super-sized" the city boundaries in order to include a large oriented strand board factory in the city's tax region. This expansion stretched the city several kilometers along the highway. Growth has also stretched existing health care and social services, which are now spread thinly over the growing population. Appropriate housing is increasingly expensive and hard to find. City planning in a city where so much money is at stake can be extremely confrontational. The planned expansion of the City Library, for example, has unfortunately been stalled due to high land and construction costs. Library staff members had to build their own custom shelves to add to the ends of existing rows in an effort to make more space for books to accommodate the increasing number of service users.

Wealth in excess can be harmful. Fort St. John is much less proud to be top of the list as BC's city with the highest illiteracy, teen-pregnancy, domestic-abuse and high-school drop out rates (BC Stats 2008). Youth quickly lose interest in school when high paying jobs are easy to find in the oil fields. Employment possibilities launch youth into early adulthood at the cost of education. In my research with local service providers regarding the issues of immigration and integration, respondents expressed serious concern with the need for public education about diversity, anti-racism and tolerance to attempt to cover the basic moral socialization some youth miss out on when they drop out of public high schools.

As the population grows and high-paying jobs attract young workers, the boom in the resource sector has created an employee shortage for other services in the city. During my stay, for example, the local Tim Hortons advertised a free television for new employees. The pressing need for workers in all sectors has resulted in the city taking an interest in looking abroad for workers. Between 2002 and 2006, data from the Landed Immigrant Data System (LIDS) shows that 178 immigrants declared their intended destination as Fort St. John. The majority of immigrants (38.2%) came in through the family class, as skilled workers (23%) and as Provincial Nominees (9.6%) (Government of BC 2008). Though the numbers of Provincial Nominees moving to Fort St. John are

still very small it will be interesting to see if increased promotion of this relatively new provincial program will result in a rise of newcomers to this growing northeastern city.

4.3 Prince George

720 kilometers east of the coastal community of Prince Rupert, and 774 kilometers north of Vancouver, Prince George is located in the heart of British Columbia's central interior. Whether or not Prince George is actually part of *northern* BC is an issue of debate. Prince Georgians assure you it is. Those beyond the 53rd parallel often disagree. The northern living allowance for people who choose to live and work in the North is not fully in effect until Fort Nelson in the far Northeast of BC. Others in-between get partial payments; however those in Prince George are not rewarded for their fortitude by Revenue Canada. Perhaps residents ought to be compensated by the local pulp mills, though; the city is unfortunately well-known for the strong smell of pulp fiber that comes from mills sharing "the bowl" at the convergence of the Nechako and Fraser river valleys which tends to hold the emissions from the mills. The bowl is also home to the majority of the city's population. Local author Sarah de Leeuw writes about the small hope and great unfairness that is Prince George, a city struggling towards 'big', but inelegantly bearing the double-ills of industrial development and concentrated crime.

> Even the rivers rush southward in their search for true cityscapes. From the vantage point of this cut bank, Prince George is but a burst of small light, a meeting place of railway track river road five perhaps six tall buildings scattered suburbs factories bridges and mall. It is surrounded on all sides by forest bog lake spruce pine muskeg moose bear oceans of cattail and salmon berry. This is what wins in the battle of abundance. The city is small in a landscape of wilderness; it is even smaller when viewed from above.
>
> …all along your right hand side the landscape of pulp mills and then a prison that overlooks them, directly in the wind path of great clouds that billow forth from the smoke stacks, the stink of pulp mill meeting the faces of prisoners.
> -Sarah de Leeuw, *Unmarked; Landscapes along Highway 16*, (84)

The city's population has been steady at approximately 70,000, and it is the biggest city in BC's north. Once famous almost exclusively as a forestry centre, the much-admired icon of Prince George is Mister P.G., a 10 metre-tall, wooden cartoon-like man with a

baseball cap that waves merrily at the intersection of Highway 96 and Highway 3.[10] Prince George is often characterized as the "Gateway to the North". Mr. P.G. stands at the intersection where two major transportation arteries meet. Anyone attempting to drive from South to North or back will pass this junction and Mr. P.G.

The city's reputation as exclusively industrial and resource-based has begun to change in recent years. Since the establishment of the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Prince George has become a university town with a growing population of students, professors and ancillary staff. It is also a locus for government, healthcare, commerce and a transportation hub. For the North, Prince George is in many ways *the big city*. It is the regional service centre for northern British Columbia and over the past two decades, as the community has experienced considerable growth, it has developed into "B.C.'s Northern Capital". It is host to the biggest box stores (including a Home Depot and Costco) as well as smaller specialty shops and services that make it a destination for consumers throughout the North. Compared to the population and range of services in the Lower Mainland, Prince George, of course, still seems quite small. Most recently, officials have confirmed the expansion of the Prince George airport to a size that will accommodate the refueling of larger aircraft, ones that may directly connect the city to more destinations.   Air-travel connections and modern conveniences attract people from throughout the region to Prince George, but what attracts international migrants?

Individuals and families are motivated to move for a wide variety reasons. Like those before them, new residents of Prince George are often drawn north by well-paid employment rather than aesthetics or the presence of family and friends (Halseth et al 2007). Generally, the move to Prince George is prompted by the search for work. In 2006, 152 new immigrants reported settling directly in Prince George. Since 2003 the numbers of newcomers moving to Prince George have increased, as have the numbers in the other two study sites (see Figure 4.2).   Prince George, however, is the only city in all of northern British Columbia with a dedicated settlement service society – the Immigrant and Multicultural Service Society (IMSS). Even then, the small number of immigrant

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[10] Mr. PG has been successfully burned down by repeated arson attempts. His body is now fire retardant as it is formed from old sewer tanks. He still looks the same.

arrivals compared to settlement numbers in other regions of BC has meant sporadic and intense competition for services funding. Of all the cities, Prince George is experiencing the steadiest increase in international immigration *and* growth in tertiary employment sectors. Yet, Prince George's history and self-image is still closely bound to the resource industries that are "the heart of the community". The city grapples with two very different and competing priorities; worker mobility in response to shifting economic opportunities versus stable communities with industrial and resource bases that will endure over time.
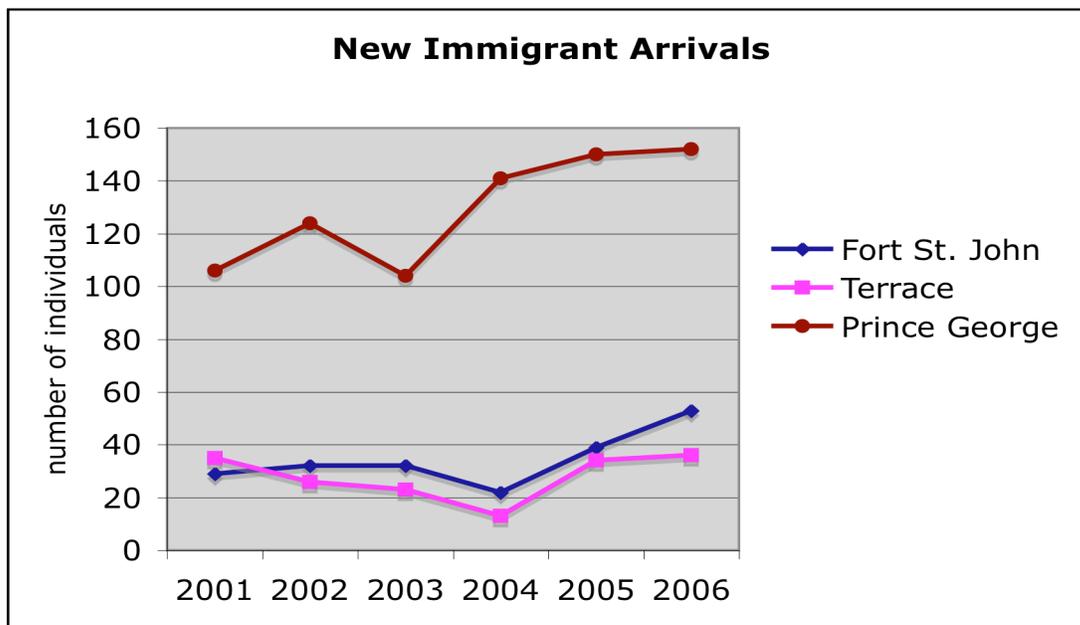
Figure 4.2 New immigrant arrival numbers in the three study sites.

4.4 The resource industries of northern British Columbia

History has shaped the settlement of northern BC. The legacy of economic policy since the mid-20th century, helps explain why residents of Prince George, Terrace and Fort St. John redefine their regional identities over and over.

"British Columbia's resource economy represents one of the most thorough Fordist experiments in the capitalist world" (Young & Matthews 2007, 178). A resource-hungry post-war industrial economy in the United-States and the election of a populist Premier voted in on a platform promise of extensive rural development drove the

remarkable expansion of BC's resource economies. Employment in forestry grew threefold from 1945 to 1970 and employment in mining doubled from 1951 to 1981 (Hayter 2000). The government allotted long-term tenures to major companies and embarked on large-scale construction of transportation infrastructure (Barman 1996). The BC government also established conditions on corporate rights, creating such policies as 'appurtenancy' which required timber to be processed in the region of harvest and 'utilization requirements' which required that a variety of species be harvested. These policies supported expansion in the pulp and paper industry and minimum annual harvests to try and ensure regional stability in employment and commodity supply. Finally, the government encouraged major resource companies to jointly invest in new communities or 'instant towns' and to contribute amenities and infrastructure to existing rural communities.[11] These moves were instrumental in dispersing settlement across the province as well as promoting resource extraction. The structural results of these policies were twofold. Firstly, BC's resource-based economy developed in the familiar core-periphery framework in which hinterland regions supply resource commodities to the industrialized, urbanized core (Young & Matthews 2007). Secondly (and more significantly for the purposes of my study) these policies wed the livelihood of communities and resource industries for the long term.

This experiment proved profitable and durable for the government and corporate players. It was not until the 1990s, however, that academics and governments took a closer look at the impact of these policies on communities themselves. BC's resource industries, forestry especially, faced significant difficulties in an increasingly global commodities market (Burda & Gale 1998). In addition, this high-volume export sector was challenged by a host of other critical issues; for example, environmental problems were brought on by over-harvesting and inadequate replanting caught up to forestry; technological advancements requiring fewer workers led to job loss; and claims to authority over traditional territories by local First Nations groups put in question the rightful access to land and resource. Due to their close connection, every falter felt by companies broke down the job security of local families.

Unsettled by these challenges, Fordist regimes shifted almost completely in the 1980s towards a regime of flexible specialization, especially in the forestry sector of British Columbia (Hayter et al. 1994). While contractors and companies had the choice to move, communities did not. This hits a problem endemic to industrial capitalism, capital's mobility in fluid markets in tension with the rootedness of place (Zukin 1991). In a Fordist system a coalition was forged and eased tensions between the state, organized labour, and capital, "who each had a vested interest in stability and maintaining the status quo" (Harvey 1988 in Hayter et al. 1997, 1). Without this kind of mutual commitment and cooperation, communities would risk job loss as companies would be free to leave at any time.

Especially since the early 1990s, the situation has changed in British Columbia. For one, BC's forestry industry has seen new and unexpected obstacles. Crippling trade issues over softwood lumber with the United States and the devastating mountain pine beetle outbreak have crowded news pages for several years. Mountain pine beetles had already attacked an estimated 130,000 square kilometers of forest by the end of 2006, and killed approximately 40% of the province's merchantable pine volume. A recent study points out that the forests of dead wood are now releasing high volumes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as they decay (Walton et al. 2007, Kurz et al. 2008). The death of the forests that surround Prince George is not only highly visible (trees killed by the beetles are a shock of orange-red in an otherwise green landscape), but also deeply felt by the concerned community. Local artists paint on the subject, poets and authors write.

B.C Origin Export to All Countries 2007 - Share of Total %
(source BC Stats)

Wood Products — 22%
Pulp and Paper Products — 16%
Agriculture and Food other than fish — 5%
Fish Products — 3%
Metallic Mineral Products — 11%
Fabricated Metal Products — 3%
Energy Products — 20%
Machinery and Equipment — 11%
Plastics and Articles of Plastic — 2%
Chemicals and chemical Products — 2%
Apparel and Accessories — 1%
Textiles — 0%
All other commodities — 4%

Figure 4.3 Exports from BC shows continued importance of wood and pulp products.

Despite significant declines in the forestry sector, the province's wealth remains largely dependent on resource extraction. In 2001, British Columbia exported $27.9 billion (CAD) worth of commodities and primary processed goods, representing 81 per cent of the value of all exports (Baxter 2005). **Figure 4.3** shows in detail the variety of commodities BC exports worldwide, and it is clear the importance of wood products, and pulp and paper products are still paramount.[12] This weighting may shift once the accelerated harvest rates required to salvage commercially viable stands already attacked by mountain pine beetle recedes.

While forestry's future is uncertain, growing attention is being paid to the future of energy industries and sustainable resource extraction. The province has recently invested $45.7 million in geoscience projects to support the development of oil and gas in

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[12] Services (for example, film production, tourism, producer services) are omitted from this data.

B.C. (April 21, 2008). The stronger trend in the last decade, however, has been the tertiarization of employment sectors.

Service-production is the primary source of employment in each of the regions in this study. Figure 4.4 demonstrates the structure of employment sectors, dividing employment categories into either the goods-producing sector or the services sector.[13] The most recent statistics from 2007 show that, compared to Vancouver, where the goods-producing sector accounts for just 18.5% of employment, the selected northern regional districts employ a much higher percentage of workers in goods production. The figure also shows that the Northeast has the most employment outside of service-producing sectors.
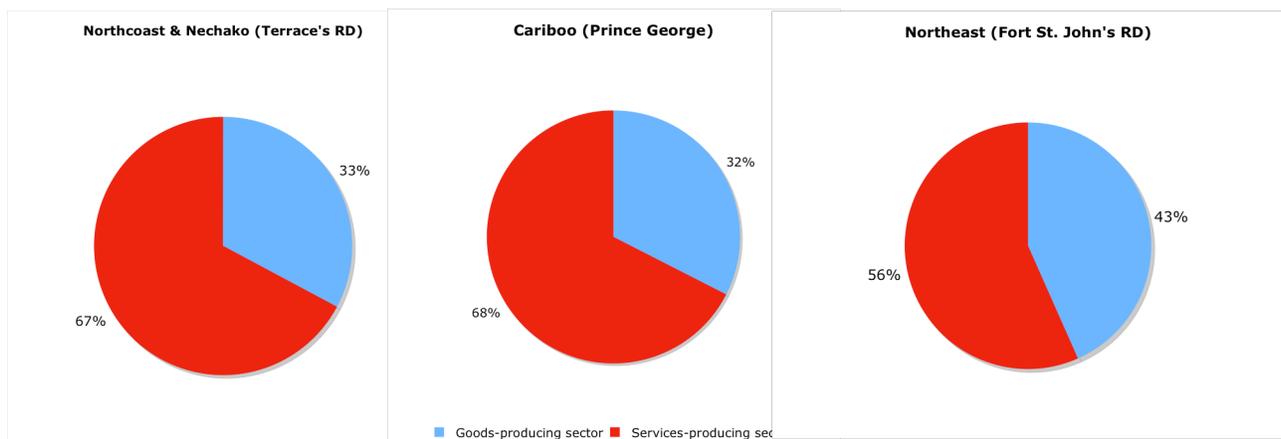
Figure 4.4 Employment by sector by Regional District, 2007 Statistics Canada.

The provincial economy is hugely impacted by the booms and busts of world markets and, of course, the pressures of globalization do not apply equally to all sectors. While global markets have progressively lowered the price of primary products, the prices of many services (like haircuts or legal services) do not compete at an international level (Fairlie 1999). The structural adoption of Innis' heartland-hinterland model (1930)

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[13] Goods-producing sector breaks down into these subcategories: 1) agriculture; 2) forestry, mining, oil and gas; utilities; construction; manufacturing. Services-producing sector includes: 1) trade; 2) transportation and warehousing; 3)finance, insurance, real estate and leasing; 4) professional, scientific and technical services; 5) Business, building and other support services; 6) Educational services; 7) Health care and social assistance; 8 Information, culture and recreation; 9) Accommodation and food services; 10) Other services; 11) Public administration.

means primary products come almost exclusively from the hinterland, while services tend to be town-based. The areas outside of town, therefore, suffer disproportionately.

Regional populations are also adjusting unevenly (see Figure 4.5). The Northwest and Cariboo-central regions, areas strongly affected by the scaling back of the forestry industry, have experienced steady population decline, while the Northeast has grown with the energy boom.

Population Change
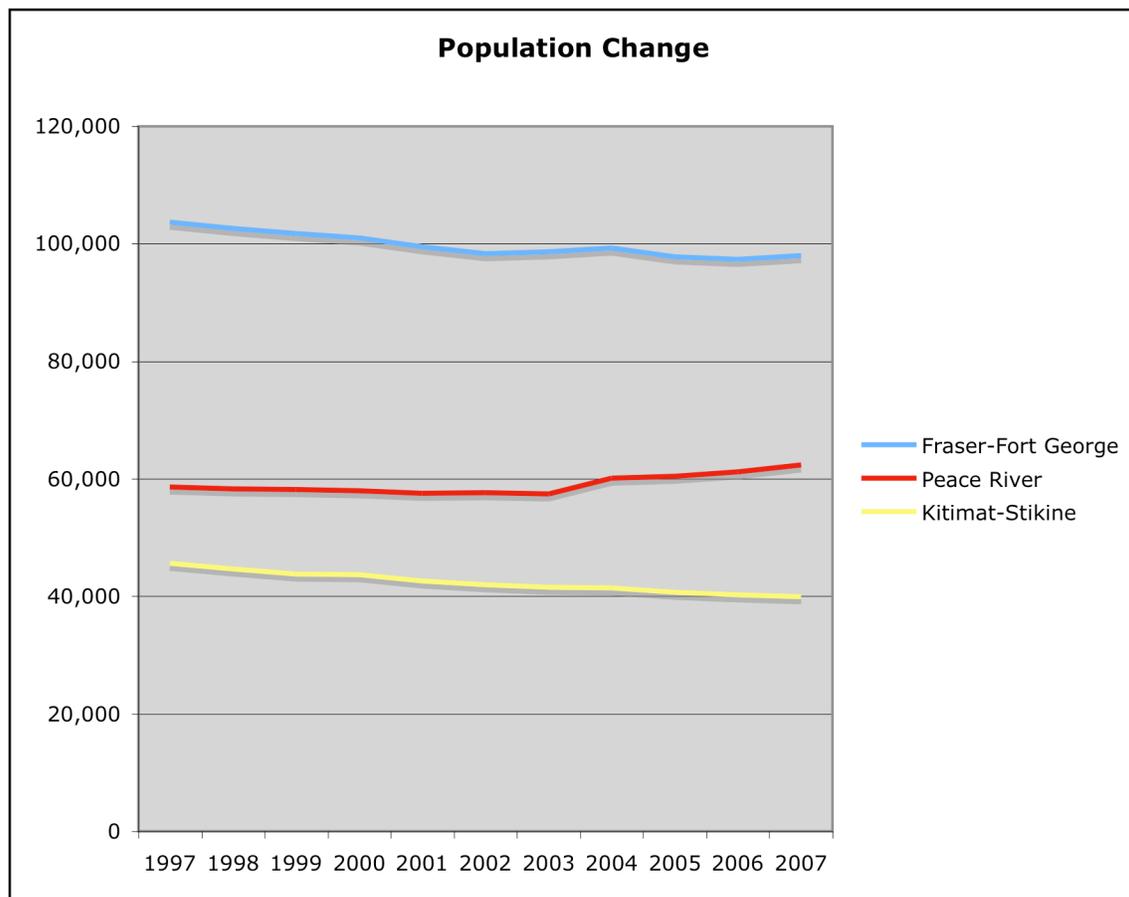
Figure 4.5 Regional population trends 1997-2007.

4.5 Local realities of small and medium-sized communities

During my time in Prince George, Canfor announced plans to close the sawmill in MacKenzie (about 2 hours drive north of Prince George) by the end of the summer as a cost-cutting measure. The town was shocked by the sudden announcement that was to

put about 450 people, or ten percent of the town's population, out of work. Terrace was dealt a similar shock with the close of the Skeena-Cellulose pulp mill in 2001. Fostered by "entrepreneurialism and self-sufficiency" (personal communication), a group of local owners re-opened the mill in 2005. Unable to compete with the international corporations in the market, however, they closed less than a year later, and the mill has since been torn down.

In northern British Columbia the connection between place and industry is still significant. Though the alliances between town and company may now be considered part of the region's historical architecture, cooperation between employer and employee is still a pre-requisite to doing business. Corporations and industrial developers may have more flexibility in relation to place, however, the physical extraction of natural resources still happens in place. In a push for ultimate flexibility, manifestations of connection to place emerge differently. Work schedules in many energy industries do not require typical time commitments. Employees, valued for their flexibility, may invest a few years in a place or alternatively fly-in and fly-out of their work-places on a predetermined rotation. Attracting workers does not necessarily mean attracting their families, who may stay in their home community. The temporary nature of this type of work created a need for new types of housing and other infrastructure. The cyclical character of oil and gas industry growth does not match the typical funding structure for school districts, hospitals or other social services. This is just the beginning of many complicated planning issues in communities with flexible populations.

From my research respondents in Terrace, I learned that many families lived in the community while a wage earner moved to Northeastern BC or Alberta to work in the oil and gas industries. These families were committed to their community, but also still had an important economic dependency on the resource industry in a distant area. Thus, family-level strategies had to evolve to cope with the separation and loved-ones were stretched across the province and beyond, because economic policies had failed to bridge the gap between industry and community development.

Young and Matthews (2007) argue that since the election of the BC Liberal Party in 2001, rural and resource development in BC has been given a neoliberal treatment intended to further disengage the strong connection between industry and community.

They argue that reforms bring very different development strategies for the corporate-resource economy and for local or community-based economies:

> …the BCLP government is reforming the corporate-resource economy by liberalizing resource rights, liberalizing markets and liberalizing spaces; while community-based economies are increasingly the target of very different policies and regulations aimed at fostering local entrepreneurialism and self-sufficiency (180).

The provincial and federal governments are treading dangerously by allowing the public to imagine that immigration policies can meet the demand in communities that need more workers, more "entrepreneurialism" or more economic diversity. Not only do issues of race, class and colonial-history complicate an acceptance of diversity in remote areas of the province, but as I argue, serious problems still lie at the heart of communities created to be dependent on now liberated industries.

The economic trends I have reviewed show how economies in the North are intimately connected to the demands of global markets. Major industrial backers have international addresses. The new demand for workers is causing employers to look outside of Canada, and locals are buying goods shipped from across the world. In these remote northern places, there are undeniable economic connections to the rest of the world. The globalization of traded goods and the transnational strategies of people and their dollars make bridges between the most unlikely places.

The possibilities of global connections to smaller places make for exciting work to be done in this area of geographic research. A most fascinating part of context (probably the hardest to capture) is the daily experience of the individual. Resource extraction and consumerism link the local to the global even in these remote northern communities. Does the same global connectivity extend to the social and cultural lives of locals? And will increasingly global immigration (with newcomers diverse across race, class, language) alter the stereotyped image of the small cities? More than half of service providers in all three communities claimed that diversity carried a special virtue that could not be measured in money. But how does a lack of diversity feel for those first pioneering immigrants?

5 METHODS

An interest and an idea brought me to this project. Initially, I was interested in finding out why provincial and federal governments considered immigrant settlement to smaller communities an idea worth supporting and a strategy worth pursuing. Accordingly, I wanted to explore my supposition that settling into small-town British Columbia would present unique challenges to new immigrants that would differ significantly from the settlement experience in the province's metropolitan area. These questions laid the groundwork for my first significant research question, *are regionalization policies sensitive to the experiences of immigrant settlement?*

The answer to my initial inquiry – why are governments promoting 'regionalization'? – was largely answered through reviewing government and academic literature. By scrutinizing such publications about regionalization I encountered much of the story. I learned about what pushed regionalization as a path for immigration policy in Canada, and read of the government's explicit interest in "spreading the benefits" of immigration to flagging economies in the country's smaller centres. Reading more broadly in the fields of critical geography and sociology revealed more implicit explanations for the popularity of regionalization as a settlement strategy; concerns about the health of national identity as well as a fear of the imagined consequences uneven socio-cultural landscapes might bring. These themes have been covered in the preceding chapters. Answers to my second question – what are the experiences of immigrants settling in small places? – came through immersing myself in the field of immigrant settlement in the North, and talking with immigrants and service providers to gain insights from their experiences. In this chapter, I detail the design of the research, and reflect on some of the strengths, difficulties and limitations to the types of research I conducted.

5.1 Location and cooperation

To choose field sites, I looked to communities with expressed interest in regionalization. Study sites were selected from the group of communities involved in the Regional Immigration Initiative pilot project in BC (see section 2.5). Although the idea I wished to investigate focused on the experience of settling in *small* places, I ended up

conducting most of my research in what could be considered a medium-sized urban centre (by Canadian or BC standards). This occurred because I was presented with an opportunity to co-ordinate with a research team led by geographers from the University of Northern BC (UNBC), which brought my research to Prince George. While not a small community, Prince George is one of the RII communities, and is still small enough that the immigrant settlement experience would not be analogous with settlement in a major metropolitan centre. Working with immigrants in Prince George was a good option for several reasons, the foremost being the general population size and the helpful presence of the only immigrant service society in Northern BC, the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society (IMSS). Prince George is the largest city in the North, with a population around 80,000 in the city and surrounding region, and working in a city of this size provided numerous research advantages. For example, interviewing immigrants in a city this size still offered respondents the comfort of anonymity. In a very small community, by contrast, it would not be difficult to sort out just who the respondents are from just a few personal details. Consent forms and verbal explanation informed all participants that their identity would remain confidential. Even so, one respondent later withdrew from the research, explaining the city was small enough that their responses could be too easily picked out even with all identifiers removed.

Cooperation with the UNBC team also offered the chance to extend my research questions about integration into other communities. Traveling to two other northern communities, Terrace and Fort St. John, broadened my research to a regional scale – covering the three largest population centres in the BC Development Regions that comprise the province's North. Interviews in these smaller cities were confined to service-providers and volunteers who deal with recent immigrants. Maintaining confidentiality was less of a concern with this set of participants. Service-providers (perhaps accustomed to a public reputation) sometimes laughed out loud at the idea of confidentiality, saying the concept was impossibly absurd in the small towns they serve.

5.2 Research design and the field

Deciding how to collect data seemed clear at first, but soon presented challenges. For now, I will explain the decision to use interviews and the structure of inquiry. In-

depth one-on-one interviews formed the base of the interchange with participants. Following the advice of Duncan and Duncan (2001), I sought to match data collection techniques with the theoretical and ethical groundings on which I felt steady. The semi-structured interviews conducted with immigrant participants were consequently centered on the three previously mentioned theoretical and methodological starting-points; biographical, hermeneutic/interpretive, and paying attention to everyday enactments.

The research is a cross-sectional study, drawing content from many different individual cases. It represents the experiences and opinions of a sample of respondents from two groups: recent immigrants to Prince George and Northern service-providers. Data was gathered through two principal means:

1) In-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with new immigrants to Prince George that lasted between one and two hours. Analysis is based on data from 12 such participants.

2) Structured interviews that lasted approximately one hour with service providers in Prince George, Terrace and Fort St. John. Analysis is based on the feedback from 21 interviews with service providers. (See Figure 5.1)

City	Participants	Topics covered	#	Location
Fort St. John	Interviews with service-providers	Meaning of integration, service availability and capacity to welcome new immigrants.	8	Work or café
Terrace	Interviews with service-providers	Meaning of integration, service availability and capacity to welcome new immigrants.	9	Work
Prince George	Interviews with service-providers	Meaning of integration, service availability and capacity to welcome new immigrants.	4	Work
	Interviews with recent immigrants	Settlement stories, meaning of integration and service availability.	12	Home or IMSS*
*IMSS is Prince George's Immigration and Multicultural Service Society, and the location where I recruited many participants.				

Figure 5.1 Participants and Interview Location

Immigrant respondents were from all backgrounds, ages, immigration classes and family structures.   No effort was made to find immigrants who had entered through, or were attracted by regionally focused immigration programs because my interest was in the

settlement experience as related to place, and not to the immigrant selection process. I did, however, ask participants why they came to Prince George, whether it fit their expectations, if they would like to stay, and if settlement would be very different in Vancouver. The interview structure was based on ten questions (see Appendix 1).

5.3 Recruitment

In total, I recruited thirteen immigrant participants in Prince George. I met two at a multicultural health conference in Prince George, and I found the other eleven through presenting the research in English language classes run by the Immigrant and Multicultural Service Society (IMSS). One subsequently withdrew leaving a total of twelve. There was no attempt to match characteristics of respondents to the statistical profiles of recent immigrants in the community.

It is noteworthy that the two immigrant participants recruited from outside the English language classes at IMSS had generally more critical or circumspect perspectives on their experiences. Two obvious factors influenced this; first, their spoken English was generally better than class respondents so they were more equipped to provide me with detailed responses, and secondly, some of the respondents had generally negative experiences settling, experiences aggravated by interactions with the service society.

Service Provider respondents were from all three northern communities and were not necessarily "immigrant service providers" (there were no such designated services in Terrace and Fort St. John) but rather all were involved in the delivery of services that immigrants might need or want. The structure of interviews with service providers was co-authored with Catherine Nolin, a Professor of Geography at the University of Northern British Columbia. The main goal of the research project at UNBC was exploratory, to test for key issues and to gauge an interest in collaborative service provision. I conducted all the one-on-one interviews personally. In agreement with the research leads, two critical research questions about integration (central to this thesis) were added to the interview script.

I was fortunate to benefit from the good reputation of the UNBC and I believe the local connection was very helpful in the small northern communities that receive little

attention from other educational institutes. It also helped that the research was novel in this setting. Researchers in the social sciences may find over-researched social-service workers are not interested in answering the same questions again, but in Northern BC, especially where immigration is a budding issue, people were eager and excited to talk.

Service-provider respondents were mostly selected through existing connections with the Geography Department at UNBC. Though last summer was the first year that UNBC Geography conducted immigration related research in the North, Dr. Greg Halseth, the project's principal investigator, has long-established connections with service providers and politicians in Northern BC through his extensive work on rural and northern health care and resource economies. This provided a network of connections through which service provider participants were recruited. Snowball sampling through these connections led to recruitment of other community workers or volunteers involved in issues surrounding diversity, race, settlement and community planning. In the small-town settings, respondents were continuously asking, "have you spoken with so-and-so?" Though by ethical guidelines I could not satisfy everyone's curiosity, they eventually seemed to have all found out who had participated through one another. Hopefully this meant few key perspectives were missed.

5.4 In the field in Prince George

I moved to Prince George for the duration of the research and spent four months in the city (summer 2007). Prince George became my "home base" for work that concentrated on that city and extended regionally throughout the north. At no time before the move did I consider my relocation as a trip into "the field", and with interview-based qualitative research I did not spend much time thinking about being *in the field,* so much as being in people's living rooms or offices. Upon arrival, however, I was struck by the effect that moving and living in this place would have on me and my work.

The nature of my research questions required that I study the kinds of relationships people developed with place. Of necessity I thought about the physical descriptions and mapping attached to a traditional notion of the "field". City size and physical isolation were particularly important physical aspects of the field. However, the

concept of the "field" is highly contentious and human geographers move increasingly away from a definition based on place alone.

> The "field" in fieldwork is treated as a *physical* assignation, a bias stemming from historically centering human and physical geography's contributions around field mapping-related endeavours that were often tied to government-sponsored surveys and resource assessments.
> – Nast (1994), 56

Efforts to move past the physicality of the field site elicit a consideration of the socio-cultural and political context of places and people, how such considerations cut across time and place and how researchers affect and are affected by the dynamics of the field. Hyndman (2001), for instance, describes her field site as "a network of power relations in which I am a small link" (262). This necessitated some reflection on my (as researcher) personal propensities in relation to the research.

5.5 Biographies; theirs and mine

I arrived in Prince George in the last days of April to live with friends (a young family) who had recently moved to the city for work, I was curious to see how they settled in and how good life could be outside of a big city, however the more I inquired about their experience, the more I realized how personal my research questions were going to be. My idea that small-town settlement would be markedly different from a big city scenario reflected my own interest in deciding where to live, and what bearing location can have on one's happiness. As it turned out, a full comparative study was beyond the scope of my research.

"There is something very personal both in what we choose to study and how we choose to study it" (Pile 1991, 460). Those few words served as a reminder to examine the decisions made in between research interest and research action. An initial research interest that sought to compare settlement experiences between large and small cities was personally intriguing, but presented a methodological undertaking that did not sit comfortably with *how* I wanted to conduct research. A comparative study demanded one of two scenarios; either participants had the ability to compare big and small city settlement experiences within their own lives (testing people to describe multiple

experiences both comparatively as well as across time and place), or a set of similar participants be drawn from a large urban centre to match participants from the smaller city. Drawing participants in a small place with a relatively small number of recent immigrants would make finding suitable matches logistically challenging. I also preferred a research design that honoured people as individuals not based on categories of race, nationality, gender or class of immigration.

Though intellectually engaging, the original research idea left little space to discuss how people and their personal histories affect place and how they imagine and explain settlement experience. Settlement stories are so intensely personal and complicated, and as "feminist scholars have argued for years: there is no underlying truth to be discovered in interviews, only a series of narratives that people tell" (Mountz 2007, 38). For this reason I chose a different approach to the research. I scaled back the research question from a comparative one, to one that sought to understand more simply and directly the experiences of new immigrants in BC's North: "So, why did you move here and what has it been like for you?"

From this more biographical standpoint I formulated the initial research design for this project. Drawing ideas from grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I chose to start from individual cases, incidents and experiences and develop the conceptual categories and themes that would guide further inquiry together with the help of participants. By letting people relate their accounts, some of the important stories I should be following emerged.

5.6 Interpretation

A year of scholastic research in the field of immigration, settlement and geography, however, prompted a second research question; *What does immigrant integration mean to different people and what are the determinants of successful integration?* I wanted to know how immigrants interpreted their own settlement stories through the idea of integration, and what use the term had in attaching meaning to experience. So the second main question was, "what does integration mean to you?" This question was extended to immigrant service providers when the research broadened

to include their perspectives. Thus two distinct populations – immigrants and immigrant service providers - answered this question.

The second research question introduced a second methodological approach to the research. Asking different people to assign meaning to a specific term emphasized the importance of an hermeneutical or interpretive approach. Such an approach searches for greater meaning in all responses, interrogating the significance assigned to particular sayings, the subtleties of tone or body language and the larger context in which voices are heard. In this regard, Pile (1991) differentiates between 'quantitative', 'qualitative' and 'interpretive' research methodologies. Qualitative and quantitative research, he argues, always involve a component of the other; "they form a continuum rather than there being a radical epistemological break between them" (459). Both forms of research involve getting information and trying to understand it. Interpretive research, however, shows an interest in the dynamics and the content of the intersubjective relationships revealed in the available information.

Being sensitive to meaning requires critical attention to the larger structuring processes in which individuals tell their stories. However, "individuals will provide the researcher with a crucial account of their actions in relation to cultural systems, but the account is always partial" (Duncan and Duncan 2001, 401). Once again, I found myself facing the dilemma of inferring cultural meaning or speculating on what structures are important in order to contextualize, understand and represent individual respondents' accounts.

As appealing as a hermeneutical and interpretive approach was, a critical theoretical perspective required the need to factor in my own position – how it affected my interactions with participants (and thus the data content) and how my positionality limits my capacity to interpret meaning in other people's lives. Duncan and Duncan (2001) offer resolutions to this complex position by imploring researchers to acquire in-depth knowledge of the respondent's cultural systems, of the place being studied and the "intersection of local practices with larger cultural systems" (402). As the fieldwork unfolded, I realized the impossibility of doing so with a sample so heterogeneous. Participants were from all over the world, and understanding their cultural systems was not at all connected to a knowledge of our environs (Prince George mostly).

Understanding the setting was crucially important, but long-term residence in the field was not a possibility. It was necessary therefore to be flexible and to meld methodological theory with common sense, in order to ensure data collection was trustworthy and accountable and that inferences would not be drawn beyond the scope of the investigation.

I decided to ask for help. Never an immigrant myself and having no similar shared experiences through which to understand the process, I depended on participants' explanations. Indeed ignorance often worked to my advantage as respondents were careful to explain and teach a willing listener. Hearing biographical accounts from immigrant participants helped contextualize their responses, and while this helped make the first research question about settlement experience more meaningful, it did not inquire into the individual's situated understanding of "integration". Therefore, in asking my second research question, I made the importance of meaning overt and asked participants directly: what does integration mean to you? By asking it in this way, I was not alone in deciphering situatedness and the importance of interpretation. By asking participants to search for and explain meaning, they know what process they are a part of.

What particularly drew me to an interpretive approach was the importance of language and hearing people speak in their own words. Participants had a chance to explain their own context and to know that we were talking about interpretations. "Interpretive geography is in the reality reconstruction business, attempting to develop representations and constructions to describe the representations and constructions that take place in the social world" (Baxter & Eyles 1997, referencing Schwartz & Jacob 1979).

At times, the more I probed for meaning, the further our conversations moved from experience. Burial by reflexive etymology was not what I had in mind. Looking to a classic reference guide, Hays reminds his readers seeking methodological help that "language must be seen as not merely reflective, but instead as *constitutive* of social life" (Hay 2005, 221, see also Barnes and Duncan 1992; Bondi 1997; Dear 1988). Sometimes asking for an overtly interpretive and subjective meaning of 'integration' seemed abstract and disconnected from reality. I did not want to risk boring participants with seemingly passive or historicized questions. A biographical approach emphasized life stories and the

creation of narrative, but such accounts were often affected by memory, coloured by nostalgia and strongly dependent on the circumstances in which the storytelling was happening; "the past thus conjured up is, to be sure, largely an artifact of the present" (Lowenthal 1985 XVI). All the same:

> The implicit idea behind narratives is that the subject's narrative can stand as a proxy for reality. Such "texts" become flattened and iconic representations of lived reality, something that can be carried off to the confines of one's office and pored over for hidden meanings.
> -Dunn 2007

While stories told over and over again might be interpreted a thousand times by their tellers, it is the researcher who decides what qualifies as 'hidden gems' that make it into the paper. Where does the truth lie, in what we hear of the past or its re-telling in the present? My responsibility as researcher is to honour the narrative by representing clearly and fairly the essence of the informant's perspective.

5.7 Acting in place

Shifting from the abstract to the comfort zone of here and now, I asked people to describe their daily activities. I also held most interviews with the immigrant participants in their homes, and interviews with service providers in their places of work. By doing so I hoped to understand the worlds in which they conduct their lives, what two-way interface existed between their bodies and place (how bodies affect and are affected by places) (Grosz 1992) and to touch on the idea of "identity as re-enacted through bodily performance" (Longhurst 2004, 338).

Investigating performance and the body were not principal themes of the research, however the ideas of Judith Butler helped create for me a crucial sightline to the relationship between structure/place and individuals. "Gender proves to be performance – that is constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed" (Butler 1990, 25). Butler's work on gender and performativity made me think more closely about how identity is constructed. The idea that the body is constituted by the compelled enactment and repetition of hegemonic discourses (Butler in Longhurst 2004) opened up for me a third methodological possibility. I saw another opportunity for self-reported

contextualization; a possibility for these particular people to put themselves "on the map", to construct a personal diary of enactments and experiences in place in order to relay how they see themselves, and what the relationship is between their identity and the community around them. Honest, simple and visual, this theoretical foundation encouraged me to ask questions about the everyday spaces in which people perform their multiple roles, including their roles as newcomers.

The place of interview also affected how participants, and myself as a researcher, comported ourselves. Research does not take place in a social vacuum; 'things' are going on for everyone involved in the event, and where we are and how we comport ourselves in particular situations affects the resulting conversation. Visiting immigrant participants at home was, for the most part, a great pleasure for me. Respondents who felt comfortable at home hosted me as a visitor and so I took on the role. I was greeted with refreshments, often an introduction to family members, and generously extended time without limitations (no deadline or exit countdown); I accordingly tried my best to graciously accept without imposing. My presence seemed a step out of the ordinary, an occasion – and in a city where I knew few others I felt grateful for their kindness. On one occasion a very recent immigrant told me (almost confessed) that I was the first guest she had ever invited into her home. She'd bought Tim Hortons donuts – the ultimate gesture of Northern friendliness.

While I was playing the role of the guest, it was at times a challenge to also be a researcher. Pulling out a consent form, setting up guidelines, checking the audio-recorder were all clear visual symbols that helped define the task, but the relevance of research at times vanished in the social awkwardness of the situation. At that moment of transition between guest and researcher, I felt self-conscious and vulnerable.

Meanwhile, those participants playing host were surely also experiencing an interesting flip. Participants took on roles in their conversation and demeanor that were not always clear cut: the expert, the civil servant, the truthsayer, the soothsayer, the renegade, the peacemaker, the learner, the dedicated volunteer. Some took seriously what I thought of as a kind of "man of the house" role, *showing* me their homes, their cars, their families, and their stories of survival or change. Still other roles cropped up, even flipped in and out like scenes in a play with few actors and many parts. For example, two

participants were at once engaged with me, and listening for their young children waking from a nap, simultaneously balancing their roles as parents, hosts and immigrants with a story to tell. Sometimes I witnessed a participant play many different roles in front of their spouses, sons, daughter, grandparents, aunts, cousins, friends and whoever else walked in the door or sat in the adjacent room. How people acted was, of course, affected by who they acted in front of. In the two cases where a male spouse was at home, there was evidence of more than one participant struggling to act "themselves". Twenty-minutes into one interview, when her husband left, one participant's very polite and positive answers changed noticeably.

Once her husband left, she and I made a more overt attempt to communicate with each other. She spoke of isolation, loneliness, and missing home, and she wanted to leave Prince George for a big city, though she seemed to say that it didn't make a big difference, because she hardly saw the city. -From field notes October 22, 2007.

Just one conversation with an immigrant participant took place at the Immigrant and Multicultural Service Society (IMSS). On this occasion, the luxuries of time and comfort were compromised. We spoke in a classroom booked for lessons and early students sometimes interrupted. IMSS is a welcoming place with extremely helpful and flexible English teachers and students. Nonetheless, it was then that I realized the unsettling balance of authority in a classroom setting. Accustomed to being the learner myself, the participant (whom I met before his/her English Class) was now the learner, and I led the discussion. We were without the props and circumstances that reveal more of who we are, and thus whether we are likeable or trustworhy. A little uneasy banter and it was down to business, finally thankful for the structure that explaining consent forms provided.

Speaking with service providers was a very different experience, though not always in ways I predicted. Clearly identifiable roles were present. For instance, the "pufferfish" in the workplace cropped up as some professionals seemed to inflate their own importance (Dunn 2007). Most deflated after a few minutes and settled to present their opinions and the perspectives of their agencies. To be fair, those who maintained a professional veneer throughout the interview were almost all either new to the

community or in a group with colleagues. Long-term residents and those most involved in face-to-face service provision often spoke personally and with frankness.

5.8 Approach to analysis

Part of the appeal of qualitative research is the room for creativity in the research process. For inquisitive people, research in another place is highly stimulating. Ingenuity, time and careful attention to detail are required to capture the richness of new places and people. Furthermore, reflexivity and positioning oneself in the research introduces honest and complex performances in the presentation of work, or at least an intimacy that evokes a different kind of academic interest in the reader's mind. "And yet, once reflexivity is acknowledged, the important concerns over what and how we present has in some respects overshadowed the problems connected with obtaining and interpreting interview texts" (Baxter & Eyles 1997, 505).

The following analysis is based largely on the reading of texts; interview transcripts and notes from eleven interviews with immigrants and twenty-one interviews with service providers. Inevitably, analysis also incorporates aspects of what was not said and what themes emerged through non-verbal interaction, for example visual reactions or a shifting of behaviours.

Coding was helpful in organizing data that combined in-the-moment observation and reflective textual analysis. Recollection, further readings and personal interest affected what themes remained crisp in my mind over time, so following grounded theory, I kept track of emerging themes or issues of concern as they were addressed by participants themselves. As those themes consolidated, I introduced new related questions to subsequent interviews.

In coding the data I decided to use a two-pronged system that could handle both manifest themes and ones that developed through more indirect reflection. The first set of codes I developed were *descriptive codes*, words or phrases that "reflect themes of patterns that are obvious on the surface or are stated directly by research subjects" (Hay 2005, 224). I used *analytic codes* to code more interpretive themes that emerged through a deeper investigation of text and interaction. Analytic codes were used especially to code text that reflected a theme that I was interested in (for example meanings assigned to

integration) or one that emerged through the words of others. Often my search for descriptive codes brought about analytic codes by revealing important themes or patterns that showed me a connection I had not previously inferred.

I developed a coding structure that shifted and changed while sorting through texts. What seemed clear at first became more difficult as I discovered axial relationships between certain codes, or had to drop some that were anticipated, but which never arose in fact. This was especially the case in looking at analytic codes based on my initial research question about integration. When asked about the meaning of integration, I found people's hesitance or misunderstanding to be occasionally more telling than their response.

With most participants I covered ten basic questions. Not all questions were asked in all interviews, however. I classified descriptive codes for each of the questions in the immigrant interviews. For example, for the question about their decision to come to Prince George, the codes developed to classify responses included "family", "work", "partner's work", "environment" and so on. I read and coded responses manually so as to catch meanings regardless of vocabulary. A small set of participants made this task manageable. The results of analytic coding reflect emergent themes worth investigation in future research. I have been cautious in using biographical information in the findings section. In this research the findings are by no means applicable or generalizable to the overall population, so their importance is useful mostly to describe the overall trends in the interviews. Analysis of the question about integration (answered by both service providers and immigrants) is dealt with separately at the end of the following chapter.

Methods of mixed-theoretical foundations grounded my approach to research collection and analysis, and so findings are not the clear pedigree of a particular chain of thought. It is my opinion that this is useful and ultimately lends more power to the mixed opinions and voices of participants. But still, I carry my own perspectives and these will inevitably influence the findings that follow.

6 ANALYSIS

The following section summarizes the findings from both descriptive and analytic coding of immigrant interviews. Later in the chapter findings are discussed from service provider interviews. Analysis of immigrant data incorporates information about peoples' lives, but avoids anything that could identify respondents. In a small city, it would be too easy to identify individuals in the relatively small community of immigrants. The body of the text is based on descriptive findings, in the order they were sequenced in interviews. Analytic themes are sub-titled throughout.

6.1 Analysis of immigrant responses

6.1.1. Why Prince George?

Every immigrant has a variety of reasons for settling where they do. Four of the participants I interviewed cited presence of family in Prince George as a reason for choosing the city. Two respondents had family in the province and two others married a local Canadian in their country of origin then moved to Prince George with their new spouse. This reflects the findings of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) which showed about 87% of immigrants already have family or friends settled in Canada (LSIC 2005). Most participants who moved because of the presence of family members were *not* moving for work. Only two mentioned both work and family, but in both cases it was the possibility of finding work in their field that counted and *not* a specific job. Not a single participant moved solely for their employment prospects. This is likely related to my recruitment site. Those people enrolled in English classes at the Immigrant and Multicultural Service Society (IMSS) were still learning English and thus lacked the language skills necessary to be working, or to be recruited for a job in Prince George. Most in this group were dependents of economic immigrants or Provincial Nominees, family class migrants or refugees. Thus, the group of interviewees is, in many ways, not quite what regionalization initiatives have in mind – immigrants who may benefit and broaden society, but not by filling targeted occupational niches in the economy.

This highlights the larger fact that all of the interviewees immigrated with their families. Seven participants brought children and partners along in their move to Prince George, and the remaining four moved with a partner (or to join their partner). Also, two-thirds of the participants in this study were women under 60.

Interestingly, data from the Landed Immigrant Database System (LIDS) shows that Prince George attracts a higher ratio of family class immigrants to skilled worker migrants than does Vancouver. It also attracts a slightly higher percentage of provincial nominees in the total immigrant arrivals.
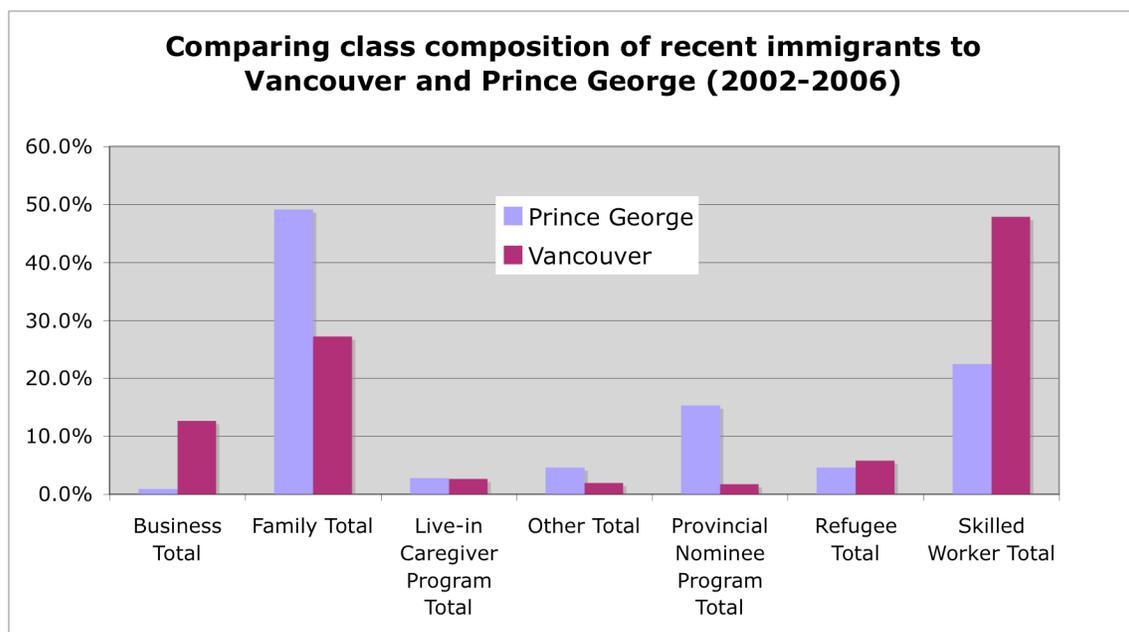
Figure 6.1 Immigrants by class of arrival for Vancouver and Prince George (LIDS).
The participants of this research do not represent a similar breakdown in class of entry, however, an importance is placed on the role of family in settlement experience, and this is useful considering the high percentage of Family class immigrants moving to Prince George.

After family, three attractions were about evenly represented in the responses: employment (especially a partner's job), the presence of university and hospital facilities, and the size of the city itself. Four participants moved to Prince George because family members either worked or studied at UNBC. Two others were themselves studying at UNBC to achieve the requisite credentials to continue work in their professions. The

large, newly renovated hospital (and good healthcare in general) were also important draws to Prince George.

Employment, family and services were anticipated to be attractive reasons to settle in Prince George. Half of the group I spoke with, however, also mentioned the general attraction of a small city. These qualities set Prince George apart from bigger metropolitan centres. Small meant many things, but first of all affordable. Some felt they could achieve more financially in Prince George than they could in a big Canadian city:

For three years, you know, we have a house. We bought this house last year. In [my country], for a couple years working in [my country], you will have a house only in your dreams. Everything is different.

So my sister in law has a PhD and she had her PhD in Quebec…After she finished they moved to Vancouver and they have been in Canada now 13 years. When we moved here it was, yeah, 10 years they'd had, so I has so shocked they'd realized so little because they had stayed in Vancouver, you know?

Respondents also liked small for being quiet, calm and close to nature.

I don't like Vancouver. I really don't like it. Too much traffic, and what I really don't like for example, wintertime, when the rain comes it's about one week, two weeks.

Unlike speculation I heard from local stakeholders that "lifestyle fit" would attract outdoor-type people to outdoorsy places (tapping some source of immigrants who love fishing, for example), almost all I spoke with had moved from big cities or hectic, crowded environments. No one mentioned fishing, but several mentioned they liked raising their children in a small place and that it generally felt safer than bigger cities. Personal security was another reason for moving, as three of the participants in this research left their home country in fear for their own safety.

Small town you know, and you see people in the streets, people start to recognize you, you know? It's fun. Because all my life at home I was with people and I feel the same in Prince George. It's – I think it's a safe town you know? Maybe in percentage…criminal…is less than big towns.

For a few the move to Prince George was connected explicitly to personal development, either as a chance to learn English in a small, overwhelmingly English-speaking environment or as a chance for an adventure. Those who moved for such

reasons were normally younger, or had a clear picture that Prince George would be a hiatus until they moved to a more permanent residence elsewhere.

6.1.2. Connections to place

A great deal of attention is paid at this time to the topic of immigrant retention for smaller cities. It was one thing to find out why people came, but another entirely to learn what connections they made with place. I did so by asking two questions. The first was based on performance; what are the activities of ordinary life here for you? The second asked explicitly what connections people felt to the community.

Participants were all "recent" immigrants; however the range of settlement still varied significantly. Some had been in town for as little as two months while others were approaching four years. The average number of months in Prince George amongst all twelve immigrant participants was 16.8 months. Also, for some immigrants Prince George was chosen and made as a secondary move from another city. One respondent had moved to Prince George thirty years previous, stayed for a few years, and then moved back home to El Salvador to return again a year before speaking with me. How they were connected with place changed in relation to their time of arrival.

When talking about everyday activities, respondents' answers tended to centre largely around educational activities (UNBC or IMSS English classes). Because most participants were recruited through IMSS, they were quite involved there with classes or settlement services. All respondents had had previous interaction with the service society at some point.

For people constrained by their poor English language skills, a small ethno-cultural community and little spare money, everyday life happened almost exclusively in the home, in English classes and sometimes at a place of worship.

Katherine: So, what do you do everyday?
Participant: Here? Now I stay, come here to learn English. Then I go. I do my homework.
K: That's it?
P: Yeah!
K: Do you go anywhere else?
P: No. I am walking sometimes in the road. And Sunday I walk to church. All weekend we stay home and we try to work behind the house [in the yard].

The service society (and perhaps the church as service point, see Ley 2008) plays a critical role as a gathering point for many who are not otherwise exposed to new people. At IMSS, English language classes are free to eligible immigrants and the services have recently expanded to include English ELSA levels 4 and 5. The availability of these services was one participant's absolute favourite part of Prince George. English classes were vital places where people could be something other than a newcomer; they became learners and also friends with others. Classes there tried to integrate English and settlement lessons in class, so people learned about Canadian culture while improving their English. Also, several people referred specifically to the positive role their English teacher played in helping them settle. Again, LSIC data points to the importance placed on education by immigrant respondents; the majority claimed that obtaining education and training in Canada was either very important (71%) or important (18%) (LSIC 2005). The majority of immigrants enrolled in language classes, especially those in family and refugee admission categories.

Overall, recreational activities were the most substantially represented everyday activity. In this group of participants, as many people mentioned going to the gym as going to work. Participants and their kids were involved in all kinds of sports as well – and there are many opportunities to do so since Prince George has a reputation for emphasizing sport and in recent years has put major funding into sports facilities. On the other hand, activities like spending time with friends, attending cultural events or going for meals were rarely mentioned. It seemed from the group I spoke with that people kept very busy but were not necessarily going out to socialize. It could be the demographic profile of participants (mostly mid-life with children), the challenge of making friends as a newcomer (which could speak variously to the personalities of respondents or the attitudes of the host society), or it could also be the kind of activities that are available to residents of Prince George.

The absence of "getting out" and the strong connection to home were perhaps reasons why so many people mentioned their first place of residence. In meandering off the "everyday activities" to a discussion about connections to place, a number of participants told me they lived or still live in the VLA, a centre-city neighbourhood

notorious for concentrated poverty and crime. Results from the national LSIC research showed that six months after arrival, more than 80% of surveyed immigrants reported living in rental accommodation, emphasizing the importance that rental housing can have on early settlement experiences (LSIC 2005). While family and friends may influence where immigrants choose to settle, vacancy rates, housing costs and density zoning may determine the type of accommodation and area in which they will live. Several explained that they did not feel connected to place at first because of the bad neighbourhood they lived in:

Katherine: What about your neighbourhood, do you feel any connection with your neighbourhood?
Participant: No. No. No, because of the financial problem we live in such a bad neighbourhood. I think it's the worst neighbourhood in Prince George.
K: What is that neighbourhood?
P: The VLA.
K: Right.
P: It was the cheapest rent we could find.
K: Are you renting now?
P: Yes, still. So, no, you cannot go out in the community, in the neighbourhood.

Participants' opinions on safety were mixed. Some argued that Prince George was safer than a big city, but others were concerned about the safety of downtown neighbourhoods and entire districts. This revealed an interesting tension, one that I believe reflects the dichotomous urban fabric of the city where all wealth is in the suburbs, and poverty concentrated in the city's small central core.

I don't know if it's just me or Canadians are not used to it, but back home a city has a downtown, a nice downtown where it's clear and you can go shopping and go for a coffee and sit outside without having troubles. And I think it's very dangerous downtown. And if you have kids you are not going downtown – even if it's Saturday afternoon, and it's daylight and the sun is shining.

The majority of respondents found connections with the community either through work, through IMSS, or through their neighbourhood. But it seemed that participants felt more connected to their neighbourhoods if they lived outside the downtown area. The clear majority of participants that I asked about a relationship to place expressed feeling at least some kind of connection with Prince George.

6.1.3. Analytic theme: The important space of home for family or "dependent" migrants

Home and family life comprised a central part of normal life for respondents, and formed the basis for many of the activities that happened both inside and outside of home (like shopping, carpooling, parenting, caring for elders, food preparation and cleaning, all of which were often mentioned). I noticed this particularly in the set of respondents who said they moved to Prince George to be with family, or for a partner's career. When asked about the everyday activities, such participants sometimes combined action talk with identity talk:

Usually I go shopping. I spend a lot of time for it. Food or things, anything. I like walking and I am a housewife. I'm cleaning my house and I spend time too. And we, my husband and I go to visit his friends sometimes in the evening. Sometimes his parents came to us and we go to restaurant and maybe some places.

This particular respondent, very new to the community and with novice English, found a great deal of her own independent activities attached to the home. She was very busy with work, school, and exercise, but did not identity herself as an employee, a student, or an exerciser. Her reason for being here is to join her husband and that new part of life was especially important. The comfort of a clear role or identity, reinforced by how she sees herself and the things she does, offers her a sense of purpose in a new and unpredictable situation.

The importance of home-spaces, fostering the health and well-being of the family, and domestic roles might be amplified because all of the participants moved to Prince George with their families. Amongst this relatively new set of immigrants, however, the strongest connections to the rest of the community were made through service centres; IMSS and UNBC. Places of worship were also very important for some, as they are another place to seek guidance – a safe place to be new. All of these places bring immigrants a step closer to gaining the qualifications and the comfort level necessary to settle in.

6.1.4. Settlement experience

I spoke with most participants explicitly about their experience settling into Prince George. They described both positive and negative experiences, though more than half of the experiences they shared were negative. People had many different ways of discussing such negative experiences. For some, experience was primarily a reaction to newness and their responses compared Prince George to whatever previous place they lived:

In Korea and in here, very big difference. Korean people – most Korean people is very busy so just connect neighbourhood and family. But in here, think about the other people. How to say…my church members…if I need some help, anytime helping to me.

Others used more common comparisons:

I was like a kid with a new toy, (laughs) I mean you just, everything is surprising and interesting. You find things that you don't like, of course, but you learn to take what things you like and then learn from them.

Although *how* people explained experiences varied tremendously, in my analysis of responses I found five subject themes in responses. The majority of participants focused on emotional or interactional experiences (how they felt or how others treated them). For example, this very emotional explanation of experience of connection:

I am feeling in the family to be in Canada, in Prince George. I am feeling in the family, in a larger family, in a lovely family.

A similarly high number commented on perceptions of the built environment. Fewer spoke directly about the physical or natural environment, and just a couple spoke about the physical impact of settlement on their bodies. Descriptions of settlement experience came in fragments amidst general conversation, but some of the most visceral responses were about the physical environment:

Participant: Ah! When we arrive here, ah la la la la! It's a country very very cold. Very very cold. But I like Canada
Katherine: Why?
P: It's a big country, a beautiful country with the mountains very very nice. And one day I went to see Jasper. Oh! It was very very beautiful. I saw many many kinds of animals.

I went up in the mountain in the tramway. I touch within my hand a snow! My first time to see snow! (Laughs).

Some minimized the shock of the weather, preferring to emphasize the good qualities of the city:

Prince George is okay. The cold is the biggest problem. The people are good, very nice.

The feelings associated with settlement were more commonly mentioned:

It was just frustrating because, I don't know if I was expecting too much but I didn't get any help. Or was I asking too much? I don't know. Like, everything was very easy when we came here. We had our social insurance number and our insurance, and everything, our car insurance. We bought our car I think in the first week when we came here. Everything was very organized because I am just that kind of person, I like to have it organized. And I think in the first month we had everything…like I never had any problems with this, but just – being accepted or feeling home.

In this case, the participant had visited Prince George temporarily once before. On the first visit the experience of place was not encumbered by the demands of settling in and this time around they needed more help, more acceptance. "Feeling home" never came to this participant who planned to leave Prince George shortly.

The feeling of exclusion was common, especially when the immigrants had limited English on arriving:

I felt like I didn't belong, you know? I felt like I'm an alien here, you know? And I had the impression that, maybe because the stress was so high at the time, I had the impression that everybody looks at me…for my first I think 3 months, because I didn't speak English I was able only to understand. I was like a mute, you know? It was hard.

Even the most upbeat Prince George supporters struggled to feel comfortable despite the language barrier.

When I first came to Canada my English was "yes", "no" and big smile… I am an independent person. I am the kind of person that, when I came in Canada and my English was none, nothing, I was feeling that I was in prison. Then if you want something you will find out how you work.

So, does every immigrant to Prince George need an independent spirit to cope with the absence of a cultural community to find some linguistic comfort? Not every immigrant is so isolated linguistically. Prince George does have sizeable South Asian and Chinese

populations, and some of the participants in this study met with others from their home country on a monthly basis, or more casually. Though the linguistic barrier might be temporary, one can assume though that the feeling of being "imprisoned" by an inability to communicate would only worsen in smaller communities, with less cultural and linguistic diversity.

6.1.5. Analytic theme: learning English – the small city advantage or problem?

Lack of a community specific to their culture/ethnicity was certainly reported by participants, but rarely in a negative way. Very recent immigrants described their frustration at not being able to communicate. More established participants repeated this, but a common refrain heard from the second group was the benefit that could be made from moving to a place where nobody spoke English.

If [a] new immigrant lives in [a] big city, most of countries' have a community – but here, a small community. So studying English is a very good practice. Because I experienced [when] I was living in [another Canadian city], most Korean people connect anytime. I attend the Korean church and met Korean friends. But here not many. Because we live here we have to study English.

We were lucky because in PG we don't have people from [our country]. And then I must learn English to communicate with people. If I was in now in Ontario, we have a lot of [our] community – big one – I don't think that I would speak English now if I was in Ontario. We are lucky in Prince George because I can practice – I can meet somebody in the street and I can practice English with them because people are so friendly here.

Whether it is forced upon them or they feel lucky to have it, if learning English is the objective it seems small places may work well. The obvious caveat here is that people have access to English classes in addition to casual conversation. Free English classes at the right skill level are a feature only larger centres have – Prince George is the only such service provider in all of Northern B.C.

6.1.6. What helps people settle?

Talking about settlement experiences often led to a conversation about what, if anything, helped them settle in. The strongest influence according to this group was the support of IMSS, their own families and connections through their churches. One participant

mentioned the importance of friends, and one said that nothing at all helped. Some respondents had clearly developed personal philosophies for dealing with the upset of resettlement.

K: What or who do you think most helped you settle in?
P: I was thinking our commitment to the idea that we have to succeed. It's just – yeah I don't think it was somebody who helped us who was special you know? Because what we did, we did because we wanted to do it.

6.1.7. Analytic theme: philosophizing settlement in homogenous places

Several participants tried to explain their personal philosophies about immigration. Two in particular discussed the psychological preparation that went into moving and how their approaches played out in real life.

So, but we knew that when we come here that it's going to go away and we just start our life in a normal and quiet and relaxed way of being, yeah I know. And it's actually, because we didn't expect too much it was very hard for us to adjust, you know? And we, we decided in the beginning not to judge anything, you know? So yeah, we just took it like it was.

One participant's philosophy for dealing with the process of settlement clashed with what was possible upon arriving.

Participant: We didn't like the idea that we had to take it step by step, you know, when you come you just want to do something, but everybody said, "No, no, no! Don't rush. Take it step-by-step." I was a little bit frustrated by this step-by-step stuff!
Katherine: So you just wanted to jump right into it?
P: Yeah but you cannot do that. After a while I realized that you cannot jump.
K: Why not?
P: Because it's a different society! Different mentalities! Different people! Actually, it's not only that. My language barrier was there, you know? So even if my mind worked properly, my communication skills weren't, you know?

The frustration that this participant felt was directed in part at the advice received from other immigrants who had already been through the process. No matter the warnings received, it seems people will experience their settlement differently and learn for themselves about the process of settling in.

Maybe for some it will sound crazy, but when I came I bring my people, you know. I love my daughters, my wife. I don't need more. I have parents, my parents they are still alive, you know. But then I came, you know, if everyone start thinking like that it will be better.

What the two respondents above have in common is their decision to move away from larger, better established ethno-cultural communities. They are cultural pioneers in a sense - both represent one of very few people from their country of origin in Prince George, and both dealt differently with how to philosophize the experience. The former approached the immigration process in a relaxed, open-minded manner. Their focus on the long-term may have permitted a more laid-back approach to the move (assuming that eventually a balance will restore itself) but it also failed to prepare their family for the immediate impact of living in a smaller, Northern Canadian city. Accepting the concept of immigration is not the same as accepting, or *expecting,* life in Prince George. For this participant's family, the city was considered more of a temporary home on a longer journey. Prince George was the perfect pit-stop; a place to improve their education and career experience while still being able to afford housing and feeding their family. The later respondent thought that with the right energy, settlement would come together quickly. Without the encumbrance of family advice, this participant thought Prince George would be the perfect place to launch head-on into their new lives. Though they were well-prepared and had thoroughly researched Prince George, their well-crafted vision met with unpredictable barriers. Overall, researching the city seemed to help respondents overcome the initial shock of moving to Prince George. Being thoroughly prepared for immigration, however, meant much more. It involved knowing about professional credential recognition and having the language skills necessary to work in Canada, and these serious barriers are hard to identify until after arrival.

6.1.8. What would help others settle?

Four main themes arose in answer to this question. Foremost was the importance of social resources, specifically better immigrant services, a safer downtown and more cultural activities and educational opportunities. Other suggestions to ease settlement for future immigrants included more and better help from employment counselors to help people find good jobs in their field, or at least jobs with employers who held realistic

expectations. Several respondents felt crushed by the pressure to get a job in unrealistic circumstances:

I had an employment counselor at the beginning, and I felt like I was just a file….I had a number and [he/she] phoned me every 2 weeks to ask me if I found a job…
…another counselor tried hard and [he/she] put me in connection with one of the agencies here and they phoned another guy here, and that guy hired me. In two days he fired me. And for me, it was such a bad experience …I think I cried 2 weeks and everybody was telling me, "don't take it personally". Yes I am! You know? Because I wasn't able to speak proper English. When you put these kinds of guys in connection to hire people with barriers, just make them aware that you have barriers, you know? So, that was for me very frustrating… [Later], the employment councilor phoned me and I told them that I am in school now and they were happy that they could close the file.

In a small city with a small job market, it is scary to imagine who might end up being an employment counselor, and what their approach and attitudes towards immigration are. Though settlement counselors are trained to work with immigrants, employment counselors are not always exposed to immigrant clients. Furthermore, no matter how sensitive and accommodating the employment counselor, funding often hinges on the number of referrals and successfully employed clients, so the pressure is on and especially in smaller places with fewer clients and a smaller job market. New immigrants to Prince George face a similar set of barriers to finding employment as other immigrants to British Columbia. As most of the respondents in this study were in relationships where their partner was the primary earner, it was particularly interesting to hear the employment experiences of people looking for starter jobs in a smaller city. Respondents worked in manufacturing and service industries, and most found work through connections. Certain businesses had a reputation in the community for hiring new immigrants. In this way, new immigrants with multiple-barriers could eventually find employment but might had a limited and marked set of employers to choose from.

Despite all these suggestions, the second most emphasized theme was the incredible importance of people being more welcoming and friendly. Respondents spoke from their own experiences of discrimination in emphasizing the importance of good people and changing attitudes towards immigrants.

6.1.9. Analytic theme: prejudice from unexpected places

One of the themes I had expected might come of this research was discrimination towards the participants I spoke with. Personal experience led me to anticipate this theme after a couple of coffee shop interactions about my research. Certainly, in my time in Prince George I caused the raising of more than one eyebrow with my topic of research. Curious strangers seeing me working on a laptop would stop and ask me what I was studying. "Immigration", I replied. The response was, "Oh good because there's too much of that and it's serious." Though none of the participants I spoke with mentioned ethnic or racially-specific prejudice in Prince George, several did experience discrimination as immigrants. It was not the man in the coffee shop though who expressed prejudice; the source of such prejudice was often official, from employers, in schools or even from service providers.

One participant had encountered outright discrimination from an employer who attempted to manipulate his/her entitlement to minimum wage after a year of work under a federal wage share contract. The participant had some reflections on the employer's abuse of power:

I think it's because of my culture; that I am an immigrant here. So, [he/she] feels that power and knows that I need a job and knows that there are no other options for me right now in the community. It's a mix of things. And as well, [his/her] position… It's a person powerful in the community, so it's something you can't do anything about…In general, people don't really value immigrants…they want to take you for jobs that they don't want to do. And we are people with education and with knowledge of many things and we want to share it. But they don't. They don't always allow you to do that. So it's hard for you because you feel, I mean you feel unappreciated. How do you say that? Yeah so you say, "If I can [bring] this to the people or to this company or to this community, why is it so hard to fit in?

The challenge of working through this situation was meaningful for this participant, especially because yet another power dynamic in this situation includes the size of field-specific labour markets. It is difficult for someone trained professionally to avoid a manipulative situation and move between jobs when there are so few related companies or workplaces to begin with. Another participant felt particularly singled-out for being Asian in the very Caucasian setting of a Prince George public school:

Katherine: Do you feel comfortable here?

Participant: First time I don't. I didn't feel comfortable. First time maybe ah, that really Canadian, for example blonde hair and blue eyed people, doesn't like Asian people I think.
K: What made you feel like that?
P: Some people, they… I went into my son's school, most of the parents don't say hi.

A final participant felt discriminated against as an immigrant in the job market:

Participant: I wrote applications, at least 10 to the city and 10 to the University when I was new into Prince George. And I think they probably figured out that I am a new immigrant.
Katherine: What do you mean? I don't understand… they figured out that you are a new immigrant?
P: Yeah because I think that in the first cover letter I put in that I am new into the town and into the country, so it was into my cover letter. Yeah. I got no response, no response at all.

Experiences such as these suggest the operation of a more covert racism and discrimination at play in parts of Prince George. Ironically, as a white person in the city's public spaces I heard more overtly racist remarks than through the experiences of the participants. Their experiences were of course more hurtful and impacted their daily lives as they had a feeling of discomfort while just trying to be a part of the community.

6.1.10. Loneliness or isolation

Something I tried to explore with all participants was whether they felt lonely or isolated in Prince George. Of the participants who answered this question, just over half reported feeling no loneliness or isolation. Those who claimed they were not lonely pointed to two answers; the presence of family and staying busy.   The staying busy story was one I had not expected, but was a coping mechanism a good number described:

I really try to do everything… I really try to keep me very very busy [so] that I don't have the time to think about some things.

I am here not long. I'm busy. It's important now.

Those who felt lonely predominantly explained a lack of friends and for those who differentiated between loneliness and isolation, isolation was connected to poor communication skills and the language barrier. For some people however, isolation was not altogether negative.

But I think it's good to be far sometimes, because family always is complicated. It is always a pleasure to share things with your family and everything, but sometimes they get too complicated. But yeah, yeah of course in most of the cases we would like to have at least someone to help each other.

For another participant, moving far away from extended family and friends meant her immediate family actually spent more time together. For one, they had to share a car so she, her spouse and her adult children carpooled everyday to work, school and the gym, and on the weekends attended the same activities together. The unusual ways that isolation helped was a major theme that cropped up through the analytic analysis of interview texts.

6.1.11. Analytic theme: little city antidote to cultural casting?

One interesting stand-out case was about the choice made by one participant to be purposefully isolated. The participant arrived with family in Vancouver and stayed for five days in total. They moved north to avoid the big cultural community and all their friends who wanted them to stay in Vancouver.

We were so determined not to stay in Vancouver that – because everybody was against our decision – we just decided to go without looking back.

What was the root of the pressure they felt from that community in Vancouver? And why would they intentionally move away from the supports of the community?

You know like it's the mentality that if we stay together we can help each other much better and stuff like that. But because we came in our late 30's we didn't have time to socialize that much, so we, we were so determined to go back to school and regain our professional status, you know? So we decided just to isolate ourselves. It's not isolation, but it's kind of, see your own interests first and after that, yeah. Looks like selfish when you say it…yeah…looks like selfish. But that was our decision…

Our community they tend to offer lots of advice and if you don't take their advice they are going to be mad at you and they are going to say like, "No you should do that! No, no, no! You should do that! It's much better to do that! No!" You know? And we're just like, "No. We want to do what we want to do!" … So we decided, no. We just need to go somewhere, in our quiet place and just do whatever we want to do.

Despite their choice to avoid settling amongst a strong ethno-cultural community in Vancouver, this respondent acknowledged the importance of being able to communicate with others as a form of settling:

I don't know if community helps, I think it helps that you can go and talk with somebody and you can open your soul.

When it came to employment however, the participant did not want to work in the same factory as every friend and relative from the same country.

For me that's not very constructive and productive as an individual because it just keeps you in the same environment without being able to challenge yourself.

6.1.12. Where do you consider home?

At the end of each interview I asked participants where they considered home to be. While responses to this question were generally short, they actually worked well to summarize people's experiences and their philosophies of settlement. Seven participants responded that Prince George was home for them, and of those seven most referred directly to the importance of their family in making a place home. All but one person reflecting that opinion were parents, and it was always the younger, childless participants who described home as elsewhere. Two participants connected the concept of home directly to home ownership. Some of the most recent immigrants considered themselves to be at home in Prince George.

The majority of participants said they wanted to stay in Prince George, for many of the reasons discussed earlier: life is easy, they have everything they need, it is affordable, it is peaceful, there are good English classes, it is comfortable, etc. The desire to stay, however, was tempered significantly by a pragmatic approach to life. Early in each interview I asked about plans for the future, whether they expected to move away from Prince George and if so when. All but two respondents could see themselves leaving the city within the next five years. Why? The answers were usually for employment opportunities, and then in the odd case because they were generally unsatisfied or would like to join their family elsewhere. None expressed an intention to stay in Prince George regardless of better opportunities elsewhere. The small group of

participants mostly liked Prince George, but nearly all were still looking for something better.

General appraisals of Prince George from this group were highly mixed. Most liked the place but struggled with certain elements. They were busy with instrumental activities in the community, but not necessarily socially involved. This sort of ambivalent connection to place is highlighted once again in the contradiction of wanting to stay but predicting departure. I think this has largely to do with their past experiences (having gone through immigration, they accepted the need to move) and of their general stage in life. Had I spoken with a group of retirees, it could have been very different. Most that were willing and ready to make Prince George home were still forming their family and saw years of possibility ahead of them.

The desire to connect was apparent and one or two participants were enthusiastic about the city, but the lack of real emotional connection to place might have more to do with Prince George as a "centre of mediocrity" as one local joked. The place has great access to the basics, but anything over and above is hard to find. A European participant drew attention to this issue:

[At home] if I want to go to Italy it takes me 3 hours – and I am on the beach, [while] here if you drive for a couple hours you are in the middle of the bush, seeing nothing.

In another conversation with a participant's visiting friend, he described the mass departure of what was once a substantial Salvadoran community:

*They just left for more adventures in big cities. At one time, everybody we just got together. Hey [name]? Throw a party and eat. Then they just **whoosh**! Calgary, Vancouver…except for us!*

The niche markets, specialty services or cultural events of a big city are not developed in Prince George and even the natural setting is not typically as "spectacular" as most visitors expect of British Columbia.

We think Canada is a very beautiful country, but Prince George is not very beautiful.

This participant explained their family took every occasion possible to see other parts of British Columbia and Canada. Coming to Prince George was a shock. The participant

complained about the awful smell coming from the city's pulp mills, no one warned them and as though they researched the city online, they could not see smell on the Internet. Furthermore, several immigrant participants were shocked by the state in which they saw First Nations peoples in Prince George.

We went to Superstore and I think it was Saturday 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and two natives were outside totally drunk. I had to start to cry. And I don't know why. Because I am just so frustrated that nobody can do anything against it and I don't know why. Is it the law that you are not able to do anything? Or, I don't know. Or is it Prince George?

One participant compared our conversation about immigrant integration to her concerns for the other "outsiders":

I would like to see more integration between the Natives for example. I think ah, it is sad as well that they live as an immigrant here. They don't fit in so I would like to know more about them. I would like to, I mean probably to have more events when they can share their culture. Their culture: songs, and I don't know, things that they like to do. I would like to see that, but it doesn't depend on any of us. But I think Prince George probably can promote more activities for the people here, the Natives, in general.

The cultural and natural environment of Prince George surprised and disenchanted these respondents. Rather than fixate on these shortcomings however, people seemed to turn inward to the warmth of their homes, their role in a family, and personal accomplishments like learning English or owning a house – the factors that helped them to find deeper satisfaction. Participants who came from unsafe countries often expressed thankfulness to be somewhere so peaceful as Prince George, but even then a desire to stay did not reflect an attachment to Prince George so much as to Canada:

In this country somebody can want to stay here. And the government are okay to receive each one who want.

With the exception of one, all immigrant participants expressed at least moderate satisfaction, a finding that seemed dissonant with the negative integration experiences that all but two participants shared. Generally, negative experiences were put into a larger, more optimistic perspective. This, I think, has a great deal to do with the atmosphere of the interview. The first question set a story-telling vibe, where people looked at their experiences retrospectively and painted challenging moments into a larger,

progressive storyline. Appreciation for Prince George was sometimes allegorical, but also based on the ability to afford what seem the ideological cornerstones of normal Canadian life: a home, a car and a good school.

This research informs us about reasons why people may want to move, but we must also understand – perhaps especially considering the majority's intention to leave – what would make people stay in Prince George or in other similar smaller communities.

6.2   Analysis of integration

In this final section I will compare responses from regional service providers and the immigrants from Prince George. Both groups answered the following question: *What does successful immigrant integration mean to you?*

In the field, I interviewed service providers first, then immigrants two months later. This section is organized in the same order, introducing first the themes that came from service providers, and secondly how responses from immigrants did and did not fit. It would be unfair to classify all service providers as a unit of analysis without first reminding the reader of the enormous gulfs of geography and specialization that divide them. Though they work together to serve members of the community, each does so in a different capacity. For this reason, the analysis remains somewhat piecemeal and is more generally informative about the conditions of Terrace, Fort St. John and Prince George than to the perspectives of all immigrant service providers.

6.2.1. Responses from service providers

This population was not an average group of immigrant service providers. In fact, of the twenty-one participants I include in this discussion, only four work specifically with immigrants and all of those participants are in Prince George. Since IMSS is the only immigrant service society in the north, the service providers I interviewed in Terrace and Fort St. John included:

City planners	*Literacy workers and volunteers*
Community volunteer coordinators	*Community organizers*
Employment counselors	*Local council members*
Librarians	*School District representatives*

Some were once immigrants themselves, several were long-term residents of their community, but all were connected to accommodating newcomers and able to consider the implications of immigration from their own perspective.

6.2.1.1.Furrowed eyebrows

Keep in mind, my questions about integration were asked in the middle of questions about service needs that formed the base of the important work done by UNBC geographers Drs. Catherine Nolin and Greg Halseth. When I asked this wide assortment of people about how they understood integration, the only unanimous reaction was a pause for consideration. Service provider respondents were so steeped in the language of their work life and so informed about the local situation that an abstract question asked from beyond the context of direct service came as a surprise. The question required a certain degree of conceptualization. People had to stop and think. What followed the inevitable pause was interesting. At first most responses seemed vague or covered a range of topics. A more careful analysis helped to reveal the emotional work many respondents put into their answers. People took time to reflect and gave very personal interpretations.

Responses commonly included some reflection on their own community and the characteristics of place to reveal the issues of racism and discrimination that would face newcomers. One respondent explained bluntly:

I think that Fort St. John is still somewhat of a redneck community and there are still some issues – racism-type issues. So there is a need for diversity training and stuff like that.

A similar, though more indirect response from Terrace was:

In small towns that's hard, you know, because people have their little tight circles that they deal in. You've got to be open. You've got to be in a mindset that says different isn't bad.

In the carefulness of this response, just who should be open-minded was unclear. Other responses, like this one from Fort St. John, were less vague:

I think the municipal government should take a more active role, like you hear stories about minorities working on the oil patch and there being, you know, racist comments and that can happen anywhere. I think if you had a kind of city council who really felt and could see the value of recruiting newcomers to the community, it might be more accepted.

Both blunt and subtle responses proved useful in constructing a more refined picture of place, and the issues of racism and exclusion newcomers may face. The circumspection some people used tipped me off both to the sensitivity of the topic, and the great mental effort they invested in the larger discussion. Overall, service providers offered extremely serious answers to this question about integration. It's clear these community members wanted immigrants to find their place socially and to feel a part of the community above all else.

6.2.1.2.Social or economic?

One of the principal themes I looked for in the interview texts was to see whether participants prioritized the importance of social integration or economic integration. More than half of service provider respondents wove together both social and economic aspects in their understanding of successful integration. A coding of responses shows that the two most common themes in describing integration were 1) having a job or being able to survive economically and, 2) becoming part of the socio-cultural community. The following example from Prince George shows the seamless connection made between economic and social integration, as well as the expectation that integrated people will not congregate into "their" groups:

They have a job, they can feed their family, they see a future for their family here. They are successfully employed in meaningful employment. [Pause] And they're part of the community. Nor just their community, but the community.
<div align="right">

Service Provider in Prince George (#01)
</div>

The remaining responses focused on the social aspect of integration, and only one of twenty responses described integration in purely economic terms.

Though respondents were clear about the importance of social integration, they struggled with finding ways to facilitate it. Service providers had no lack of ideas, but

met with the essential challenge of securing funding to advance settlement programming. Many of the participants were already working "off the edge of the desk" after-hours or as volunteers. Lacking numbers of service users comparable to big cities, funding is hard fought-over and sporadic. If no additional services are provided, the burden of providing the bare minimum settlement assistance and English language instruction falls squarely on local school districts, colleges and volunteer associations.

In Terrace and especially Fort St. John, where the problem is worker shortage, the push is to attract immigrants for economic improvement. Local funds are put into recruitment and advertising for economic migrants able to fill jobs, curb the out-migration pattern of local populations and to boost and diversify business investment. But even for cities that need workers, the ability to provide complete settlement services for those who arrive is essential, and if the focus is on economic integration in situations of great employment need, the success of newcomers is also the success of the community.

Participants expressed concern with immigration policies directed at attracting immigrants as workers. Immigrants who move directly into the workplace, one employment counselor argued, are less likely to see service providers who might explain their rights and introduce them to available services. Participants also pointed out the challenge of co-operating with private businesses to create diversity-training courses for all staff. If the workplace is the new venue for settlement experience, employers carry an even greater responsibility to create a welcoming workplace.

6.2.1.3. Who's Responsibility is it?

When explaining the meaning of integration service providers struggled to decide whose responsibility it is to integrate – the immigrant, or the long-term resident. One of the clearest indicators of how they assigned responsibility was linguistic: most responded using "they" in reference to immigrants, for example "they are able to find good quality housing and are able to get into the workforce, and basically become an active and contributing part of the community." Others spoke from their own perspective;

Successful integration means finding a balance between your traditional cultural values, but feeling comfortable in your new environment.

Some correlated the term directly to concepts or needs;

I think acceptance and diversity. I think HOUSING!

Those few who responded through personalizing the question were all either immigrants themselves, or had a close personal relationship with immigrants.

Deeper and more significant meaning was found in their full responses, and just under half of the participants understood integration as a two-way process negotiated between newcomer and receiving place, similar to the official Citizenship and Immigration Canada definition of the term. In those responses, however, the "Canadian" half of the equation variously referred to individuals, to the community, or to the whole country. Just who they deem to be responsible on Canada's part remains unclear.

The majority of respondents explained their understanding of integration as a responsibility held exclusively by the immigrant and his or her family. Respondents commonly qualified integration to mean when newcomers find a way to be happy, healthy, English-speaking, and working in jobs that match their skills. Two findings pointed to the existence of potentially problematic assumptions about integration; that new immigrants become financially independent and that people are not "segregated". One response from an employment counselor explained integration as the economic responsibility to 'carry your own':

First of all, please be working because I don't want to be paying taxes to support you on social assistance, okay? Call that rude or whatever, but it's reality. I don't want people from other countries moving here so they can suck off our government to survive. That's not contributing to our society.

In this standout case the Terrace participant's response was angry and seemed to address an invisible audience of immigrants. Though not all so argumentative, about a quarter of respondents argue that successful integration involves immigrants becoming "contributing" members quickly and smoothly. Deciphering what is valued as a useful contribution differed by respondent, but ideas ranged from purchasing a new car to running for election to teaching salsa classes at the local community centre.

Also, very few respondents addressed just *how much* diversity or how much change the host society is willing to accept. Much of the theoretical debate about integration hinges upon the dilemma between concepts of social cohesion and multicultural particularism. Is it possible to reconcile group rights protecting cultural diversity and the individual rights that underlie liberal democracy without constructing a hierarchy of rights that prioritizes one over the other? The common insistence amongst service providers that immigrants are "unsegregated" is double edged – at once seeming to mean not isolated and included, but also intoning the lesser importance of group rights as compared to an individual's successful involvement in what they understand as general society.

But a handful of respondents tried to come to terms with this core question. One tried to by referencing his/her own democratic values:

...are we expecting people to come here and sort of adopt white man's culture in its entirety or is it fine to retain some of the cultural traditions of the place you came from? So, what is integration? It's the old melting-pot/mosaic thing! [Pause] I guess we do, we do expect anybody moving to the area to be good citizens...
Service provider in Terrace (#5)

In an effort to relate an expectation of what it means to be a good citizen, this participant's (somewhat sarcastic) ethnocentric appeal to a Canadian cultural stereotype emphasizes the implicit associations that many draw between democratic citizenship and culture. He seems to ask the ultimate unsaid question; if the present culture creates good citizens, then why risk anything different?

Largely, respondents painted a picture where immigrants were responsible for integrating, but that society was responsible for providing the kinds of structure and welcome that would permit the basics of integration such as a housing market that helped renters or new owners, an unprejudiced workforce and accessible language instruction. This common perspective forgoes the issue of personal change on the part of long-time Canadians, and goes back to emphasize the importance of "bedrock" social services that Canadians sometimes take for granted, but they seek a tailored version that addresses the basic needs of newcomers. Respondents seem to want the same things they might want themselves, like being *"able to find good quality housing and to get into the workforce"*.

Service-providers unanimously agree that immigrants deserve the same individual rights as any Canadian, and that immigrants should receive special help to get them on their feet. But the same teetering issue presents itself: where do those rights bend and change to the needs of different cultures, and will the changes brought with new cultures go beyond learning to tolerate difference?

6.2.1.4.What does it look like?

Some respondents used physical symbols to summarize what they understood as successful integration. For example, four people mentioned the role a physical building might play in helping integration:

Having a place, like a cultural centre, for people to be able to showcase their cultures and maintain their cultures. (FSJ)

...maybe more multicultural centres...even something as simple as helping people to use a computer to send emails to their families. Things like that, that keep them connected, that don't make them feel like they've come here and now they're cut off from who they were and now they must assimilate. A library is good, but it's not good for people who aren't ready to deal with people yet, and all those people and such a big surrounding. A place to go. (Terrace)

Others mentioned how imagery that conveyed diversity could encourage a friendlier, more approachable community and therefore a less stressful integration process.

One respondent imagined integration as a state where difference is no longer important:

You know what I think success is? When they're invisible. When it doesn't matter a hill of beans that a guy like Mr. Mistry is on council versus a Mr. Smith or somebody like that, they're just part of the community. Not the focus of some evil-doing, not responsible for all the new crime in town, when they become invisible and not blamed for these things. (Terrace).

A shift in the way people see difference was not an uncommon way for respondents to describe integration. Learning to accept one another, and feeling comfortable being oneself in a small town was frequently mentioned as a sign of integration as well. How those dynamics played out within the spaces of relatively small cities meant for one respondent in Terrace re-imagining local ownership over space:

Well, if we're a multicultural community everyone needs to understand the differences and find a compromise at times. Get away from the "not in my town" mentality, it's our town.

Immigrants have already made their presence known in downtown Terrace, Fort St. John and Prince George through restaurants serving food from across the world. This kind of culinary-multiculturalism was commonly mentioned as a sign of diversity, but not universally seen as reflecting integration.

Integration means…being part of the business community, and hiring locally. Because often they'll open a business and then bring family and friends from home to work, for example the Chinese restaurant only has Chinese workers there. (Fort St. John)

This response furthers the earlier discussion around the meaning of "contributing" to local society. Integrating in this case is not just joining the workforce, the housing market, or the business community, it is bringing a benefit beyond diversity to the community in the form of filling employment gaps, adding jobs and hiring locally. In describing an understanding of integration one participant from Prince George made a point of differentiating between sharing cultures and sharing cuisines:

Have some comfort, and have people around them not afraid of their culture … but sharing the positive aspects of the community beyond food, right?

This educated participant was keen to look beyond the local Western-Chinese buffet as a venue for cultural integration.

6.2.1.5.Integration in a small place

This research combined two research questions, one about settlement in small places and the other about the greater meaning of integration. Service providers in Prince George made an explicit connection between the topics. One Prince George service provider explained in detail how some of the fascinating dynamics that living in a small place sometimes influence connections between service provider and immigrant:

In a smaller community with an agency like ours that's the biggest advantage. We feel very connected to them, and when they come here they feel connected to us. In a large

community when somebody goes to an agency like ours they just go there to seek the information. They get the information and they walk out the door. But here, when they come they get a personal attention…and they become our family. And as long as they live in Prince George, they will always be coming to our agency - for any small help, for anything. They start to rely on our community and on us so much, that they don't want to talk about any personal issues to their family members, they come to us, because they know that everything is confidential here and they seek the best advice. And that's what living in the small community means. Living in the large community, they are lost. In a smaller community, they make relationships, they make connections, they feel they belong to this country, they feel they have a sense of belonging that yes, we are part of this community.

(Service Provider in Prince George)

The bond between immigrant and service provider is obviously meaningful to both parties. Another Prince George respondent explains:

…that's what I love about working here, when people come I am really interested in finding out more about them and I think that's what makes people feel like they belong here, to know that people want to know things about them and they can ask things, that it goes both ways.

The intense closeness of living in a small place, however, may also play out in other more problematic ways:

Say there are some family issues, some violence issues, or generational gap. They do not want to talk, or be known in the community. Because still the number is not that large, so they don't want their problem to be known in the community. If they were in a larger community, that would take the pressure off of them. They want to be part of the community, in terms of the fun events, but their problems are not to be shared. Culturally people feel very exhausted. They think that if they were in a larger group, they could choose who they want to know.

So it seems that for ethno-cultural communities in the middle – with a fair representation in population but where everyone still knows one another – negotiating who they want to be in this place can be very hard. Interestingly, I was unable to recruit participants from the South Asian community, which is the most populous ethno-cultural group in Prince George. I can only speculate at the reason for this situation.

Overall, interviews with service providers were thick with opinion and concern, but there seemed an unpredictable variety in the ways people approached the question. This, I think, is partially the result of the explorative nature of this research. Talking with

service providers from different areas and from smaller cities meant they have not spent much time immersed in the vocabulary or debates that surround immigration; stock answers were minimal. More importantly though, I think their mix of responses is the result of introducing a new issue to people who are already stretching to deal with big social issues like unemployment, racism and poverty. Immigrant integration is often either framed as a new problem, or as a solution to the pre-existing issues. Neither of these approaches is helpful as they either compound or over-simplify the situation; a new stress on already scant services or a misguided solution to unrelated issues. The opinions of service providers on integration were fresh and unrefined, but still largely affected by the pressing need to resolve other issues first. This does not discount the importance of their words. If anything, it draws attention to the complex social environments as well as the many instances of "unwelcome" in which newcomers may find themselves.

6.2.2. Responses from immigrants

When I approached service providers with a question about integration, their rich responses gave me almost too much material. Two months afterwards when I approached immigrants with the same question – their blank stares horrified me! I had committed the grievous error of imposing my vocabulary on others, particularly others with varying levels of English comprehension. The problem with my question was the fact that I conceived of it as a Canadian studying immigration in grad school. The term was almost inaccessible to immigrants. Only four immigrant respondents were fully able to answer my question, and of those one put me on the spot by asking me to first explain what it meant. My embarrassment caused me to answer the question, throwing another response in the bin.

From the answers I did gather it was clear that the concept was understood in very different ways. The first compared integration to what I would call assimilation:

Integration is um, if you try to put people who are not from here or who have, or who are not the same people who are normally here, to try to integrate them to try and put them into the environment and expect them to operate like the others who have been here.

This was an interpretation I did not hear from a single service provider, but then this account came from a participant with a very bad settlement experience who wanted to return home. The second participant went into much more detail and showed an immediate interpretation of the term as two-sided:

Participant: From my part as an immigrant you mean? Or from the people here?
Katherine: Both.
P: Both okay. Ah integration is basically, as an immigrant to try to fit in a group, um…and try to imitate or do things that people do in that group. And understanding the differences between them and you. And then, um, from them understanding that people can teach you as well different things that you can use for your benefit, to make this community to grow.

This response was similar to the previous one, but focused a little more on learning and the importance of contributing to society (two topics also raised by service providers). But I was curious to hear what the Canadian responsibilities were through an immigrant lens.

Katherine: So, from the part of the Canadian what do you think it is?
Participant: As a Canadian, they think that they have to teach you. Everything. At the same time, in general, Canadians are very friendly and especially in this part of the country I found, as I have bad experiences I have good experiences as well, great experiences. People that are just so used to receive immigrants that they don't care if you are Mexican or Italian – they don't care, they just want to be your friend. And so you have to get used to trying to fit into that, in this culture trying to participate with the activities from the community. So if you want to live happy and have friends and fit into a group, you have to participate, you have to learn from them, and you have to as well to give them back something that probably they want to learn or probably not. But you just share things.
K: So when you say to give them back something, what do you mean by that?
P: Experiences, knowledge, fun too. Just like a friend.

It was refreshing to hear that "giving back" in this case was not explicitly getting a job but more about being a friend and sharing. However it was concerning to hear that a Canadian's responsibility to integrate was that "they think that they have to teach you."

The final response was the most detailed, and the closest match to responses from service providers:

My idea is – ah – is just to keep your tradition and roots but trying to adjust to the new society. So for me, …I feel like I am integrated in the community when I do stuff that they

like to do. But in the same time I can share my own…tradition and recipes and stuff like that, you know? Just, when I feel like they value my tradition too, you know? So that's my idea. But I am very open and I know that in order to feel like you are part of the community, you have to adjust to the community, you know? Just not to keep caring your own tradition and telling everybody what good your traditions are…So I'm not like that.

This participant matched a couple of service providers in emphasizing the balance between keeping your traditions and accepting new changes.

6.3 Resolving immigrant and service provider interviews

Despite the fact that only three immigrants could respond to the question about integration, while there were 20 in the sample of service providers, some interesting ideas surfaced. The first was that none of the immigrant respondents included a concept of economic integration or integration into the labour market, when more than half of service providers did. The importance here is probably not the difference between groups, but rather the overwhelming emphasis on the role of social integration altogether. While economic integration was mentioned, almost everyone referred to the term's social implications first. This is especially key as the term has been used to link economically focused immigration policies and the social consequences of immigration in regionalization initiatives. The second noteworthy finding is that the term is not helpful. If immigrants do not understand it at all and if Canadian service-providers muse and conceptualize the term abstractly, then what use does it have as a guiding principle for the future of immigration? From here, let me conclude the findings of this thesis and discuss that question within the overall picture of the research project.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Key findings

From the responses of participants in this study I learned about the important role that moving with an immediate family has on settlement into place, on creating a sense of belonging and on the readiness to call a new city home. Immigrants also looked into employment, healthcare and education when deciding where to settle, imparting the importance of those "bedrock services". Satisfaction in their settlement experience, however, was largely relayed in terms of affordability and recreational involvement. Recent immigrants were very proud to own a home or to be able to afford to enroll their children in sports programming, for example. Those who were on a career path or who had secured meaningful employment also showed a greater sense of fulfillment, but there were few such respondents. Participants reported feeling satisfied with their lives in Prince George when they could measure their success through such accomplishments.

Though an outdoor lifestyle, climate, or natural beauty were sometimes mentioned, they did not seem to be important factors in deciding to move to Prince George. Despite some frustrations with the climate or pollution, however, the pull of good English language courses was dominant. People accredited the English classes as spaces of learning, but also of friendship and connection with teachers and other students. Learning English in a homogenous English-speaking place is an advantage students learnt by necessity. Some even went as far as to claim that being a "cultural pioneer" with no developed cultural group was an advantage more generally in fitting into a new community. Friendly and welcoming community residents helped ease the psychological adjustments of settling in a new place. Conversely, negative experiences that made participants feel unwelcome are generally processed as part of the experience, but may ultimately add to their disinterest in long-term settlement in Prince George. Discrimination is still a daily reality for new immigrants. Employers especially need better awareness of new immigrants' capacities and stress-loads. Ultimately the group held a tenuous attachment to place, as all would move willingly if a better opportunity was presented.

Regionalization policies that encourage immigrant settlement into smaller communities need to be sensitive to the needs of multiple parties, not just local employers and the immigrants who move to work. The impact that immigration has on the rest of the community and the rest of the immigrating family is tremendously important in ensuring long-term settlement, or "retention". The most critical service components seem to be the availability of good, free English language programs and a capacity to reach out to immigrants no matter if they are working, staying at home or living in some remote part of the community. Service providers highlighted the need to know who is arriving, in order to greet them upon arrival and keep better track of what new needs ought to be filled. If regionalization programs tend to focus on connecting employers to new immigrants, then the employers need to cooperate with service providers. The Welcoming Communities initiative that focuses on bolstering the social service capacities in small immigrant-receiving communities is starting in the right direction, but the municipal focus (every town for itself) symbolically cuts regional cooperation that is very important in the North, where communities are smaller and more isolated. Regionalization programs can benefit from learning more about the kind of settlement experienced by immigrants who move to smaller places.

The term integration is widely used by academics and policy makers, and its meaning is obviously complex. When I brought the question to the field I hoped to learn from the people who were integrating as a daily experience. What I found was that the term had little or no meaning for immigrants themselves. Furthermore, there is such a varied understanding on the part of service providers, as to render it unhelpful in discourse at the community level. Part of what makes the term so challenging is that integration is at once an idea and an action. This fact became prominent as I heard people struggle with the term integration, while simultaneously articulating their integration experiences in other ways. By considering 'integration' as an abstract concept rather than an action, I was obviously out of step with the actual process of immigration.

What insights can be drawn from the above? The first is simple – words matter and "language lies at the heart of all knowledge" (Dear 1988, 266). In every stage of this research words have mattered; in my articulation of the research questions, in my ability to communicate with participants, and in the writing-up. All participants wanted to be

heard and understood. Those with language barriers used paper and pen, relatives, alternate languages and hand gestures to portray meaning and emotional depth in their settlement stories. For both immigrant and service provider respondents, talking about the meaning of integration challenged them to use words to put meaning to concepts they had perhaps not previously vocalized. In my opinion, the exercise did more than exchange knowledge from participant to researcher. Rather, it was an exercise in creating knowledge. Participants solidified abstract concepts in front of my eyes. They moved from opinion to understanding, and in a way I think that helped them realize their own part in a larger picture of settlement and integration – not just to contextualize their experiences within a general understanding of the situation, but to see themselves as an active part of the process.

Whether it is to be encouraged or facilitated, economic or social, integration acts as an ambiguous sort of instruction for small communities and the immigrants who move there. The concept reaches towards a positive end goal of creating a healthy and harmonious society (integration as a condition) but simultaneously creates a responsibility to succeed (integration as an action); it is an imperative with no instructions and an expectation with no end. Because there is no clearly understood meaning to integration, the term's conceptualization is put upon the individual. The few immigrants I spoke to who were capable of responding felt integrated when they achieved the very parameters for happiness they had set themselves. Integration's meaning was largely self-constructed. Service providers too defined integration as the accomplishment of prescribed goals for individuals and the community.

If it is up to individuals to define integration for themselves, does this in some backhanded way empower individuals to decide for themselves how integration works? Is it opening a door to agency in a conversation that has so far been deeply directed by structure through policy creation and national imaginaries? Because there is no ascribed meaning to integration, does this by some way accept the individual creation of meaning?

Maybe this is true in the everyday reasoning of individual participants who set their own settlement goals (and that is a positive and interesting situation by itself). If the term is to be employed by service providers and governments, however, there needs to be a greater consensus on its meaning. The only common thread that connected all

definitions of integration from my respondents was the importance of achieving personal and societal goals that help fulfill some larger concept of belonging and working within a diverse society. Conceptualizing integration becomes a struggle when people measure using different expectations. The existence of something to aspire to as a society is what the idea of integration really rests on.

Though it seems evident that regionalization is more intent on revitalizing or buffering economic/demographic volatility in smaller places, the regionalization debate also risks idealizing small towns and cities as welcoming, friendly places with firm Canadian identities. Though small towns may seem to represent a simpler way of life or a more authentic distillation of what it once was to live in Canada, they are not without their own histories and diversities. Small places are far from the last bastions of the Canadian national identity. There is limited evidence that buying a home or learning English might be easier in a small town (provided there are people to help), but negotiating identities is as complicated as ever.

How people integrate (and here I mean both parties to the two-way process) is a form of cultural politics. The process tells a great deal about how people engage with the powers operating around them. Remarkable strategies of adjustment are the product of creative engagement with and manipulation of the circumstances people live in. Amidst the many pull factors that seem to account for decisions to move abroad, it is also an immigrant's own (or their family's) creative capacity to imagine change and go after it. However, the existence of basic social services, a larger and more flexible labour market, and more exposure and connections to the rest of the world are part of even being able to imagine settlement. It will take major efforts for cities smaller than Prince George to provide the most basic elements necessary for successful settlement.

7.2   Limitations and further study

In hindsight, interviews with provincial nominees would have added a useful element to the research because this group would have given more information about workplace settlement issues. This would have helped me understand the real life impact of regionalization initiatives with economic goals. I did not explicitly ask what stream of the immigration system participants came through. Though interviews with Provincial

Nominees, for example, would have added an interesting element to the research, recruiting such a group of people in a small place would take serious time or close cooperation with an employer who hired employees through the PNP. Cooperation with a private employer would present a whole other world of ethical dilemmas.

Recruitment strategies were limited in scope due to reliance on mainly IMSS connections. Because the majority of participants were enrolled in English classes there was a clear language barrier with some of the participants. Working without an interpreter may have led to misunderstandings based on language barriers. With interpreters I could have talked to immigrants with no English at all. Recruitment also resulted in a sample of immigrants that did not include any South Asians, despite the fact that the South Asian population is the largest immigrant/visible minority group in Prince George. Local social service workers spoke about the community, however, and their insights into the dynamics of the biggest (but still little) ethno-cultural community in a small town were fascinating:

Because it's a smaller group of people you can't pick and choose friends. Say there are some family issues, some violence issues, or a generational gap. They do not want to talk, or be known in the community. Because still the number is not that large, so they don't want their problem to be known in the community. If they were in a larger community, that would take the pressure off of them. They want to be part of the community, in terms of the fun events, but their problems are not to be shared. Culturally people feel very exhausted. They think that if they were in a larger group, they could choose who they want to know.

If the proper connections were made, closer research with this community would be very useful.

Another interesting area of research would look directly at comparing settlement experience between metropolitan and non-metropolitan communities. A matched comparison study would be a large undertaking but would provide rich data for analysis. This would be required to truly investigate the differences in settlement and the success of regionalization initiatives. Finally, if we are to continue using the term integration in policy and academia, we need to reach a consensus as to its meaning. We would know we had achieved this if we saw evidence at the community level that immigrants and

service providers shared a common understanding of integration and used the term in reference to their own lives.

The relatively small number of immigrants settling in Northern British Columbia, should not discount the importance of studying settlement and integration in non-metropolitan places. This research helps explore a new issue and challenges the generalizations about immigrant settlement and community identity that we are quick to make about places seemingly far away. The same can be said of research into integration. With a concept so ambiguous, its analysis might seem wasted – but ambiguity can too easily mask an acceptance of the status quo and open an escape from such challenging questions as 'are we ready to change?" This research then is a practice in demystifying phenomena and terms commonly overlooked. I have attempted to make a space for the voices that are otherwise quieted because they are far away, and to let people read between the official lines on a term commonly glossed over.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

10 Basic Interview Guide Questions:

1. Tell me your story, how did you arrive in Prince George?

2. What do you do on an ordinary weekday in this community?

3. Do you feel connected to this city, or to a community within the city?

4. What does "integration" mean to you?

5. How was your experience settling into this community? Do you feel like you belong here?

6. What do you think it takes to feel comfortable in a new place?

7. Who or what has most helped you to settle into your new life in Prince George?

8. Have you ever felt lonely or isolated living here?

9. Would your settlement experience have been different if you had moved to a large centre, like Vancouver? How?

10. Where do you consider home?

Probes followed each of the questions as necessary, and basic information like gender, country of origin, date of immigration and reason for moving were collected throughout the guided conversation.

APPENDIX TWO

 The University of British ColumbiaOffice of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC BREB NUMBER:
Daniel J. Hiebert UBC/Arts/Geography H07-01066
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:
Institution Site
N/A N/A
Other locations where the research will be conducted:
community centres, subject's homes

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Katie McCallum
SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A
PROJECT TITLE:
Understanding Integration in Small Places; A Northern Case Study
CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: September 3, 2008
DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL: DATE APPROVED:
 September 3, 2007
Document Name Version Date
Protocol:
Research Proposal N/A May 3, 2007
Consent Forms:
Consent form for participation 2 September 2, 2007
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:
Interview Guide N/A May 3, 2007
Letter of Initial Contact:
Invitation to participate 2 September 2, 2007

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

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
and signed electronically by one of the following:
Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair