Navigating Multiple Worlds:
Experiences of stress from the perspective of immigrant youth
by

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M.Sc. Brunel University, 2006
B.A. McGill University, 2002

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Supervisory Committee

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ABSTRACT

Immigrant youth face uncertainty in many aspects of their lives. Most have little control over their family's decision to immigrate and once they arrive, many encounter challenges. The Navigating Multiple Worlds project worked with a group of youth researchers to explore the relationship between stress, resilience and expressions of subjectivity among immigrant youth. Moving beyond the negative conceptualizations of stress and acculturative stress that dominate the literature, this research gathered youth perspectives on stress and what could be done to enhance supports for immigrant youth in Victoria.

Through our participatory approach, the youth research team was involved in the design and implementation of interviews, focus groups and finally a photovoice exercise. Our methodology sought to highlight narrative complexities and the fluidity of experiences, with the research team reflecting on their own experiences while gathering perspectives on stress from other immigrant youth. The benefits and challenges of working in participatory paradigms with youth and the value of arts based methods for capturing youth voices and creating 'thinking spaces' for community engagement are highlighted.

Historically, research has problematized immigrant youth identities. A focus on immigrant youth perspectives reveals that while many youth face challenges after immigration, they also emphasize the value of flexibility in self-definition. The combination of our methods, participatory approach, our focus on youth voices and taking an ethnographic approach to documenting experiences of stress, contributed to the distinctiveness of our findings. Considering stress as an idiom of narrative expression rather than an index of negative experience, acknowledges its place as part of the worldview of the participants, who use the term in multiple ways. The physicality of stress, the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress and 'everyday stressors' emerged from our analysis as thematic categories that describe the ways that youth experience 'stress'.

The findings of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project speak to the value of conceptualizing stress as a narrative idiom. Over the course of our research it became apparent that youth were talking about stress in ways that allowed them to discuss and normalize negative experiences, re-framing experiences of 'stress' in positive terms. For many, this facilitated fluid movement from a focus on challenges to a focus on coping and resilience. Our research suggests that while conflicting expectations in the lives of immigrant youth are sources of 'stress' for many, they can also be understood as key 'sites of flexibility'. The processes of negotiation that occur in these 'sites of flexibility', as youth use the language of stress to name challenging experiences and overcome them, contribute to the resilience of youth. Although our findings are specific to a small group of immigrant youth in Victoria, BC, considering stress as an idiom of resilience as well as distress creates opportunities to recognize and enhance the strengths of immigrant youth and the supports available to them. Recommendations from our research in terms of service provision, supports, and participatory research with youth are provided, as well as suggestions for future research in anthropology related to immigrant youth and stress.

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Acronyms:

ICA   Inter-Cultural Association
NMW   Navigating Multiple Worlds
PTSD   Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SWIS   Settlement Workers in Schools
VIRCS Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

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I am finishing my dissertation a better writer than when I started. I am very grateful to all those who provided feedback on earlier drafts. To Paulina and Meegan, who might not have known what they were in for when they agreed to read through my early draft, thank you from the bottom of my heart. To my number one editor, the person who struggled through the earliest (and most unclear) versions of my work, and who patiently listened to a number of hysterical breakdowns along the way, you are an amazing role model, and the best mom ever.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Anxiety, tension, pressure; all words commonly associated with experiences of stress. While a significant amount of research has been carried out related to immigrant populations and stresses associated with processes of immigration, much of this research is focused on the experiences of adults. The perspectives and voices of children and youth, in relation to stress, resilience and their experiences of immigration, are sadly lacking. There is both a space and a need for research that gives prominence to the perspectives of immigrant youth as they navigate experiences across multiple social and cultural contexts in ways that shape their ways of being in the world.

When I began my program, one of my roommates was an employment counselor at the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) where I was also a volunteer with their youth theatre program. Initially, I met with several of the youth workers from VIRCS and asked them to identify any areas of research related to health that they thought could benefit from more exploration, or, that they felt could benefit their programs. The youth workers were quick to point out the resilience of many of their clients. However, they also noted the frequency of discussions of 'stress' among the youth with whom they work.

In my experience with the youth theatre program at VIRCS, I had also been party to discussions of the challenges facing immigrant youth in Victoria. Stress was a frequent topic of discussion in conversations among youth, and was depicted in theatre scenes enacted by the youth who were part of the group. VIRCS staff and youth workers were very interested in finding out what immigrant youth were talking about when they used stress terminology, and what might help youth in coping with or minimizing 'stress' in general. When I spoke to several of the youth that I worked with as a youth night volunteer, they also agreed that 'stress' was something that was relevant to their lives and was a topic they found interesting.

A significant amount of literature across a number of disciplines discusses the challenges and stresses that can face immigrant youth. However, after an initial search, I found there was a dearth of literature that focused on the perspectives of youth themselves, and very little related to immigrant youth and stress from the perspective of anthropology. My preliminary literature search raised a number of questions that I realized couldn't be answered by existing work and led to the creation of the Navigating Multiple Worlds research project as part of my dissertation research.

Research Objectives:

The objective of this participatory research was to explore the relationship between stress as a narrative idiom, experiences associated with processes of immigration, resilience, and the ways that immigrant youth express their subjectivity. This

relationship is complex, and through an exploration of narratives of stress, the dynamic tensions in the bodily, self and social/political processes that are at the core of subjectivity will be explored. Framing stress as an idiom of resilience as well as distress also demonstrates the productive potential of 'stress' or the use of stress language in the lives of immigrant youth as they navigate multiple worlds and negotiate multiple identities. An ethnographic focus on stress as a narrative idiom contributes to anthropological theorizing related to stress, processes of self-making and identity formation among immigrant youth.

Research Questions

I developed and refined the research questions for the project in collaboration with a team of immigrant youth researchers. The Navigating Multiple Worlds project gathered youth perspectives to address the following questions:

- What are the meanings and causes of 'stress' from the perspective of immigrant youth? How do youth use the language of stress and how do they experience stress?

- What factors do immigrant youth see as contributing to resilience? How do youth cope with stress or navigate the challenges they face?

- What is the role of 'stress' in the expression of subjectivity, and in social processes of self-making for immigrant youth?

- How do the changes in social relationships and cultural context that can occur as a result of immigration impact the development of feelings of belonging and sense of self for immigrant youth?

- What supports do immigrant youth access in Victoria and what could be done to minimize stress and enhance resilience for other immigrant youth?

In addition, the project aimed to raise awareness in Victoria related to the challenges and experiences of immigrant youth. The project also sought to develop the research capacity of the youth involved in the research team, and, wherever possible, to identify and implement actions into the research process to address gaps in support or resources currently available to immigrant youth in Victoria.

Conceptualization of Terms:

Stress:

In this research 'stress' is conceptualized as a narrative idiom, most frequently used to describe a process that is experienced as emotionally unpleasant or negative, resulting from an imbalance between the requirements of a situation and capacity to act and is experienced as a threat to one's well-being (Semmer 1997). Recognizing stress as a process, rather than a reified object or force (Korovkin and Peterson, 2010) and theorizing stress as both an idiom (of distress and resilience) (Nichter 1981; Nichter 2010; Obrist and Buchi 2008) and as a discourse (Foucault 1980), creates a starting point for the elaboration of the relationship of stress, resilience, and subjectivity among immigrant youth.

Resilience and Agency:

Theories of resilience and agency draw from multiple disciplines. Described succinctly by Obrist and Buchi (2008), the idea of resilience is borrowed from the language of physics. "The material of a rod is resilient if it bends under great pressure without breaking and bounces back to its original position" (252). Resilience, as is often discussed in the context of child development, refers to positive adaptation despite the experience of significant adversity (Luthar 2003). Just as risk and vulnerability exist as potentials, which may or may not present themselves over time, and are dependent on many interacting factors, resilience can also be conceptualized as a potential resistant or positive trajectory in the face of adversity (Luthar 2003). For the purposes of this research, resilience is conceptualized as such a trajectory, influenced by the interplay of many personal, social, cultural and structural factors, and less as a personal characteristic. As an example, the experiences of youth as they work to address the conflicting expectations in their lives can be seen as elements that contribute to their resilience. Rather than focusing on resilience as an individual potential, I take a social or relational approach to defining resilience. Resilience is conceptualized as potential for resistance and positive outcomes among immigrant youth as a group.

Further, I consider resilience and the processes of identity negotiations/ negotiations of social norms as forms of agency. Following Mahmood (2009), thinking about agency as it relates to embodied capacities and means of subject formation, agency (and resilience) is understood as the capacity for action that

specific 'relations of subordination' (or in this case, experiences of stress) create and enable (Mahmood 2009).

Coping:

The idea of resilience and its relationship to stress is frequently discussed in relation to 'coping'. Coping refers to action that is oriented towards solving problems or towards regulating emotion (Lazarus 1993; Lazarus 2006). "Successful coping implies the mobilization of various physical, psychological material and cultural sources of resistance" (Obrist and Buchi 2008: 252). In the context of coping with stress, research emphasizes that a 'sense of coherence' is a particularly important source of resistance. Coping will be used in discussion of individual experiences and actions oriented towards solving problems. (What youth did when faced with particular incidences of 'stress' that allowed them to alleviate the stress, confront issues or move forward, and what actions youth take to develop or enhance their 'sense of coherence' in the face of social change). This research will elaborate the relationships between stress, resilience and this 'sense of coherence', framed in terms of expressions of subjectivity.

Subjectivity:

In this research, subjectivity will be conceptualized as the means of shaping sensibility; the continuity and shaping of inner processes and affective states, of personhood, or as the expression of human agency amid contexts of social change

(Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007). Subjectivity provides the grounds for individuals to "think through their circumstances and feel through their contradictions" (Biehl, Good and Klienman, 2007: 10). In her discussion of subjectivity and cultural critique, Ortner defines subjectivity "as the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear and so forth that animate acting subjects… as well [as] the cultural and social formations that shape, organize and provoke those modes of affect, thought and so on…" (2005: 31). Biehl, Good and Klienman (2007) add to this definition, stating: "only through explicating the logic of key emotional and intersubjective constructs do major social dramas become intelligible; and only amid such contemporary social enactments can we understand particular domains of affect and agency" (p. 10). As a cultural formation, an intersubjective construct, and as a form of expression of the 'inner states of acting subjects' (Ortner 2005), 'stress' will be considered as an expression of subjectivity.

Immigrant Youth

The category of 'immigrant youth' includes first or second generation immigrants, who have been in Canada for varying lengths of time and also includes any youth who self-identifies as an immigrant. I recognize that the label of 'youth' also contains problematic assumptions related to age, maturity, responsibility, and ability to make reasonable decisions (Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009; Tisdall 2006). For the purposes of this research 'youth' will be categorized as between the ages of 13 and 30 (the same parameters used by the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) to delimit access to their youth-oriented programs).

Setting: Immigrant Youth in Victoria

B.C. accepts approximately 40,000 new immigrants each year, and approximately one in six are youth (Strategic Information Branch, Labour Market and Immigration Division 2010). Between 2004 and 2008, B.C. became the new home to 32,116 immigrants aged 15 to 24. That is an average of 6,423 immigrant youth arriving each year. The number of immigrant youth in BC is growing. From 1999- 2008 immigrant youth arrivals increased by 30.3% (Strategic Information Branch, Labour Market and Immigration Division 2010). There are also more immigrant youth in BC than in many other provinces in Canada. The 2006 Census shows that there were 99,300 immigrant youth living in B.C. at that time. This represented 18.5% of the total youth population in B.C., well above the national share of 13.0%. However, the majority of these youth reside in the city of Vancouver, and in the lower mainland.

While 59.2% of the province's total population lives in the lower mainland region, it is home to 79.7% of BC's immigrants and 89.9% of immigrants who arrived in the province between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics 2007). As of the 2006 census, the lower mainland and city of Vancouver were home to 892,335 immigrants, comprising 36.6% of the region's population. In contrast, although it is the capital of British Columbia, Greater Victoria has a total population of only 345,164, and an immigrant population of 65,535 or 19% (Statistics 2007). 25.5% of the immigrant population in Victoria arrived between 1991 and 2006. The immigrant population in the Capital Regional District is diverse: 36% of the visible minority population identifies as

Chinese, 21% as South Asian, and there is a fairly even split (between 3-8%) in other

categories (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: (Stats 2006b)

Visible Minorities	Number	Percent
Total visible minorities	34,310	100.0
Chinese	12,385	36.1
South Asian	7,300	21.3
Filipino	2,800	8.2
Japanese	2,395	7.0
Black	2,375	6.9
Latin American	1,890	5.5
Southeast Asian	1,610	4.7
Korean	1,235	3.6
Multiple visible minority	930	2.7
West Asian	585	1.7
Arab	505	1.5
Not included elsewhere	295	0.9
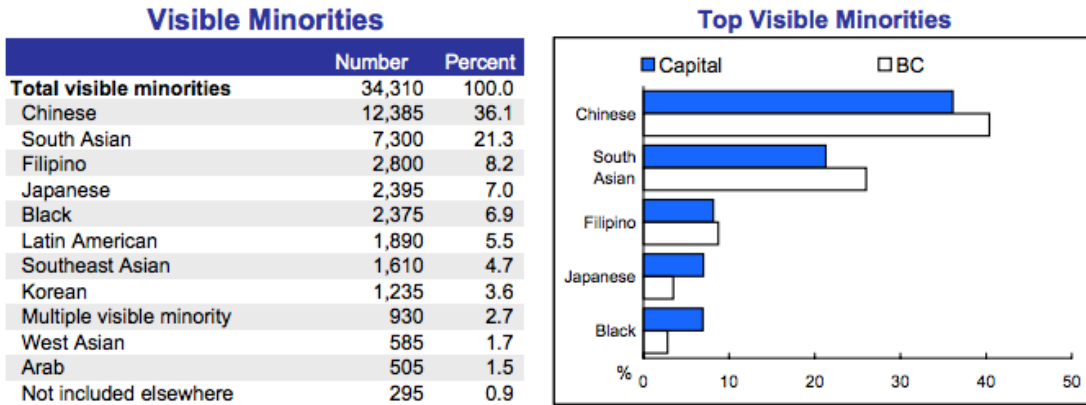
It is difficult to find precise statistics on the age distribution of immigrant youth in

Victoria; however, approximately 13% of the population of Victoria is under the age

of 24. Immigrant youth comprise about 7% of the population in that age range, or

42% of the population under the age of 24 (See Figure 2) (Stats 2006b).

Figure 2 (Stats 2006b)
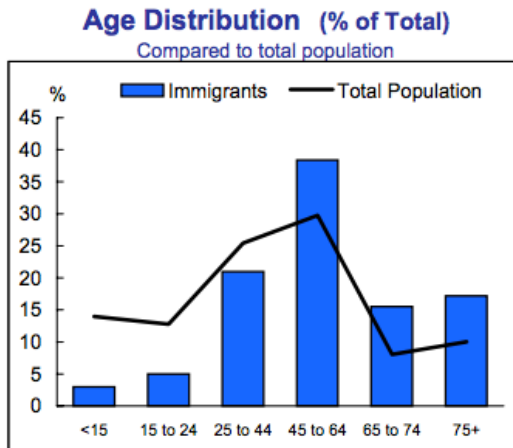
Source: 2006 Census, Statistics Canada

So, although the number of immigrant youth in Victoria is relatively small, immigrant youth do comprise a large percentage of the youth population in the Capital Regional District. There are many churches and cultural organizations that provide various types of support to immigrants and refugees, but there are only two non-profit organizations established to serve this population in Victoria.

The Intercultural Association (ICA) began in 1971 and encourages cultural awareness by promoting intercultural events. It also assists newcomers with settlement in the Greater Victoria area. The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS), was established in 1989 by three former refugees and helps immigrants, refugees, new Canadian citizens, and visible minorities settle and adapt into new lives in Greater Victoria. Both of these organizations serve immigrants who have permanent resident status and both host a small number of youth-specific programs. The programs that are available include youth workers (who provide employment counseling and individualized support), ESL classes, homework clubs, youth nights, social nights, arts and theatre programs, summer camps and LifeSkills programs.

There is one part-time mental health support worker in Victoria who specializes in multicultural counseling and there are additional supports available to newcomer youth through the public school system. Specifically, the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program is available to students in School District 61. However, there are considerably fewer resources available to immigrant youth in Victoria

than in the neighbouring (and much larger) metropolitan centre of Vancouver. While there are only two SWIS program workers in Victoria, there are over one hundred in Surrey (a suburb of Greater Vancouver) alone. Although there are a range of specialized services and programs available to immigrant youth in Victoria, there is a strong feeling among service providers that services for immigrant youth and specifically those related to mental health and support are severely under-resourced.

Much of the literature on immigrant youth is based on research set in larger urban centres with significantly larger immigrant populations. As a mid-sized urban centre, Victoria is very 'white', with only 9.9% of the total population self-identifying as a 'visible minority' (Stats 2006a). Only 13% of the population in Victoria is under the age of 24 and approximately 75% is over the age of 45 (with about 40% over the age of 65). Victoria is also a retirement destination and is often described as an 'older' city. As a result, youth in Victoria perceive there are often limited opportunities in terms of entertainment and extracurricular activities in the city. Many youth label Victoria as very 'quiet' particularly those who arrive from larger or more densely populated areas. As one youth described while talking about his first impressions of Victoria:

> So I woke up and I think we were trying to… we tried to find the path to school, so me my dad and my sister walked around to find the closest way to school, and I thought that it was really quiet... I was thinking that it was like those movies with like, zombies walking in the street, cause it was really quiet, and it was also misty, it was autumn… that's the thing I first thought, so quiet, and empty.
>
> <div align="right">-Alejandro, 16, Peru</div>

(One of our research team members was so inspired by this description that she referred to it in her image of the biggest challenge she faced after immigrating to Victoria).

I took this picture because it reminds me of the quote in the interview "like a zombie movie, no people, no cars"

- Sinney, 16, China

The demographics of Victoria, along with the fact that it is both a 'university' and 'government' city, with considerable employment originating from both of these sectors as well as information technology, contribute to social and cultural contexts in Victoria that influence the experiences and opportunities for immigrant youth.

The experiences and perspectives of many of the youth in the Navigating Multiple Worlds (NMW) project may be most commonly shared or recognized by other immigrant youth in smaller urban centres. However, within their experiences there are also elements that appear to emerge consistently in research related to

immigrant youth as they engage in the process of immigration, regardless of the setting of the research.

Locating Myself in the Research

Over the past decade I have been involved in research projects in communities on Vancouver Island and in various parts of Canada as well as in Australia. The majority of my work in the past has been with First Nations and Aboriginal communities, outside of Victoria. As I set out to think about PhD research, I decided that I wanted to engage in research within my own community. I was born in Victoria and despite having had opportunities to live in other communities in Canada and internationally, Victoria is home. Although our research took place in Victoria, and in what I consider to be my own community, I identify as Canadian and my family immigrated to Canada six generations ago. It is important to recognize that throughout the NMW project I was working both within and outside of my own community.

In qualitative research, and particularly in the context of participatory research, relationships are central to research processes. My background and social location, as a young, Caucasian-Canadian, educated female certainly influenced the relationships I formed with my research team members and framed my experiences in the context of the NMW project.   In Chapter 2, I describe my role as a research facilitator and reflect on some of the challenges of working within a participatory

paradigm. In Chapter 7, I reflect on my own social location in more depth and consider its implications with regards to the research processes and our findings.

A review of the relevant literature:

Immigrant Youth and Stress:

Research in immigration and its implications for youth has a multidisciplinary history, and comprises a range of inter-related topics including: assimilation, integration and adaptation (Espiritu and Wolf 2001; Portes and Rumbaut 2005; Rumbaut 1994a; Sabatier and Berry 2008; Schiller 2009; Todorova, Suárez-Orozco, and Suárez-Orozco 2008; Yeh et al. 2005), school performance and the 'immigrant paradox[1]' (Abrego 2009; Espiritu and Wolf 2001; Georgiades, Boyle, and Duku 2007; Green et al. 2008; Horton 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Milburn 2009), place-making, identity and belonging (De Micco and Clayton 2006; Fernandez-Kelly 2008; Hébert et al. 2008; Yeh et al. 2008a; Yeh et al. 2008b), and family structure and the negotiation of multiple cultures (Orellana et al. 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2005; Pumariega, Rothe, and Pumariega 2005; Qin 2006; Yeh et al. 2005; Yu-Wen Ying and Han 2007). These various foci have resulted in a significant amount of data, some of it longitudinal, related to the school, social, family and economic performance or outcomes of first and second generation immigrant youth (Beiser et al. 2002; Phelan, Davidson, and Cao 1991; Portes and Rumbaut 2005).

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[1] The finding that immigrant youth often perform better in school than their non-immigrant counter parts, despite lower socioeconomic status and additional challenges of the immigration process has been termed "the immigrant paradox" (Portes & Rumbaut 2005).

From this diverse literature it is clear that many factors influence the experiences of immigrant youth. It is also clear that as the numbers of immigrant youth in Canada continue to grow, understanding immigrant experiences and working to address the challenges facing immigrant youth will remain important areas of research (Beiser et al. 2002; Biles and Lafrance 2009). As demonstrated by the literature, many immigrant youth excel in their new countries of residence, performing well in school and going on to post-secondary education. Others face multiple challenges in learning a new language, juggling responsibilities and integrating into their new environments.

Over the last decades, 'stress' has emerged as a normalized way for people to express aspects of distress or tension in their lives (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010; Obrist and Buchi 2008). Over the course of this research, 'stress' was discussed by youth in relation to their experiences with: the process of immigration, adjusting to a new community, negotiating the often competing expectations of family, friends, and teachers, finding employment or advancing education (or both), and dealing with the multitude of changes in support networks, socioeconomic status and daily life that can accompany immigration. Research suggests that 'stress' has become a dominant explanatory framework for various forms of experiences of distress around the world (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010).

Recognizing the heightened pace of change, innovation, and knowledge exchange in the world today, Sennett suggests that the widespread prevalence of 'stress' and use of 'stress terminology' may be a response to "the fundamental need for conceptual, cognitive, symbolic tools for reorienting and reconstituting the self" (Ortner 2005: 44) in the face of social and cultural change. In exploring stress as a narrative tool, rather than as something that is measureable as a 'thing' or 'symptom' on its own, I argue that 'stress' has become a means of facilitating self-organization or self-definition. Stress is intertwined with ideas of identity and expressions of subjectivity in the context of change, as well as the increasing need for flexibility in the multifaceted daily lives of youth.

This conceptualization of "stress" may be particularly relevant to immigrant youth, who are not only subject to cultural change through immigration, but who are also often forced to navigate multiple identities in various social and cultural contexts. For example, over the course of the NMW research, many youth gave examples of wanting to respect their parents' wishes and maintain elements of their 'culture' while also wanting to 'fit in' at school, sometimes describing feelings of being pulled in opposite directions or having to balance various aspects of their past and present cultural contexts. Estuardo, a 20-year-old second generation immigrant of Chilean and Guatemalan descent, elaborated on these feelings in his photovoice image representing what 'navigating multiple worlds' meant to him.

This made me think of my ethnicity. I have two cultures that I balance, but in turn, it creates a whole new one for me. These two poles are halves of a whole, but are still one thing together.
— Estuardo, 20, Chile/Guatemala/Canada

In their analysis of social stress and stress processes, Korovkin and Stephenson (2010) suggest that stress is a principle systemic feature of any type of social organization. They emphasize that stress stems from dissonance, from contradictions between systems of social organization and the perceptions of individuals within (or on the margins) of these systems. Although all youth may experience varying levels of stress, it is reasonable to suggest that immigrant youth may experience additional forms of stress as they work to renegotiate their place in their newer host communities and in their relocated families. While immigrant

adults sometimes have the option of choosing margination[2], or remaining on the edges of their host culture (Pumariega, Rothe, and Pumariega 2005), this is not often an option for immigrant children and youth as they are required to go to school and to learn and speak a new language. As a result, youth can be forced to negotiate between 'multiple worlds'. Youth are often encouraged by their families to remain loyal to their ethnic enclave, with departure viewed as betrayal. At the same time, those same families may be pressuring youth to succeed academically as parents place emphasis on the sacrifices they have made to ensure the success of the next generation (Horton 2008). Meanwhile, youth are also looking to make friends in their new communities (Costigan, Hua, and Su 2010; Pumariega, Rothe, and Pumariega 2005; Wolf 1997).

Despite the extensive research from various disciplines, on school performance and social adjustment or integration of immigrant youth into their new communities (often measured by assessment of social support networks) (Yeh et al. 2005; Yeh et al. 2008b; Portes and Rumbaut 2005) there is a paucity of research focused on the perspectives of youth themselves. 'Stress' terminology is emerging as an increasingly ubiquitous and normalized way to talk about the challenges that can face those dealing with social change, or various forms of experiences of distress. Understanding what immigrant youth mean when they talk about stress, how they

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[2] Margination is the opposite of acculturation, which occurs when immigrants embrace their culture of origin to the exclusion of the host culture. Living in ethnic enclaves often facilitates it.

experience stress, and how they feel resilience can be enhanced, are areas that call for additional research in anthropology.

The theorizing of stress across disciplines and in anthropology

'Stress' is described by Korovkin and Stephenson (2010) as a "grand concept", a "key term in the master narrative of our times" (xxii). The introduction of the term 'stress' by W.B Cannon in the 1920's followed by the publication of Seyle's seminal work on stress in the 1950's led to a boom in stress research (Obrist and Buchi 2008). The topic of stress has been approached across many disciplines and the literature related to stress is diverse. 'Stress' has been explored in a number of contexts including: the biology of the stress response, the impacts of relational experiences on stress, diagnostic categories, cross-cultural interpretations of somatization and mental health in general (Vingerhoets and Marcelissen 1988; Korovkin and Stephenson 2010; Aneshensel, Rutter, and Lachenbruch 1991; Young 1980; Adelson 2008; Kirmayer and Young 1998; Young 1997).

Stress terminology has been used to describe subjective, individual experiences as well as those resulting from broader socio-cultural contexts. Many attempts have been made to objectify 'stress' as something measureable (Monroe 2008; Rudmin 2009; Aneshensel 1992). Although 'stress' is often 'simplistically summarized', it remains a largely ambiguous concept; a process, and an increasingly universal way

of describing social, physical, individual and/or collective reactions to or appraisals of change (Obrist and Buchi 2008; Korovkin and Stephenson 2010; Abbott 1990).

 In anthropology, 'stress' has been theorized in the context of the 'dominance of biomedicine from the 18th century onwards', (Foucault 1978; Young 1980) and as an emerging diagnostic category - specifically elaborated in analyses of the emergence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – where stress is discussed simultaneously as a symptom, an etiology and an ideology (Young 1997; Young 2007). In one of the first anthropological analyses of 'stress', Young (1980) emphasizes "while the facts about stress *are* scientific, they are also the product of certain historically determined factors- i.e. specific sets of social relations and theoretical knowledge-which account for their ideological character" (133). In other words, he suggests the meanings associated with stress terminology are derived from social, cultural and historical contexts, or discourse.

'Stress' has also been a focus in research related to somatic responses to distress or patterns of distress (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010; Kirmayer and Young 1998; So 2008) as well as narratives or 'idioms of distress' in various socio-cultural contexts (Nichter 2010; Nichter 1981; Keyes 2003; Whitley, Kirmayer, and Groleau 2006; Groleau 2004). Idioms of distress recognize "the need to analyze particular manifestations of distress in relation to personal and cultural meaning complexes" (Nichter, 1981:379) within the context of social relations and coexisting idioms of expression.

Although it is rarely specifically defined, 'stress' as a generalized concept and descriptor of experience, has also figured prominently in ethnographic works documenting the implications of structural violence, political unrest and social suffering (Farmer 2004; Biehl 2001; Scheper-Hughes 1993). Constructed simultaneously as a 'disease of adaptation', a bi-product of modernization, globalization, inequality and change, and a product of social relations, the frequent de-contextualization of stress in research has been criticized (Adelson 2008; Adelson 2005; Dressler 1991; Schoenberg et al. 2005; Appadurai 1996). Korovkin and Stephenson (2010) maintain that while 'stress' is often discussed as a concrete phenomenon it is, in reality, an explanatory principle. Yet, the popularized notion of stress as a generalized, negative force or outcome of pressure, anxiety or change, continues to be commonly referenced across disciplines.

The concept of 'stress' is invoked time and again at the level of the individual as an acting subject, as well as at the level of social and cultural formations. In a discussion of the history of stress research in sociology, Abbott (1991) suggests that the stress-symbol of our culture is "both ambiguous and ambivalent, serving a cultural function of defining difficult events precisely because it captures our own ambiguities and ambivalences about those events" (442).

'Stress' in the Context of the Navigating Multiple Worlds Research Project

In focusing on youth perspectives of stress, I demonstrate how the adoption of 'stress' as an explanatory framework functions in a number of ways in the lives of many immigrant youth. Framing stress as a narrative idiom, as an idiom of distress and as a discourse, as well as considering stress as an idiom of resilience, illustrates how narratives of 'stress' allow youth to share their experiences and talk about their way of being in the world. Moving from the conceptualization of 'stress as a negative force' to 'stress as an idiom of resilience' contributes to theorizing the relationship between stress, resilience and subjectivity. The following sections will clarify the value of theorizing stress as both an idiom and a discourse, providing a framework that I will use throughout this dissertation for the further exploration of the perspectives of immigrant youth.

Theorizing stress as an idiom of distress and as a discourse

Including both the language and practices that construct a topic, Foucault constructs discourse as "a system of representation, a group of statements that provide ways of talking about and of representing knowledge in a particular historical moment…" (Hall, 1997:72). Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language and since all social practices entail meaning, and meaning shapes what we do, all practices have a discursive aspect (Hall 1997). From a Foucauldian perspective, discourses always function in relation to power relations (McHoul and Grace 1995). Although more specific than the broad discourses of 'disciplines' often focused on by

Foucault (e.g. medicine, the natural science, crime and punishment, sexuality), defined in this way, 'stress' can be conceptualized as an evolving, historically situated discourse.

Foucault suggests that discourse produces the objects of knowledge, and that nothing that is meaningful exists outside of discourse (Foucault 1980). Discourse is about *where meaning comes from*. As such, framing 'stress' as a discourse addresses the previously mentioned concerns of some anthropologists relating to the de-contextualization of stress. It also allows for full consideration of the social and political contexts that make 'stress' a valid system of representation, in a particular temporal context.

Historically produced and enacted, discourses change over time. The discourse of stress has certainly changed over time, particularly evident in the spread and frequency of use of stress terminology and the normalization of stress as a feature of everyday life (Obrist and Buchi 2008; Korovkin and Stephenson 2010). Foucault also emphasizes the cultural as well as historical specificity of discourse (Foucault 1978; Foucault 1980). However, the discourse of 'stress' has now permeated many national and 'cultural' boundaries. It could be argued that stress has become a feature of a broader 'culture' of modernization and globalization, but focusing solely on stress as a discourse highlights other problematic assumptions.

Foucault emphasizes that it is the discourse itself, not the individual, that produces knowledge. Foucauldian theory of discourse is premised on the belief that changes of public ideas precede changes in private individuals (McHoul and Grace 1995). In the context of discourses of stress, this discounts the agentive aspects of expressing distress and the varying ways individuals can use the language of stress. Focusing solely on discourse limits the consideration of meaning and individual experience, without which any discussion of stress would be incomplete. In relation to its impact on expressions of subjectivity, considering stress purely as a discourse is clearly insufficient. The factors that influence the meaning of stress on both individual and societal levels must also be included. Therefore, considering stress as both a discourse and an idiom of distress creates space to further explore stress in the context of subjectivity.

If Foucault's discourse is understood as explaining *where meaning comes from*, idioms of distress elaborate on *what meaning is* (Nichter 1981; Nichter 2010). Idioms of distress are defined as "socially and culturally resonant means of experiencing and expressing distress in local worlds… They can communicate experiential states, on a trajectory from mildly stressful to the depths of suffering" (Nichter, 2010: 405). Idioms of distress respond to the need to analyze manifestations of distress in the context of personal and cultural meaning complexes (Nichter, 1981).

The concept of 'idioms of distress' emerged as a result of a concern with the "why this" rather than the 'whatness' of particular cultural modes of expressing distress (Nichter 2010). This is where idioms of distress become particularly relevant in the context of stress and subjectivity. Considering stress as an idiom of distress that is increasingly pervasive across cultural contexts acknowledges both the meaning of stress for individuals and the wider social context within which stress originates and is manifested. "Being attentive to idioms of distress does allow closer examination of interpersonal, social, political, economic and spiritual sources of distress, to appreciate tacit communication as well as paying attention to cultural dimensions of the illness experience" (Nichter 2010:242).

Just as there are limitations in conceptualizing stress solely in terms of discourse, it is also problematic to consider stress simply as an idiom of distress. Some have warned that 'idioms of distress' may reinforce the illusion of highly structured and conventional modes of expression of distress (Kirmayer and Young 1998) or may fall into a pattern of valuing meaning over the experience of sensations linked to emotional states (Lee, Kleinman, and Kleinman 2007). As well, idioms of distress encourage a focus on 'distress,' and ignore coping opportunities, also instrumental in discussions of stress and subjectivity. An 'idioms of distress' approach can also gloss over aspects of historical and cultural consciousness.

No single analytic framework can fully account for the inner lives of individuals and their inter-subjective relationships (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007). In their

discussion of the ways in which anthropology, as a discipline, has dealt with subjectivity, Biehl, Good and Kleinman (2007) suggest "anthropology's overemphasis on cultural representation has had the unfortunate, if unintended effect of downplaying the conceptual significance of lived experience" (14). They call for a more substantial conceptualization of cultural experience" in which the collective and the individual are intertwined, and run together" (14) and where power and meaning are intimately linked.

Stress and subjectivity

The association between stress and subjectivity in anthropology is not new. 'Anxieties' emerged as a central focus in Geertz's seminal discussions of subjectivity among the Balinese (Geertz 1972). His analyses focused on discourses of personhood and the rules of social etiquette that governed the social and cultural 'anxieties' of everyday life (Ortner 2005). Another example can be found in the multiple ethnographies focused on the diagnoses of 'nerves', 'nevra' or 'nervios' as a culturally bound or culturally interpreted syndrome (Lock 1990; Migliore 1993; Low 1989; Low 1985; Davis 1997). The implications of various diagnoses of 'nerves' vary significantly based on social and cultural context and local meaning complexes but share some commonalities, the most obvious being the role of some form of anxiety in their etiology and diagnosis. Although the various categorizations of 'nerves' are not equivalent to 'stress' as a general concept, many of the etiologies of nerves could be conceptualized as forms and expressions of 'stress' today.

Associated with anxieties that are most often tied directly to social context, structures of power and inequality, interpretations of 'nerves' have often focused on the impacts of stress on the subjectivity of the afflicted individuals. In their comparative analysis of 'nerves' in Newfoundland and in Norway, Davis and Joakimsen (1997) show how, "despite similarities in the symptomatology and metaphorical quality of nerves in each community, the local sociocultural context can shape and reflect social action in ways that effect the experience of nerves and the consequences for those who suffer from them in significantly different fashions" (370). Translating this finding to stress in general demonstrates how, despite the increasing popularity of stress terminology across sociocultural contexts, the expressions of subjectivity facilitated by stress language can vary. Discussions of stress, anxieties and conflict, reoccur in the literature related to the theorizing of subjectivity.

As a product of social relations, 'stress' and the ubiquitous use of 'stress' language can also be framed in terms of power relations and the inequalities of power that play out in the expression of subjectivity. In her discussion of subjectivity, Ortner (2005) focuses on the need to look at understanding subjectivity in relation to changing forms of power, especially the "subtle forms of power that saturate everyday life, through experiences of time, space and work" (46). The conflicts, tensions and pressure that result from these 'subtle forms of power' are more often than not referred to as various forms of anxiety or stress.

Allan Young's classic thesis on 'stress' (1980) underscores the ways in which the biomedical discourse of stress reflects and legitimizes existing social inequalities. Grounded in inequalities of power, he suggests that biomedical discourse removes the language of stress to the 'de-contextualized domain of the clinic' (Adelson 2008). In a study of the use of stress language among Cree women in a remote community, Adelson (2008) highlights the historical and social realities that "reflect and re-inscribe the unchangeable paths of inequality that are expressed in a rationale of 'stress'"(316). 'Stress' (as an idiom of distress and a discourse) has become one way in which individuals and communities are able to label, express and therefore normalize, the pressures, tensions and sources of distress (which are often the result of inequalities of power) that are encountered in everyday life.

Recognizing stress as a process and as a narrative tool and theorizing stress as both an idiom of distress (Nichter 1981, 2010) and as a discourse (Foucault, 1980), allows for exploration of the relationship between stress and subjectivity. Subjectivity provides the tools for "subjects to think through their circumstances and to feel through their contradictions, and in so doing to inwardly endure the experiences that would otherwise be outwardly unbearable" (Biehl, Good & Kleinman , 2007:14). As an expression of subjectivity, the label of stress has emerged as a way for acting subjects to cope with the changing world that surrounds them.

Subjectivity is culturally and emotionally complex, and this complexity is heightened by the 'ongoing work of reflexivity,' which involves the subject monitoring the relationship between the self and the world, and often reacting against a given set of circumstances (Ortner 2005). Experiences of 'stress' are tied to this reflexivity – something is only stressful if it is perceived as being so (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010). The concept of stress is imbued with a high degree of flexibility. Despite the considerable amount of effort spent in attempting to objectify, quantify and measure stress, it may be the ambiguity of stress that has facilitated its uptake as a concept and means of expression of subjectivity around the world.

The ambiguity, polyvalence and universality of 'stress'

Anthropology (along with other disciplines) has skirted around defining stress, while using stress terminology relatively freely in a variety of ways. It may be the purposeful ambiguity in stress language that makes it particularly, in Levi-Strauss's words, 'good to think with' in relation to theorizing subjectivity. In his re-visiting of the 'idioms of distress' concept, Nichter (2010) emphasizes "calling attention to a generalized state of distress may involve 'purposive ambiguity' that serves subtle and emergent ends" (403- notes). 'Stress' has become something of an 'empty signifier'. Empty signifiers are defined as "empty symbols which can mean anything simply because they mean nothing"(52) (Boyer 1986). As a result of its 'purposive ambiguity' stress, as an empty signifier, is able to take on any number of meanings.

With different meanings in different contexts, 'stress' can represent everything and nothing (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010). While Filipino youth may discuss the 'stress' they experience in navigating the conflicting expectations of their school and home lives (Wolf, 1997), a wall-street broker and an Italian peasant may simultaneously be lamenting their 'stressful' days (Korovkin and Stephenson, 2010). In each instance, the meanings and experiences invoked by the discussion of stress are very different. However, labeling something as 'stressful' has become a common way of expressing distress, tension, pressure, and how these factors can influence one's way of being.

Stress has become a household term (Korovkin and Stephenson, 2010, Obrist and Buchi 2008). Although "every culture has rules for translating signs to symptoms, for linking symptomatologies to etiologies and interventions, and for using evidence provided by the interventions to confirm translations and legitimize outcomes" (Young 1982), over the past decades the language of stress has become increasingly universal. What is it that has made 'stress' so common and how has it emerged as one of the most accessible and dominant expressions of distress? As a "'public symbolic form' that both expresses and shapes meaning for actors engaged in the ongoing flow of social life" (Ortner, 2005:36) 'stress' can be understood as serving an organizing purpose in relation to the expression of subjectivity.

Accessible 'stress' terminology is used by individuals to describe subjective experiences of 'stress' in ways that are diverse but can be comprehended at some

basic level by their wider social network. The widespread use of 'stress' as an idiom

of distress that is fairly free of stigma may help to normalize responses to stressful

or negative experiences (Obrist and Buchi, 2008; Young, 1980). Although such

widespread use of ambiguous 'stress' language runs a danger of becoming

meaningless, stress language persists, and grows because it is a useful concept. It is

flexible, and easily applied to a range of 'stressful' situations. As an 'empty signifier,'

stress has emerged as a flexible idiom of distress and a discourse, which is widely

circulated and may be particularly accessible to youth as they negotiate changing

local worlds.

The local worlds of acting subjects are rapidly changing. Eloquently explained by

Biehl, Good and Kleinman (2007):

> In many of the settings in which anthropologists now work, the vagaries of
> modern life are undoing and remaking people's lives in new and ominous
> ways… subjects…struggle with the possibilities and dangers of economic
> globalization, the threat of endless violence and insecurity, and the new
> infrastructures and forms of political domination and resistance that lie in
> the shadows of grand claims of democratization and reform(1).

The concept of 'stress' is able to take on local connotations in both individual and

societal contexts. In the context of rapid change, the ambiguity of 'stress' ceases to

be problematic. In a time that requires flexible options for self-organization and

modes of expression, the ambiguity of 'stress' has contributed to its emergence as an

accessible, dominant form of expression.

Stress as an idiom of resilience

Subjectivity does not exist unless it is organized (Ortner 2005). As a discourse and an idiom of distress (consisting of certain practices and modes of expression) the increasingly universal nature of 'stress' can be construed as serving 'organizing purposes'. However, while the majority of research continues to discuss stress as a negative force, or as an idiom of distress, stress can also result in positive outcomes. Moving to the consideration of stress as an idiom of resilience, Obrist and Buchi (2008) focus on how 'stress' organizes the potentially negative experiences of everyday life, providing a label and framework for action that facilitates the expression of subjectivity, and enhances the coping abilities of individuals.

In a study focused on meanings of health and resilience among immigrant adults, Obrist and Buchi (2008) demonstrate that 'migrants with resilient trajectories have dynamic and multidimensional understandings of health' (251). Moreover, they suggest that learning to interpret difficulties as 'stress' offers immigrants not only a framework from which to draw meaning, but also provides an agenda for action, contributing to feelings of belonging in their host country, and normalizing their otherwise 'stressful' experiences. They explain, "in a narrow sense the study participants associated the concept of stress with a faster lifestyle and higher levels of regulation in European countries. In a broader sense they used it as an idiom for often diffuse feelings and perceptions of ill-health, brought about by a broad range of difficulties…" (255) For these immigrants, 'stress' provided a useful frame for interpreting diffuse emotions, and served as an explanatory model for negative

aspects of modern life (Obrist and Buchi 2008). In a context of social change, interpreting experiences as 'stress' provided a normalized avenue for the expression of subjectivity, while increasing resilience.

Advancing this idea, the stress concept may serve simultaneously as an idiom of distress, an idiom of resilience and as an expression of subjectivity. This conceptualization of stress is particularly relevant in the context of understanding the experiences and meanings of stress for immigrant youth, as they engage in social processes of self-making. Throughout this dissertation, I emphasize the perspectives of immigrant youth, recognizing the agency of youth as they engage with changing social contexts and experiences, and cope with stress.

Beginning with a description of the impetus for this research, this chapter (Chapter 1) described the research questions and objectives that began the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, as well as defining key terms and concepts and introducing Victoria as the setting for our research. Following a brief introduction to cross-disciplinary literature related to immigrant youth and stress, and to the theorizing of stress in Anthropology specifically, a theoretical framework is presented that describes a multidimensional way of thinking about stress. Framing stress as an idiom of distress and a discourse, as an expression of subjectivity and as something that is at once ambiguous and increasingly universal, and ending by exploring the relationship between stress and resilience, provides the background necessary to fully consider the agency of immigrant youth as expressed in their discussions and

experiences of stress. In the final section of this chapter, l lay out the organization and structure of the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Organization of this dissertation

Participatory methods, and particularly methods that work to engage youth in research, is an area that is of particular interest to me. Taking a participatory approach was central to the research in that it allowed for youth to be involved in all stages of the process. Chapter 2 presents the methodology that structured the Navigating Multiple Worlds Research, and a phase-by-phase description of the research process. This chapter goes on to describe the research team and concludes with a description of the benefits and drawbacks of participatory research in principle, with a discussion of the efforts made to address these challenges in practice over the course of the Navigating Multiple Worlds projects.

Chapter 3 presents immigrant youth perspectives on what it is like to be an immigrant youth in Victoria. Part one of Chapter 3 draws upon the themes generated by the youth research team in the first phase of the analysis process, and provides an overview of the issues and concerns that were pertinent to the participants in the project. Part two then focuses specifically on stress, as the primary focus of the original research questions, and on the thematic foci that emerged from the secondary analysis of the data. Stress is discussed in terms of embodiment and physicality, spatial and temporal dimensions, and 'the little things' or the everyday stressors that affect the daily lives of youth from their perspective.

In part three of Chapter 3, I return to the idea of considering stress as both an idiom of distress and as a discourse. Highlighting underlying notions of balance and unbalance in discussions of stress and coping, I argue that the themes of expectations and balance emerge as key to the ways in which immigrant youth exercise their agency while navigating the challenges they can face in their host communities.

Chapter 4 returns to exploring the relationship between stress and subjectivity. It focuses on how the perceptions of youth, as they relate to their experiences of stress, are discussed in the context of the assumptions often made about immigrant youth in the available literature. I argue there is a need to move toward viewing youth identities as flexible and dynamic, and emphasizing the agency of youth as they engage in identity negotiations. Doing so draws attention to the relationships between identity, stress and subjectivity and the way youth express themselves and embody their ways of being in the world.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit, held near the end of the active research stage of our project, to showcase the work and the preliminary findings of our research. The process of the exhibit is presented, alongside reflections from the research team, the community audience and myself, as an engaging way to draw attention to youth voices. I emphasize the importance of creating spaces where youth can express themselves and draw attention to their experiences. The idea of 'thinking-spaces' in research creation is introduced and I

highlight the value of thinking-spaces in research with youth, in terms of creating spaces for participation rather than merely presentation.

Chapter 6 ties together the findings from the previous chapters to engage more fully with the idea of stress as an idiom of resilience. This chapter begins with a discussion of three key elements of our research that contributed to the distinctiveness of our findings: our ethnographic focus on stress, our focus on youth voices and our participatory methods. I suggest that it is the combination of these three elements which allowed us to move beyond the negative conceptualizations of stress and acculturative stress that dominate the literature related to immigrant youth and to consider stress as a narrative tool. The ability of immigrant youth to operate with high degrees of flexibility to 'navigate multiple worlds' successfully is highlighted. Emphasizing the 'flexibility' that is embedded in the navigation of contextual elements that influence the meanings given to 'stress' provides a new perspective on both the challenges and the successes of immigrant youth. Finally, I explore the mobilization of stress as an idiom of resilience, in the context of resistance to the constraints placed on the agency of youth and their ability to cope with stress.

In Chapter 7, I conclude this dissertation with a reflection on my role within the project and the influence of both the setting of the research and decisions made throughout our participatory process, on our findings. I reflect on things that I might choose to do differently if I were going to carry out another similar research project,

and discuss some of the challenges we encountered to inform recommendations for future work in anthropology focused on stress and with immigrant youth. After suggestions for future directions for research, the recommendations put together by the research team and drawn from our interview, focus group and reflection meetings, are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: Research methods and process

This chapter focuses on the methodological issues relevant to my research. As a participatory research endeavor, our process itself was instrumental to our outcomes and findings. An understanding of the research methods and processes used, as well as the efforts made to address the challenges of participatory methods, particularly when working with youth, contextualizes many of our findings.

Following a brief introduction to participatory research in anthropology and participatory research with youth, the overall research design for the Navigating Multiple Worlds project is presented in a phase-by-phase description. The discussion then moves to the research team, briefly presenting the individual researchers in both the core research team and the expanded photovoice team, as well as describing the process of the weekly meetings. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges that can occur in practice when working within participatory frameworks with youth. Highlighting some critical issues and assumptions that can influence participatory approaches, I describe the efforts made to address these challenges in the research design and process of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project.

Methodology

Anthropology and Participatory Research with Youth

Participatory research (PR) approaches share a similar goal in that "each is explicitly committed to conducting research that will benefit participants, either

through direct intervention or using the results to inform action for change" (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998:175). Since the 1960's, calls for a more engaged, socially and politically active anthropology have led to the acceptance and adoption of many of the principles and approaches of participatory research. This move sees anthropologists actively working for social change, taking on advocacy roles in the communities in which they work and moving towards collaborative partnership arrangements in research (Hemment 2007; Rappaport 2010; Singer 1993).

In research with youth, perspectives from the anthropology of childhood have also influenced this focus on partnership and collaboration. The anthropology of childhood has emphasized the importance of recognizing children and youth as social actors, and giving voice to children in research and policy development, as well as acknowledging the agency of children and youth (James and James 2001; Bucholtz 2002). The language of "participatory research with youth" is commonly invoked as a positive, well-intentioned approach to research. Focused on empowerment and action to support positive social change, participatory research has become increasingly popular, and because of its positive connotations is often unquestioned.

Describing the move towards the increased 'participation' of children in research and in society, Woodhead (2010) explains some of the challenges.

> Embracing child centered, child enabling and child empowering values is one
> thing, putting them into practice is quite another... it is encouraging that
> promoting 'children's participation has emerged as an explicit goal from so
> many rights based organizations. However, often lip service is paid to

participatory principles, but implementation is patchy, tokenistic and variable, particularly in different political and cultural contexts" (Woodhead 2010).

Recent research with youth advocates for participatory approaches, increasing the involvement of youth in research and emphasizing the agency of youth in negotiating multiple identities (Wolf 1997; Bucholtz 2002). It also calls for an increased focus on the perspectives of youth themselves (Bucholtz 2002; Bucholtz and Skapoulli 2010; Ni Laoire et al. 2010; Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010). However, applying the principles of PR in practice presents a number of challenges in any context and particularly in the context of research with youth. Challenges that are specific to the application of PR with youth, and with immigrant youth specifically, are elaborated later in this chapter.

Regardless of the good intentions of participatory approaches, and despite calls to recognize youth as 'beings' in their own right, conceptualizations of 'youth' as incomplete beings, 'under development' or in rehearsals for their 'full fledged' adult identities continue to dominate popular discourse (Bucholtz 2002). As a result, youth are typically marginalized or excluded from decision-making, even when the decisions concern matters that have consequences for the lives of youth; efforts were continuously made over the course of the project to address these challenges.

Research Design and Procedures

Involving youth in research processes can have many benefits. Delgado (2006) suggests these include: providing youth with a greater sense of control over their

lives; instilling important research skills and knowledge in youth that can serve them and their community positively in the future; providing the community with the perspective that youth are vital contributing members of the community; and counteracting pervasive views of youth that remain deficit-based (Delgado 2006). Focusing on the relationship between stress, resilience and subjectivity among immigrant youth, this research involved a participatory, mixed methods approach, with the design based on the participatory principles of community based research (Israel et al. 1998).

The research process centered on working with immigrant youth; that is, training a group of youth in research methods and then hiring those interested as research assistants to form the core research team; with myself acting as a facilitator for the research team. The role of facilitator involved scheduling and facilitating research meetings and coordinating the circulation of meeting notes and reminders, as well as handling the logistics of transportation and food for our meetings and associated events. In the research meetings, the research team discussed ideas and concerns, determined the directions the project would take, developed research questions, and decided as a group which methods they would use to gather perspectives from other immigrant youth. They also determined the training requirements they felt they needed to be able to comfortably use these methods.

The research process focused on gathering stories of the experiences of core research team members and the experiences of other immigrant youth in Victoria;

how they adjust to new environments, and what challenges they face. Feedback was also sought from the youth-researchers as well as other youth participants as to how, what and whom they access in terms of social support. These processes gathered youth perspectives on how the transition or adjustment of immigrant youth could be facilitated in the particular context of Victoria BC. The mixed methods design of the research project, which included semi structured interviews, focus groups, photovoice and participant observation, evolved over the course of the project. The research process was informed by continuous input from the youth-researchers.

Although the primary focus of the research was youth perspectives, after initial interviews were completed with other immigrant youth, the research team decided there was value in also interviewing service providers. The service provider interviews focused on perceived needs in the area of service delivery and programming for immigrant youth in the context of enhancing resilience. This second set of interviews also captured service provider perceptions of sources of stress and uses of stress terminology in describing the experiences of immigrant youth. As the focus of this dissertation is on the perspectives of immigrant youth, the content of the service provider interviews will not be discussed in detail here.

There were six phases to this research project including: 1. Consultation; 2. Training; 3. Youth-led research process (which included interviews, focus groups and photovoice); 4. Participant observation and reflection; 5. Data analysis and; 6.

Dissemination of primary findings. Several of these phases overlapped or ran concurrently. (See Appendix A for a bullet point list of the phases and their content).

Phase 1: Consultation

Prior to the beginning of the project, initial consultations were held with the directors of the youth programs at VIRCS, as well as with the Settlement Workers in Schools Programs to determine perceived needs in the area of immigrant youth and stress. These consultations also provided background information that was used to inform the research design and the recruitment of youth.

Recruitment and Consultation Process

Youth were recruited for the initial consultation phase of the research through VIRCS (Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society) Youth Night programming. Youth Night is primarily a social program, with the goal of providing immigrant youth with a space to socialize through a variety of facilitated sports, arts or social events. Participation in Youth Night changes on a weekly basis, but typically involves a group of 20-30 immigrant youth, between the ages of 13-18. In a Youth Night session, the youth leader provided an introduction to the research project. Youth were asked what type of training (research, interview, public speaking, community involvement etc.) they felt would be most beneficial to them, as well as gauging interest in the proposed research and collecting preliminary information on what they felt would be relevant foci for research related to stress. Consultation was also carried out in informal discussions with youth who had been previously

involved in theatre work through VIRCS. The initial consultations directly informed

the design of the research project. As part of the consultation process, the idea of the

research training workshops was introduced and any youth who were interested in

attending the research training workshops were invited to put their names forward.

Consent

All youth who were involved in the consultation phase were given information

about the project, its goals and the research process. In the initial consultation

phase, all participants were informed that their participation was completely

voluntary, would have no impact on their ability to access services at VIRCS or ICA

in the future and that they would be free to withdraw at any time. Throughout the

project in its entirety, the confidentiality of the data was maintained as no names

were used in the analysis. Pseudonyms have been used for all interview

participants, including the research team members who participated in interviews;

however, the youth involved in the research team and the photovoice project chose

to have their own names associated with their images and descriptions.

At every phase of the project, ongoing consent was obtained to ensure that no

concerns ever remained unaddressed. After we decided as a group to use Dedoose

(an online qualitative data analysis tool that stores data remotely – on servers based

in the US), re-consent, along with an explanation of the ethical issues associated

with US-based cloud storage was sought from all research team members and

interview participants. Re-consent was obtained from all but 3 interview

participants, interviews without re-consent were removed from the online storage

system, and ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Review Board at the University of Victoria.

Phase 2: Training Workshops

After the consultation phase was complete, a second round of recruitment information was circulated specifically for those youth interested in participating in the research training and in potentially becoming employed as research assistants on the project. The poster and invitation for the research workshop were sent out through VIRCS to all the participants from the STRIDES summer camp (a youth training camp facilitated by the VIRCS youth programs), as well as to youth who participate in their other programs. Recruitment information was also sent out to the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) workers, to ICA (the Intercultural Association), and to a variety of UVIC list serves. Posters were put up around Victoria and several youth night participants also distributed posters and flyers to friends and to school counselors. To include youth who were not already accessing support services related to immigration, youth participants recruited through VIRCS were encouraged to invite friends who may not already be affiliated with VIRCS.

Although the primary purpose of the workshop was training in research methods, it also provided a venue for initial data collection. The workshop covered interview and focus groups methods, as well as an introduction to photovoice. It also involved brainstorming and facilitation practice that focused on aspects of 'stress', resilience, and social supports for immigrant youth from the perspective of workshop

participants. The research methods workshop was held over a weekend in mid-October, with the workshop running from 11:00am - 4:30 pm each day. (Interests identified in the consultation phase informed the design of the workshop). As only some of the youth already knew each other, the workshop included icebreakers and activities with the objective of creating a sense of team among the youth involved (See Appendix B- Workshop Agenda and Plan).

Thirteen youth completed the workshop and received a certificate as well as a letter of recommendation, detailing their participation and skills gained. At the end of the session, youth who completed the workshop were invited to apply for paid research assistant positions. (The number of positions was initially flexible to ensure that positions would be available for all those who were interested and were willing to commit to the project). The research team's responsibilities included: the development of research questions, determining the research process, implementing research methods, assisting in the data analysis, and in determining the most useful ways to disseminate the knowledge gained. After the workshop, 10 youth expressed interest in being part of the research team.

Phase 3: Youth-Driven Research Process

In working to support the development of a research project with meaningful results, having youth involved in the research process as influential decision makers is of particular importance. This is especially true for our exploration of the experiences and meanings of stress and resilience for immigrant youth. For the

NMW research project, the importance of involving youth in the process is premised on the following beliefs, as outlined by Delgado (2006:19):

1. Youth have abilities that can be tapped into in developing and implementing research projects.

2. Youth bring a unique perspective or voice that facilitates the process of answering questions about youth.

3. Youth are vital stakeholders in the process and outcome of research.

4. The knowledge and skill youth acquire through active participation in research can transfer over to other aspects of their lives.

At the start of the project, the core research team, consisting first of 10 and then finally 6 youth research assistants and the research facilitator, met once a week to develop a research agreement for the project, the research plan, a timeline for the project, and interview questions. (The weekly research meeting process is discussed in more detail, along with a detailed description of the research team members, later in this chapter).

Interviews

The youth-led interviews (core research team members interviewing other immigrant youth) were an integral part of the research process. The value of youth-led interviews is well acknowledged in the field of youth research. "One of the best ways to build up an understanding of children's lives, their interests and needs, is to interview them... children too can have control over the processes and the issues covered...and children themselves can interview each other." (Delgado 2006:95).

The research questions and foci were developed by youth as part of the research process, focusing on the following: what meanings youth give to stress, how youth experience stress, what factors youth perceive as contributing to support or resilience, and where they see gaps in support or existing services. In the development of the interview questions, the research team was most interested in developing questions related to the experiences of immigrant youth during and after the process of immigration, as well as their current experiences in Victoria.

The interviews were designed to contribute to the theorizing of stress as a narrative idiom and to allow for the exploration of stress as an expression of subjectivity. The use of critical incident questions (Can you tell me about a time when…) within the semi-structured interviews supported the elicitation of in-depth detail related to the experiences of individuals (Schluter, Seaton, and Chaboyer 2008).

We developed the interview questions over a two-week period. Ideas were initially brainstormed, discussed and refined, after which questions went through several iterations. Once the interview questions were developed, the youth-researchers practiced the interview process using an interview matrix (alternating roles of interviewer, interviewee and note-taker) to ensure all youth were comfortable in the role of interviewer and that the questions flowed smoothly. As a group, the research team then thematically analysed the practice interviews (See Appendix C- Interview Questions).

The youth researchers recruited other immigrant youth for interviews from VIRCS and the SWIS program, as well as from various other sources. All youth who were interviewed received a $10 gift card of their choice, to either Starbucks or iTunes. In all, the youth researchers conducted 36 interviews focused on the experiences and perceptions of immigrant youth related to challenges, stress, coping, identity and belonging (See Appendix D for an anonymized list of all interviewees and their characteristics).

While the interviews were being carried out, the core research team continued to meet and carry on with analysis. After the first round of analysis, a number of themes emerged; as the analysis progressed, common themes, and any emerging recommendations related to alleviating stress, enhancing resilience or addressing existing gaps in services were recorded. (The process of analysis will be discussed in more detail as part of Phase 5.) At regular intervals throughout the project, the team provided feedback to VIRCS, creating opportunities for action as part of the research process.

Focus Groups

Many of the research team members were interested in developing facilitation skills and in conducting focus groups. The youth researchers received training in focus group facilitation as part of their workshop training, as well as additional practice in mock focus groups during the research meetings. It was decided that focus groups would be a valuable approach for sharing and confirming preliminary findings from the interviews with other immigrant youth. Focus group questions were developed

with the core research team and a mock focus group was held during a research meeting. Three guests were invited to participate (one immigrant youth from the UK and two education students who studied our project as part of a course on multicultural education). The research team took turns running through questions and taking on the role of facilitator, note-taker, or focus group participant (See Appendix E- Focus Group Questions).

We conducted three pizza-party focus groups, one with VIRCS youth night, one with VIRCS social night and one with the Enable theatre project. In recognition of some of the limitations of focus groups (the fact that some youth may not be comfortable speaking in a group and that some topics may not lend themselves to group discussion), all the youth involved were also given the opportunity to provide additional feedback in writing. The focus groups also served as opportunities to discuss and get feedback on findings from the interviews, present any changes that had already been made to existing services as a result of the interview findings, as well as providing an opportunity for group reflection and planning for further dissemination of the findings.

Photovoice

As part of the training workshops, the youth researchers were introduced to photovoice as a research method. Using participant-driven documentary photography to explore community issues, photovoice allows people to "identify, represent and enhance their community, with the goals of recording and reflecting people's personal outlook on their community" (Wang 1999:185). Photovoice has

been used in research with youth in the past with great success, as participants are able to express themselves eloquently through images (Strack 2004; Wang 1999; Wang 2001; Wilson 2007). "A process such as photovoice provides youth the opportunity to develop their personal and social identities and can be instrumental in building social competency" (Strack, 2004:49). Considering the importance of providing youth with opportunities to express their experiences, Strack (2004) goes on to elaborate the potential of photovoice in enhancing the positive potential, or in the context of this proposed research, the resilience of youth. "Youth should and need to be given the opportunity to build and confirm their abilities, to comment on their experiences and insights, and to develop a social morality for becoming a positive agent within their communities and society" (p.49), making this methodology particularly relevant for research on the experiences of youth with regards to stress.

The research team was very interested in the idea of incorporating photovoice into our research process. Once the focus groups were completed and thematically analysed, it was decided that a photovoice project would allow the team to further explore their experiences and express their ideas of stress and resilience with the goal of mounting an exhibit that would facilitate the dissemination of research findings to the wider community. The research team worked to develop nine photovoice questions, drawn from the themes that emerged from the interviews and focus groups, to use as the basis for the photovoice project. (See Appendix F-Photovoice Themes/Questions).

Photography Workshop[3]

The core team of youth researchers, as well as any other interested youth who became involved in the project as interviewees or who were particularly interested in photography and digital media, were invited to participate in a day-long photovoice workshop. Additional participants for the workshop were recruited through posters, word of mouth and through VIRCS. Those who completed the workshop were invited to participate in a photovoice exercise aimed at collecting additional visual information related to the stressors in the lives of immigrant youth. This method also facilitated discussions of the contextual factors that enhance support or foster resilience.

The day-long photovoice workshop included a presentation on the photovoice method and the ethics of photography, given by myself, as well as guest-presentations from two local photographers. The two photographers, Jesse Moore and Barry Herring, shared some of their work with the group and demonstrated some of the technical aspects of photography; for example, how to use light, image composition, and how to capture movement. The afternoon was spent outside in a hands-on photography exercise, the majority of the youth having brought their own

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[3] It is important to note that many of the phases that comprised the research process overlapped and that the cyclical nature of the reflection and action embedded in the development and carrying out of our process means that although they are consecutively numbered, the phases don't necessarily follow a clear timeline. In appendix A (an outline of the phases of the research process) the photovoice workshop was included under Phase 2: Training. However, for ease of reading and in recognition of the time gap between the initial research methods workshop in Phase 2 and this second workshop, a description of the photovoice workshop has been included here as part of the photovoice process within Phase 3.

cameras and basic digital cameras having been provided to those who had not. All of the additional youth who participated in the photography workshop chose to become part of the photovoice research team and continue in the project. (See Appendix G- Photovoice Workshop Plan).

The Photovoice Process

After the workshop, the combined photovoice research team (the 6 members of the core research team with the additional 5 members recruited from the photography workshop) took the nine questions developed by the core research team and went out in their communities to take pictures. The photovoice team met in the time previously scheduled for meetings of the core research team to present images and descriptions of images to the each other and to reflect on the photographs they were producing. The photovoice images were analysed alongside the interview data in the second level of data analysis, described further in the data analysis section below. The team decided that they wanted to share their photovoice work with others, and worked to put together a photo book with all of their images and written descriptions, organized by theme. They also selected their favorite images to mount as part of the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit, held at the Xchanges Gallery over the weekend of May 31st -June 2nd, 2012.

Phase 4: Reflection and Participant Observation

When linked to well-structured community participation in research, participant observation "has the potential to be a vehicle for alternative expressions and

interpretations of reality, and at the same time, allow for an analysis of the context"
(Mullings and Wali 2001). This analysis of context is essential to understanding the
meanings and experiences of stress for immigrant youth. As part of the research
process, I also carried out participant observation as a volunteer with youth night at
VIRCS, as well as continually reflecting on my own participation in the research
process with the research team.

The youth involved in the core research team also kept an intermittent journal of
their reflections on our process. Recognizing that some youth may be more
comfortable reflecting in a language other than English, or using visual or arts-based
methods, reflections of any form were encouraged. While the majority of
participants chose to write standard journal responses to reflection questions posed
during the research meetings, one participant chose to write poetry and another
created visual drawings and doodle-collages of reflections.

Phase 5: Analysis of Data

As described in the sections above, data analysis was an ongoing process. Weekly
meetings of the core research team included time for data analysis as a group, and
the research team also analysed some data on their own, with everyone working
with the data through the Dedoose qualitative data analysis platform. The Dedoose
program allows multiple participants to analyse data simultaneously, tags coded
material with the name of the person doing the analysis and has built in tests to
assess inter-rater reliability, all of which we utilized. The team discussed any themes

that emerged in the initial analysis phase, and all materials were analysed by at least two research team members to ensure reliability.

All interviews and focus groups were transcribed, and then analyzed thematically by the research team. Stages of analysis included the following: after developing the analysis skills of the team through the training workshops and through some group analysis, each research team member was assigned a particular number of transcripts to analyse individually. Basic first level themes were developed according to the procedures described by Van Manen and Kvale (Van Manen 1990; Kvale 1996). The analysis process included a process of condensation (abridging ideas into shorter formulations), categorization and narrative structuring (organizing the data into temporal or social organization), interpretation and generation of meaning (Kvale 1996).

Over a series of meetings, the research team engaged in facilitated discussions to validate and group basic themes into clusters of similar issues, and broader themes that add meaning and indicate significance, creating valid knowledge statements by debating conflicting knowledge claims in dialogue (Kvale 1996). This also allowed for the meaning of various themes to be clarified, and these themes were used to develop the coding structure that was then uploaded into the Dedoose platform along with our interview transcripts. The results of the first set of analysis were

presented in the focus groups (elaborated in phase 3) to gather feedback as to the

accuracy of the findings from the perspective of other youth[4].

Chapter 3 will describe youth perspectives, organized by theme where possible. It is

important to note that many themes overlapped and cannot really be considered as

separate from the larger context and that many of the interview excerpts and

images presented in chapter 3 could fit into a number of thematic categories. Due to

the overlap in some themes, several themes have been grouped together and the

larger theme of 'challenges' has been laid out without subtheme headings, although

the discussion within this section is organized largely by subthemes. Some of the

images from the photovoice stage of the project are also included in Chapters 3 and

4 to illustrate youth perspectives and support the thematic analysis.

Initially, individual photographers presented their photovoice images to the team

for discussion and analysis. Favorite images were then selected by the group,

organized by research question or theme, and mounted in the exhibit. The images

were also analysed thematically by myself in the second round of analysis

(described below), grouped in with the interviews and analysed alongside the

descriptive text that accompanied them.   The visual content of the images was not

analysed independently and no attempts were made to quantify the content of the

[4] As previously noted, service provider interviews were also conducted as part of
the process, and were thematically analysed using the same categories as the youth
interviews. However, as the primary research questions for this project focused on
youth perspectives, I made the decision to focus this dissertation solely on the
feedback from immigrant youth participants.

images (e.g. number of nature images) or to look at the structure of the images (use of light/color etc.). The images were only analysed with the text that was written by the youth researchers to describe their content and context as I felt that any further content analysis of the individual images would detract from my desired focus on youth perspectives.

Upon completion of the youth-involved research, I carried out a second level of data analysis. Rather than having a thematic focus, this second level analysis more specifically reviewed the interview, focus group and photovoice material to explore contextual relationships between stress and resilience, as well as focusing on the ways youth were expressing their subjectivity and talking about their way of being in and feeling through the world.

Phase 6: Dissemination of Research Results

While I was interested in exploring the relationships that exist between stress, resilience and expressions of subjectivity among immigrant youth, the primary goal of the youth-led research was to determine how some of the stressors in the lives of immigrant youth could be alleviated. In recognition of this, the research process was very solutions-focused, with the research findings disseminated in a number of ways as they were generated, so that the results were accessible to the community. Dissemination was an ongoing process, with findings relayed back to VIRCS after each stage of analysis. We also shared our findings through presentations, through public discussions, through the creation and distribution of a photo book and

primarily through the photovoice exhibit. The exhibit also highlighted the research process and recommendations, mostly related to the improvement of services and addressing gaps in support that were identified by participants throughout the process. (I will return to a more detailed discussion of the exhibit process in Chapter 5).

The research team also created a number of community resources, designed to address several challenges faced by immigrant youth that were described as primary sources of stress. The team recognized that there was a lack of translated materials related to the transit system in Victoria, as well as no translated materials explaining the blue box recycling program. In schools, there were no translated materials to explain to newcomer students how the school system worked, what the expectations of the school were, and how the block system worked. All materials traditionally provided to students, for example school agendas, are in English. Resources were developed with the research team, and in the case of the school agendas, with an ESL class at a local high school; all of which will be disseminated through VIRCS and shared with all departments who may be interested in assisting with further dissemination of materials.

Dissemination of the results from the secondary analysis of the data, which are focused more specifically on the relationships between stress, resilience and expressions of subjectivity among immigrant youth in Victoria, is ongoing and occurs primarily through presentations and publications.

The Research Team

Initially, 10 participants formed the core research team. Three of the original participants left the group fairly quickly: one realized they did not have the time needed for the project and one had to move to Vancouver for work. Another team member had to return home to Colombia due to family issues. A few months into the project, another participant left the project after starting a new program in school. Participants who left the team after completing interviews were paid partial honorariums.

This left six youth who formed the core research team, meeting for 2.5 hours a week for reflection, training and planning meetings from October to June, as well as carrying out the research. For the photovoice phase of the project, an additional five participants joined the research team.

The Core Research Team

Paulina: Paulina worked for VIRCS and as a youth immigrant herself volunteered to be involved in the project as a full participant. Her involvement proved beneficial as she had pre-existing relationships with many of the immigrant youth who access VIRCS services, ultimately facilitating in the recruitment of interview participants. Paulina is in her late 20s and is a second-generation Polish-Canadian. She spent much of her youth in Bermuda, and immigrated to Canada (indirectly via South Korea where she had been teaching for a year) two years ago after her father got a job in Victoria and her parents moved to Victoria from Bermuda.

Sinney: Sinney is the youngest participant in the core research team. She was 17 when she joined the research team and graduated from Reynolds Secondary School over the course of her involvement in the project. I also worked with Sinney in the theatre project. She immigrated to Canada with her family from China when she was a toddler. Her parents have now returned to live in China and she lives in Victoria with her younger sister and her grandparents. Last fall she started at UVIC.

Tamara: Tamara was 19 when she started in the project and is a second-generation immigrant from Iraq. Although she was born in Canada, she moved with her family back to Saudi Arabia when she was very young, and then returned to Canada at the age of 12. She identifies herself as Iraqi–Canadian and is currently a third-year student at UVIC.

Isabela: Isabela immigrated with her parents from Brazil five and a half years ago, and was 18 when she joined the project. Of the group she is perhaps the most interested in journalism and photojournalism. Isabela was applying to journalism programs over the course of the project and is now back in Victoria after spending a year in Montreal, where she began her BA in journalism.

Han-Lin: Han-Lin (Harry) is 24 and immigrated to Canada with his parents several years ago. Harry's mother works at VIRCS and encouraged him to join the project. During the research process, Harry was studying engineering at Camosun College; he has since graduated and is particularly interested in engineering and design.

Estuardo: I first met Estuardo in the theatre project two years ago. Estuardo was 18 at the start of our project and is a second-generation immigrant with parents from Chile and Guatemala. He is now attending college. He was born in Toronto and moved to Victoria in his early teens, often referring to this transition when asked questions related to immigration.

The additional members who joined to form the Photovoice Research Team

Sebastian: Sebastian was 22 at the initiation of the project and is Estuardo's older brother. He was born in Chile and immigrated with his parents to Toronto when he was several months old. He grew up in Toronto and moved here about 8 years ago with his family. Sebastian is very proficient with computers and design, and designed the postcard that was used to advertise the exhibit.

Jameela: Jameela was 18 at the start of our project, and defines herself as Canadian, or Canadian-Egyptian, depending on the context in which she is identifying herself. Jameela was born in Canada but moved to Egypt with her mother and Egyptian stepfather when she was 6, immigrating back to Canada when she was 14. I met Jameela initially through the theatre project, where she participated while wearing a full hijab. She now no longer wears the hijab, has come out to her friends and family, and graduated from Victoria High School over the course of the project. She is currently working to become a hair stylist.

Julia: Julia was 18 when the NMW research began, and immigrated from the Philippines with her mother and siblings four years ago to join her father who had

arrived in Victoria several years ahead of the rest of the family. Julia is a musician

and over the course of the project enrolled in the nursing program at Camosun

College.

Elisangela: Elisangela was 30 when she joined the team, and arrived in Victoria

from Brazil with her husband and 2-year-old son when she was 19. She has since

separated from her husband and works at the Silk Road Tea Shop. She is very

interested in photography and connected to the group through Isabela. They work

together and are good friends.

Ricardo: Ricardo is Elisangela's son and was 13 at the onset of the research project.

Ricardo and Elisangela arrived in Victoria from Brazil when he was 2 years old.

Ricardo has a very close relationship with his mother. He was in grade eight at the

time of the photovoice project and is passionate about photography and

skateboarding.

Research Meetings

We decided as a group when and where we would like to meet, with the

understanding that weekly meetings were expected. The group chose to have our

meetings on Sunday evenings from 5:00-7:30. Despite being a challenging time for

some, with participants working and/or in school, this was the only time that

everyone could commit to being available. Given the options of meeting at VIRCS,

UVIC, or my house, the team decided that they would prefer to meet on campus. The

majority of the research meetings were held at UVIC, with additional meetings held at my house and at the XChanges Gallery space as the exhibit drew near.

Facebook and email were key in communications with the research team. As particular events drew near, such as focus groups, workshops, off site meetings and the exhibit, Facebook group messages became pivotal to keeping in touch. I sent out weekly email updates and notes describing anything that we covered in the research meetings, along with tasks for the following week, as well as weekly meeting reminder emails with agendas detailing what we would be focusing on in the next meeting. In every email and in the face-to-face meetings, I worked to encourage brainstorming of new ideas to try to engage the team in the design and development of the research project. At the end of each research meeting we would go over the plan for the week and set the agenda for our next meeting. Although I tried repeatedly to step back from this process, in the interest of really allowing the youth research team to be actively involved in taking the lead in decision-making, this proved challenging. Although the team was very engaged, they often preferred to have me suggest possible directions and then make choices as to how we would proceed. This is often a challenge in participatory work. The following section will highlight several key issues that need to be taken into consideration when working in participatory paradigms.

Negotiating the Benefits and Pitfalls of Participatory Research (PR) with Youth: Challenges in Principle

Participatory Research (PR) aims to empower people through the construction of their own knowledge, in a process of action and reflection or 'conscientization', a term first coined by Paulo Freire in the 1960's (Freire 1972). Conscientization is at the heart of Freire's pedagogy of liberation, and connotes conscience and consciousness, 'capturing the cognitive and normative processes that constitute reflective knowledge' (Freire and Freire 2004; Freire 1972). PR is built on the belief that through access to knowledge and participation in its production, use and dissemination, actors can positively influence their lives, and can "affect the boundaries and indeed the conceptualization of the possible"(Gaventa and Cornwall 2008).

The principles of PR are presented in a number of ways in the literature. For the purposes of this discussion, the principles are summarized as follows (adapted from Israel, Shultz and Parker, 1998 and Gaventa and Cornwall 2001).

Participatory Research:

1. Recognizes that knowledge is power; those who are directly affected must participate in the research process;

2. Recognizes the community as a unit of identity (although this is often only explicitly stated in the context of Community Based Research, most PR approaches attempt to identify and or strengthen a sense of community through collective engagement);

3. Builds on strengths and resources within the community;

4. Facilitates collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research;

5. Integrates knowledge and action for the mutual benefit of all partners;

6. Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social

   inequalities- involves explicit attention to the knowledge of community

   members and an emphasis on sharing information, decision making power,

   resources and support among members of the partnership;

7. Involves a cyclical and iterative process in all stages of the research, (includes

   establishment of mechanisms for sustainability); and,

8. Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners involved, in a

   language that is respectful and where ownership of knowledge is

   acknowledged.

Applying the principles of PR in practice presents a number of challenges in any

context. Challenges that are specific to the application of PR with youth relate

particularly to the following principles, as listed above. These include: assumptions

related to the construction of the category of 'youth' as a unit of identity (#2),

questions related to the 'mutual benefit' of research partners, when those partners

are youth (#5), and challenges related to sharing knowledge, power and specifically

decision-making power with youth (#6).

The cyclical, iterative process of PR with youth (as presented in principle #7) is also

framed by a temporal dimension that does not usually figure into the definition of

'communities' that are engaged in PR. It is widely acknowledged that one of the

principle challenges of PR in any context is the amount of time that is needed to

develop relationships, build collaborative partnerships and carry out the iterative

cycles of action and reflection that are necessary (Cahill 2007; McHugh and

Kowalski 2009; Powers and Tiffany 2006). In PR with youth, this challenge is

compounded by several factors. First, research with youth is also often carried out

through schools or organizations that operate within specific timelines that can be

limiting as far as planning and carrying out PR projects. Second, the category of

'youth' itself is temporally defined. As youth age, they eventually move outside the

category of 'youth'. This can make PR with youth particularly challenging in terms of

sustainability (#7).

The category of 'youth' itself is problematic. Often vaguely defined in terms of age,

'youth' is widely conceptualized as a time of transition, where individuals navigate

and negotiate multiple identities in their development to adulthood. Deeply

engrained and often hierarchical relations of power between youth and adults can

also make the shared-decision making that is integral to PR processes challenging.

In this context, the question of mutual benefit to all partners involved in PR

processes also emerges as an area of contention.

Knowledge and power are intimately linked. The identity of and category of 'youth',

the challenge of mutual benefit to all involved in research, and issues surrounding

information sharing and shared decision making can all be related to circumstances

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influencing the distribution of knowledge and power. Relations of power, engrained in hierarchies of knowledge and of social relations, underlie many of the challenges of PR with youth.

If power is seen positively, as the ability or capacity to act, then power emerges as a variable, rather than a 'zero sum game', where a limited amount of power exists and power can only be gained by taking it away from someone else (Hill et al. 2004). Elaborated by Hill et al. (2004), "This means that power becomes something that is diffused throughout society, and generated in such a way that the benefits and costs may be shared by many different actors" (89). From this perspective, what matters most is not who has power, but how power operates.

Framing PR as an operation of power allows for focus on the potential of PR with youth to become a tool for 'subject-formation' and the ways in which "participation" may operate as a form of power, control and surveillance. This perspective also provides insights into the positive potential of the emergence of new forms of knowledge/power accessible particularly to youth (e.g. social media tools, technology). Too often, the positive intentions and potential of PR mean that the intricacies of power in participatory research with youth are overlooked. Conceptualizing PR as an operation of power addresses this oversight, and highlights the particular importance of paying attention to relations of power in PR with youth.

Working Through Challenges in Practice: the Navigating Multiple Worlds Project

I did not begin the Navigating Multiple Worlds project thinking of participatory research as an operation of power, but rather with an idealistic view of participatory approaches that I believe is shared by many who engage in participatory research. I believed that starting from a community-based approach had enormous potential to lead to positive outcomes; for example, in terms of research objectives, but also in a wider sense in terms of capacity building for the individuals engaged in the research and in terms of the sustainability of community relationships and outcomes. I still feel very strongly that it is essential to engage and involve communities in research processes and that the benefits of participatory approaches far outweigh the challenges. However, faced with the challenges of working in a participatory paradigm, and particularly in the context of working in participatory ways with youth, thinking through participatory research as an operation of power clarified areas of contention and allowed me to work though the challenges in ways that I hope addressed or at least acknowledged them.

Although we worked collaboratively throughout the research process, the challenges associated with moving from merely talking about participatory approaches and engagement to shared decision-making remained a challenge. Despite my best efforts, there were many times when the team looked to me to make final decisions. The wide age range of the research team members (13-30) presented some challenges, although not as many as anticipated. Although I had

initially been concerned that younger members of the team might not be ready to fully engage in the project, and may not be comfortable taking on leadership roles, the younger members of the team were just as engaged in discussion and in the development of the process as the older members. However, the negotiation of time and expectations was challenging. Several of the research team members were still in high school, others were in college or university, some participants were working full time and others were juggling school and part-time work.

The engrained nature of hierarchical power-relations is a challenge that is particularly relevant to the context of working with immigrant youth. Over the course of our research, many of the youth themselves described values concerning 'respecting their elders', which extended to concerns related to voicing opinions to teachers, a strong desire to adhere to their parents' wishes, and navigating expectations to conform to culturally defined gender roles. The research team felt that many of these values were of greater importance to immigrant youth than to their non-immigrant peers. Although I repeatedly emphasized the non-hierarchical nature of our team and my role as a facilitator (but not a leader), these engrained values might also have affected, despite my best efforts, my ability engage all members of the research team in shared decision-making

A very practical challenge, one that I was expecting but perhaps had not fully considered, was the varying levels of English within the research team and particularly among interview participants. The majority of the research team

members were fluent with a good grasp of spoken and written English. (Several of the team members were newer English speakers but, once the team began working, their comfort levels seemed to increase and language barriers dissipated.) Some of the interview participants had significantly lower levels of English and this occasionally led to comprehension difficulties with the interview questions. While the majority of the research team members became adept at explaining questions and were patient with the slower responses of newer English speakers, several of the team members, particularly those who were newer to the English language themselves, found conducting these interviews challenging. Sometimes questions were skipped and probing questions were limited, resulting in variable quality of the interview data.

I had to accept early on that by not conducting the interviews myself, I had little control over the interview data we would gather. By running practice interviews with the team and going over transcripts in research meetings to discuss how questions could be clarified, I tried to ensure that team members were well prepared for interviewing. As a group, we also went through all the early transcripts, focusing on the use of probes and prompts to make sure that the data we were collecting was as rich as possible. While there were several team members who really enjoyed the process of conducting interviews, and were able to hone their interview skills over the course of the project, there is no doubt that interviewing was more challenging for team members with lower levels of English.

As the focus of the research was somewhat pre-determined, I was initially concerned that this was, in a way, detracting from the participatory nature of the project. In a team meeting at the beginning of the project (that was particularly stressful for me!) we discussed the proposed focus of the research, and I asked the group if they thought the topic of stress was of interest and relevant to the experiences of immigrant youth. As I was committed to working within a framework that was as participatory as possible, I had to consider what we would do if there was no consensus within the group regarding a focus on stress. I decided I was prepared to change our focus completely, as long as the project could remain health-focused in some way. To my relief, the group agreed that stress and the challenges facing immigrant youth were areas that warranted further exploration. I am sure, however, that my suggestion of the focus influenced the group's agreement.

Particularly within the context of dissertation research, I think it is almost impossible to carry out a research project that is completely participatory from start to finish. I came to terms with the idea of working in a way that adhered as much as possible to the principles of PR.

Taking a participatory approach to the development of interview and focus group questions also influenced our data collection in a number of ways. The research team was much more interested in the experiences of immigrant youth during their processes of immigration than in exploring the concept of stress in particular. Sharing the responsibility for the development of the interview and focus group

questions with the team we came up with a set of questions that were very different than the questions I would have come up with on my own. This was a strength, as well as a challenge in the process. The original draft interview guide contained no references to 'stress' in particular. I was initially hoping that discussion of stress would arise organically. While stress terminology was used by youth in some of these initial interviews, it became apparent that more focus was needed on the concept of stress in particular, and we added a set of questions that directly referenced stress.

Flexibility is key in any participatory process, and was certainly paramount at all stages of the NMW project. While we collaboratively developed group guidelines and expectations in terms of time commitment and how we were going to work together at the start of the project, it became essential as we progressed to build on individual interests and strengths. This was another source of challenges as well as strengths in the process. In the beginning, I envisioned equal participation from all research team members throughout the project. It quickly became apparent that while all team members were committed to attending our meetings and completing whatever 'homework' we decided on each week, some people were more motivated by certain aspects of the project than others. For example, Paulina and Estuardo grew to really enjoy interviewing. Between the two of them, they conducted more than 13 interviews. Harry, for whom English was a newer language and who describes himself as very shy, found interviewing challenging and conducted only two. However, Harry was passionate about the photography and digital design

aspects of the project, and spent hours outside of meeting times editing pictures, designing posters and publicity and organizing printing for the photovoice exhibit.

Reflecting on the principle of building on strengths and promoting co-learning and an empowering process, I quickly realized that while I had one idea about what kinds of learning supported particular forms of capacity building for the team (e.g. interview, analysis and facilitation skills) it quickly became evident that the best way to keep the group engaged was to recognize individual interests and whenever possible, develop tasks related to certain skill sets. Over the course of the project, I repeatedly encouraged the research team members to identify particular interests so that we could do our best to incorporate additional training or opportunities into the process. For example, we received a darkroom tour, with the offer of additional training for anyone who was interested in film-based photography; Paulina collaborated with an editor from the Ring newspaper to put together a piece on the project; Isabela took a lead role in mounting the exhibit at the XChanges Gallery; and Sinney continues to work with her former ESL teacher to develop translated materials for ESL students at Reynolds Secondary School.

A challenge that quickly emerged for me stemmed from my role as the research facilitator or coordinator. As I had initiated the project and had a clear timeline and budget to work within, I needed to balance my desire to let the youth take on as many leadership roles as possible, and to not influence the direction of the project too much, with the practicalities of timelines and needing to meet expectations.

While several members of the research team had experience taking on leadership

roles in a variety of contexts, despite my best efforts to share decision-making, I was

continuously looked to as the leader of the project. Both the youth research team

and the wider community (VIRCS, research participants and the public who engaged

with the exhibit) reinforced this.

The leadership role emerged from the need to have an individual available to

answer questions and oversee details to ensure that the project was running

smoothly (and in alignment with ethical guidelines, my name was on all the consent

forms). I questioned whether or not this detracted from the participatory nature of

the project, but came to the conclusion that I was comfortable working in a way that

was as participatory as possible, as it was not realistic to adhere to all aspects of all

principles of participatory work in all contexts.

Considering PR as an operation of power, it became a question of sharing power as

much as possible, moving decision making power into the hands of the research

team and engaging them throughout the process in whatever way would be of

greatest benefit to them, both from my perspective and most importantly, from

theirs. Despite its challenges, working through PR in this way resulted in a number

of benefits. Once the research team members understood that, not only was the

Navigating Multiple Worlds Project something that they were actively involved in

shaping as a team, but that it also held opportunities for individuals to explore areas

that were of particular interest to them, the commitment of the team increased.

Team members were also more and more ready to step out of their comfort zones, to facilitate focus groups or to act as spokespersons to be interviewed by media once they acknowledged their ownership of the process.

Isabela, who was applying to journalism programs during the research process, was able to add to her portfolio transcripts from interviews, articles and poetry she wrote for the project. Estuardo discussed using his new facilitation skills in a workshop he led in one of his classes. Paulina and Sinney both focused on their roles in the NMW project in scholarship applications. Jameela, Elisangela and Ricardo all immersed themselves in photography and continued to develop their photography skills after the project ended. During the analysis of the interviews and the mounting of the exhibit, the team was able to reflect on their findings, and discuss the importance of sharing their experiences with the wider community to increase understanding.

The capacity building emanating from the project exceeded the interview and research skills I had originally thought of as the principle benefits for those involved in the research team. The process of identifying interests and promoting the development of related skills allowed us to move the idea of 'participation' beyond a scripted format that could be construed as a form of control or subject formation. Instead, continuous reflection related to capacity building, interests, findings and the intricacies of power relations with youth helped to ensure that other, newer forms of knowledge and power, accessible particularly to youth (e.g. new

technologies) were included in our process. In addition to the benefits referred to earlier of using Facebook as a means of communication, the team also started a "Navigating Multiple Worlds" Facebook page, for which they all held administrator privileges. This page became a key publicity tool for the exhibit and was also a space where the youth could share their ideas and their images.

The reflection that was encouraged over the course of the project also resulted in positive outcomes for many of the research team participants. As individuals reflected on their experiences and their learning, many emphasized the value of realizing that other immigrant youth shared many aspects of their experiences. Team members took pride in the notion that what we were doing as a group would have positive impacts on the community as a whole.

The follow up piece of the project, which involves sharing materials (translated versions of school agendas, recycling guidelines and bus guides) with the community in ways that are accessible, is ongoing and challenging. However, many members of the research team have expressed interest in continued involvement in disseminating our materials. Tamara helped me to mount a mini-exhibit in UVIC's Cornett building and presented our research as part of IdeaFest 2013, also at UVIC. Isabela and Sinney have stayed in touch and are helping with ongoing translations. Paulina provided feedback on an early draft of this dissertation.

The added value of a participatory approach in addressing and maintaining

interests, in supporting sustained change, even if it is small scale, and in the

flexibility it supports in terms of individualized as well as group capacity building,

makes working within participatory paradigms well worth the effort. During the

Navigating Multiple Worlds project it became evident that, as in any research that

attempts to follow the principles of PR, the process of the research was, in itself,

possibly the most important outcome for the youth involved, both in terms of

capacity building but also in terms of continually working to recognize their

knowledge and power and continually re-investing themselves in the project and its

various stages.

In the following Chapter, I discuss the themes and subthemes that emerged over the

course of our participatory research processes, and introduce youth experiences

and perspectives related to stress and how stress language is used in different

contexts.

CHAPTER THREE: The Perspectives of Immigrant youth: Being an immigrant youth in Victoria

> So do you think that as an immigrant youth, the expectations placed on you are different than those [of your] Canadian counterparts?
>
> Yes. It's really different. My father... Uh, expects me and my other sibling to fit in perfectly, like act... Fully act like a Canadian. And I know this is impossible... I had been living my. Um... 16 years in Korea, and its really hard change my life right the way... In these short years. And I think that is the difference... And different stress...
>
> - Sherrie, 17, Korea

Immigrant youth who arrive in Victoria can face a multitude of challenges, stemming from a range of expectations both internal and external, influenced by the context of their immigration processes, and shaped by individual histories, experiences, personalities and social connections. Paulina and Isabela, two members of the research team, wrote an article together with the support of the editor from The Ring, UVIC 's monthly newspaper, describing what the research team was doing with the project and advertising the Navigating Multiple Worlds exhibit. Using the metaphor of an alien (as in extra-terrestrial) experience, the original introduction to the article described the spatial separation, loneliness, and 'newness' that can confront immigrant youth when they arrive in their host country:

> Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be an immigrant? Imagine you come from a different planet. Your planet is busy and bustling with people. It is loud and buzzing with energy. Your family, friends and neighbours might as well move in with you (if they don't live with you already), seeing as they are always around and poking in your business. You don't notice the little details around you like street signs or what's for sale at the grocery store; none of it is uncharted territory. The hum of a

stranger's conversation doesn't distract, as you have heard this sound before. It is all-familiar. Then, one day, you find out that you are moving to a new planet and suddenly, you find yourself in a completely new environment and a new role: you are a newcomer to Victoria, a city that is entirely foreign to you, as you are to it. What would you think?

- Paulina Jarmula and Isabela Sasaki, Edited version published in The Ring, UVIC, April 2012.

Similar sentiments to these were expressed by many of our participants and are presented in various ways in this chapter. This chapter, focused on youth perspectives of their immigration experience, is divided into three parts. Part one draws upon the high-level themes generated by the youth research team in the first phase of the analysis process. It provides an overview of the issues and concerns that were pertinent to the participants in the project, bringing into view how youth are talking about the influence of immigration and what 'being an immigrant youth' means in their lives. The themes generated by the research team and presented in part one, include: challenges, first week experiences, learning a new way of life, motivations for immigration, choice in immigration process, relationships, resilience, self perception and experiences, and supports and services. Stress emerged as a general theme, as well as a specific, secondary analysis theme, but is discussed in more detail in part two of this chapter.

Part two addresses stress as the primary focus of the original research questions, and in terms of the thematic foci that emerged from the secondary analysis of the data. Stress is discussed in terms of embodiment and physicality, spatial and temporal dimensions, and 'the little things' or the everyday stressors that affect the

daily lives of youth from their perspective. This section provides an in depth

description of the many ways 'stress' is experienced by immigrant youth and how

they use stress terminology.

In part three, I return to the idea raised in Chapter 1 of framing stress as both an

idiom of distress and as a discourse. While discussions of the physicality of stress

from the previous section fit best with thinking about stress as an idiom of distress,

the focus on the spatial and temporal dimension of stress, and the role of daily

stresses in shaping the experiences of immigrant youth are more about the

discourse of stress. The theme of 'expectations' is presented as key to the ways in

which youth engage with 'stress' as an idiom of distress and as a discourse. Finally,

the metaphor of balance, used by youth to define experiences of stress in a way that

also supports the potential for coping with stress, is introduced.

PART 1: Themes generated by the research team

Challenges:

Based on the analysis of the interview data conducted by the youth researchers, the

theme of 'challenges' was the largest, containing 20 subthemes (including education

and accreditation, employment, expectations, making friends, language, money,

sacrifices, and discrimination, among others.) Many youth described a range of

inter-related challenges that they faced during and after immigrating to Victoria.

There is so much that is different… One of the biggest challenges is trying to fit in and to get used to a completely different place, because you are so used to your home and you have been there for your whole life, and then suddenly you have to move and then everything is different, so fitting in at school, making new friends, learning the language is very difficult and even just little things like taking the bus and getting around could like degrade your confidence in staying in a new country.

- Rachel, 16, China

Many participants described challenges related to the process of immigration and the requirements and restrictions placed on families looking to immigrate. As one participant explains, the process of immigration can be challenging.

It's challenging. It's not like that, like, like… whoever wants to come to Canada, first of all, they have to see their education, what they have… can he support his family? If you wanna come there, does he have his own money to survive in Canada? So it was really challenging…Well, my dad told me, we came all the way from India to Canada, right? So, first of all, my mom didn't like Canada. They were like, "What the hell", why we here? Like, you know… Everybody goes to their jobs. There's no time, there's no relationships here. Nothing like that…But you know, but that's a life in Canada. You have to live with it if you want to survive. We're still surviving, though.

- Sanjay, 18, India

While some families experienced the process of immigration as something that ran smoothly, others waited with uncertainty for long periods of time before families were reunited. One participant describes the contrast between her immigration process and the challenges associated with sponsorship in support of her new husband's immigration:

The family visa takes about 5 years to process, so we weren't really worried about it because we had our own life back there and I was going to school and my parents were working so we were busy, but when my husband was being sponsored, that was a horrible process, all the paperwork and they ask for your personal information, your chat records, your love letters, and like when you are sponsoring your spouse they ask for your personal letters and personal emails, and I had a time going

through the emails and deleting everything I said rude about the Canadian immigration, that's how bad it was, and its not that easy, it was not a very easy or smooth... no it wasn't a transition... I think anyone who goes through a spousal sponsorship goes through a hard time, and it's not very human cause I was separated from my newly married husband for like nine and half months, and that's torture right, and you are like 2 worlds apart and the time difference is exactly 12 hours so when he sleeps I'm getting up and then we can't talk, and then its like, ugh.

-Ramya, 27, Sri Lanka

For others, who were school-aged at the time of immigration, making friends and

adjusting to new social circles and doing well in school were discussed as central

concerns:

Well I think for someone my age at that time, I didn't get to... socially, the challenge was social involvement. Or getting included in social circles, especially in school. I had no one to talk, like I didn't have the same interests as the people here and they just kinda, my English was really good but there were, but some people didn't know and thought that I couldn't speak, so they didn't bother speaking to me sometimes. So some problems were basically mostly social. And, well at that time too I was like reluctant to meet new people cause I wanted to go home, that's the only thing I could think of at that time. So, ya, I think it's more in social support.
- Megan, 17, Philippines

Well when I was in high school, which was not long ago, it was like months ago, it was really hard to make friends, to meet new people, cause I wouldn't say they discriminate against you well first of all ... just a sec I have to re word it, cause I guess... we share some of the same interests but they do things that I am not really into? Umm so I guess that made it harder, but yeah, it was just hard getting to a really consistent friendship with someone, just because we don't really share the same points of view sometimes, and I am really shy too, so I am just not going to go there and start talking to someone, unless someone makes me! (Laughing) but I don't know, it was good that I was alone at times, cause that is when I kind of discovered this part of my self (referring back to earlier answer about finding artistic side of self.) ...Yeah well it was just hard meeting people
- Elize 18, Brazil

Sometimes, umm.. I think it's normal to feel nostalgia toward the home country as we are living in a foreign country... Like.. When I'm in a class,

even I'm listening to teacher, sometimes these flashback from my home country came up in my mind. And sometimes I lost what is the teacher saying.. Um... Or like when I'm doing bad at school, I.. Sometimes tend to think I can do better, I would do better if I'm in Korea, with my friends and with my own language.... Yeah.. I think that is the challenge.

- Sherrie, 19, Korea

Other youth spoke about negative experiences in schools, focused on the challenges of making friends and a perceived difference in the 'friendliness' of people in Victoria.

In school, it was really different than I thought...It was just like they didn't talk, or say hi to me when I got there my first day of school, and in our school in Philippines, you just kind of like however you are wherever you came from you are really welcomed, and it's just like I am not used to it at all... Cause like the culture is different, and people weren't friendly like, at all.

- Jonathan, 16, Philippines

For those who immigrated with post-secondary education, accreditation was also discussed as a huge source of frustration:

Well I said before, the biggest challenge for me is that international education experience is no really recognized here, so that's the biggest challenge. And yes I was able to work to overcome that, I am overcoming that, I did overcome that... so fortunately enough the private institutions give more leeway to people with international education and experience than government owned or run institutions, so I was able to realize that and then targeted my work search efforts to private institutions, that's how I got my job.

- Tara, 27, Philippines

While the majority of participants discussed a range of challenges in their interviews, it is interesting to note that some of the youth didn't feel they faced many challenges in Victoria.

Challenges? No I don't think so; most people don't know I'm an immigrant unless I tell them or sometimes when they hear my accent they ask where I'm from, so that's it.
Interviewer: How about your family, how about them?
Not really cause my dad also, well he's been living in Canada for like, I don't know, more than forty years, and his English is perfect so no one ever knows where he's from. And my mom has a, I guess a thicker accent, so they usually ask her where she's from and stuff like that. But she's also a Canadian citizen so…they don't have any major challenges I guess.

- Felipe, 17, Mexico.

Under the umbrella of 'challenges' were expectations about Victoria, about school or employment, and expectations placed on immigrant youth by others. Many school-aged youth focused on expectations related to school performance, and described feeling that they had different expectations placed on them than those of their Canadian counterparts.

I was always encouraged to do extremely well in school. If I didn't do well in school, well, it's like getting a B+ instead of an A. There would be some consequences at home – no TV for a week maybe. And I had to be at the top of my ballet class, I had to be at the top of my piano class… um, still maintain a part-time job on the weekends. At the time, I was frustrated because I wanted to just sit around and do nothing like my Canadian friends, but now I've realized how much better off I am for what had happened. So I place higher expectations for myself and I think that's a good thing.

- Rachel, 16, China

Like, well before, my dad had big expectations in our grades, and after that, my uncle has the same expectations as my dad. He has a kid older than me and when we first moved here she was in high school and she came home with grades, like 70 average, the parents were so concerned that like, oh my God, in the Philippines 70 was failing… So they were so concerned that they, oh my God, is our kid failing, why aren't the teachers talking to us and stuff like that…. And it was so funny cause they didn't realize that 50 was a passing grade. So I think yes, there's this big gap in what is good grades, to my family and to, in school… And cultural [expectations] too, like respect. I guess…I can't treat my parents, like my dad, like I can't be rude like speaking to my dad, I have to be… Respectful,

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and I can't backlash at them. I'll be bad if I did that. Even though my dad is super nice and everything but it's unacceptable to be that to your parents.

- Megan, 17, Philippines

Many of the interview participants also focused on their first week experiences and their expectations of Victoria as a city. Many agreed that Victoria was much quieter, 'whiter' and smaller than they had anticipated. While some enjoyed this, others, particularly those who arrived from bigger cities, clearly felt they were missing out on aspects of a more 'cosmopolitan' life.

I had seen lots of Hollywood movies, I thought Canada was kind of like Hollywood or Los Angeles; I thought it was pretty developed, but apparently not! (Laughing)

- Chris, 24, China

hmmmm the first time I heard about it I was in high school and I guess I was excited about it, knowing that it was a developed country, and that there would be more opportunities and especially better education and health care, that was something that was exciting…. I expected also that the place I would come to would be more metropolitan, cause Canada is a first world country, but I find that here in Victoria, this isn't true, its not as metropolitan as where I came from.

- Tara, 27, Philippines

Other participants focused on other aspects of the unexpected in their first impressions and experiences in Victoria. In the following example Ella describes not only discrepancies in expectations, but also the longer-term effects of the unexpected and how it impacted her ability to 'trust Canadians'.

The day we arrived in Saanich, we asked the airport if it snows here and they said, "No, no. It doesn't snow in Victoria or on Vancouver Island." So we came and it was pretty cold. Next morning wake up and there's snow everywhere. (laughs)… So I was already not very impressed. And we decided to stay at home for the day and the next day go to school. There

was no ESL program at the school I attended, and they separated me and my sister into different schools. I didn't speak English except for my numbers up to ten, and 'baa-baa black sheep', 'hello, how are you' and that's it. So it was pretty scary. I already felt like people had lied to me because they said it never snows here and the next day it snows so I was already wary of Canadians. I didn't know how truthful they were. (laughing) It was very difficult. I couldn't understand the teacher, I couldn't understand the students, I didn't know what was going on and I couldn't wait to go home and that probably lasted for a good couple of months.

- Ella, Somalia/Ukraine (refugee arrived from Italy) 27

Expectations formed the largest subtheme that fell under the 'challenge' theme and included expectations from peers, family, and school, as well as expectations related to Victoria as a city. 'Expectations' was also a thematic category that re-emerged again and again and overlapped with other themes throughout the data. The challenges associated with 'expectations' will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The challenge of learning a new language was a prevalent theme in interviews. Elisangela describes her challenges with learning English and her fear of not being able to be understood, and of getting lost on the bus with only limited English, below.

My biggest challenge since I've moved to Canada was learning the language. I still struggle with it but I am way better now. When I first moved to Victoria I couldn't speak not even one word in English. I have to go straight to school. Wow, I can't believe how fast I had to learn English in order to communicate. My biggest fear was taking the bus and not being able to understand the bus driver in case I needed to ask for directions or any kind of help.

-Elisangela, Brazil, 30

Many of the interview participants described the combined challenges of language and 'shy' personalities. In both the interview excerpts and the image and poem below, participants talked about changing themselves or changing their perceptions of themselves as a result of language barriers and the challenges that can accompany immigration.

It was a challenge… hmm… Because hmm... It's a different language, and different place, different cultural... Everything is a challenge. And my personality is so quiet in the outside... So it's so challenge to me.

- Mary-Ann, 17, China

Socializing is not as easy as it was before, I got much more insecure and that made me misjudge myself in many ways, which led me to be quieter and closed off, mainly because I was scared.

I'm drowning in my own words
I am my worst enemy,
And still my only and best friend.
The same words that make me smile
Kill me, slowly and painfully.
The mirror shows nothing but an empty image
Reflecting my scars,
My still very present past.

- Isabela. 18, Brazil

The above photograph and caption, along with the poem written by the photographer, also touch on the challenges that youth can face in making friends when they are operating in a new language. In coping with language barriers, the value of ESL classes was frequently a topic of discussion, as was the role of ESL in making new students feel welcomed.

When I first arrived the first day in Reynolds, I didn't have ESL class and I was like terrible, I didn't know where to go and how to ask, and it was

terrible cause I didn't have ESL class in the first day, so I just went right to the office and changed my classes.

- Diane, 17, China

Since I have studied English very step by step with consistency, I feel more confident. For example if my husband moved to China and I stayed here I can still survive here, because the most important thing is to change yourself. When you are more confident and fluent with your language especially in Canada to speak an English language it is better.

- Emily 29, China

Language, and the frustration that barriers in communication can lead to (for both those trying to understand what is being said and those who are struggling to be understood) were also frequently described as a source of negative experiences.

Well, you know, yeah I did have, hum… Some negative things since I came here, for example, in the beginning, when I came here, like, what I said most people were really friendly and they were really nice to you, new immigrants, even though you didn't speak English… they could, you know, speak slowly, you know, and they could, you know, use more body language to communicate with you, right? But definitely, there were some people that were not that patient… For example, when you go to a store or some public places that you have to ask some questions or get some information from a worker, or a waiter, or something, right? Staff there, some people, I don't know why, hum… Maybe they just couldn't understand you, why you couldn't speak English, you know, they were not really patient, you know, they spoke really fast and they even didn't want to explain too much to you, you know, when you asked 'pardon, sorry, excuse me' they were just so, ah… It just felt oh my God and you feel really upset, there was nothing wrong I just couldn't speak English well but, you know, because I just came here I'm new here, but yeah… That was really awful, you know, that was really sad actually, they just they don't want to talk to you too much because you couldn't have a really, a real conversation; they felt they were wasting their time, you know? So anyway, it was really awful… but it's fine, most people are friendly.

- Ken, China, 25

Employment and language were often challenges that were discussed concurrently.

The challenges of 'employment' included the challenge in finding not just jobs, but

jobs that matched skill levels.

> I think you're right, it's hard for everybody, but I think it's harder for immigrants, you know, because like, what I mentioned first: the language, if you can't speak well how could you work, I mean, of course it depends of the type of the job, but basically you need to speak, right? And second, that's a most important fact for me, that I didn't get anything for me at that point because I have no work experience in Canada so in the beginning I tried to find a job, I went to several places, all of them… Everybody asked me if I had work experience in Canada I said 'no' and then they felt, hum… 'We want a person who has work experience here,' you know? That was a little bit sad, come on I'm new here, of course I have no work experience here, right?… So, working definitely is a challenge and, also I think… Studying in Canada also is a challenge, yeah, because the society, I mean, the system of education is quite different here… Sometimes I feel hard, I feel difficult to study in a better way… So, basically there are a lot of challenges, right? But I think everything will be fine, I guess, you know? Just, hum… Yeah, by the time goes by, you know, hum… Get more and more used to living here, you know, more comfortable and making more friends and, I guess, hum… Everything will be fine, yeah.
>
> -Ken, China, 25

The following image, taken by a research team member after a brief conversation

outside of a job search office, captures the 'stress' that new immigrants can

experience when searching for employment:

Acquiring a living is one of the most "stress" contributing issues that face immigrants. This gentleman dressed in his finest attire has just finished a grueling day of applying for jobs and is headed home to his expanding family.

– Tamara, Iraq, 19

Challenges in employment were also linked to discussion of the size of Victoria, and the challenges people can face when working to break into tight knit social circles, as described by Sophia, an immigrant with a bachelor's degree who ended up volunteering for a year (at VIRCS) before getting a job there.

> OK, well I came to Victoria a year and a half ago and it took me a year to find a job, and I found Victoria a very difficult place to meet people. I think because of the size, there are a lot of like, people here who already have their own social groups and its hard to break in here if you are an outsider, and a lot of jobs I think you only find out about through friends, and when you come you have no friends so how do you find out about? … So I find, I found the job market was very difficult, because there weren't a lot of jobs, and that part of Victoria made it very difficult.
>
> - Sophia, 27 Bermuda/Canada

Many of the participants recognized the sacrifices made by their families to immigrate. Above all, these sacrifices included separation from family and friends. Exemplified in the descriptions below, the idea of 'leaving everything behind' was a common focus, as were the sacrifices made by parents as well as the youth themselves.

> [My family]… they left everything behind for something they had never seen, for a better future.
>
> -Alejandro, 16, Peru

> We had all our family and friends in Europe and in Africa. We didn't know anyone here in North America… Not a single person. My parents spoke intermediate English. My mom speaks French, so that wasn't too bad. We didn't know anything about the North American way of life. Um… we were really anti going somewhere cold and, it's pretty cold here. My parents both have master's degrees and those are not recognized here. So… yeah.
>
> -   Ella, 26, Somalia/Ukraine

> Again, we moved here because of safety concerns, not because we wanted to. Example, my dad couldn't, now he can't work as a doctor, which he was in the Philippines. I had to leave my friends and my family, the same with my sisters. And again it was hard leaving the house especially because we just packed enough for a vacation and we couldn't… We left a lot of stuff behind. A lot. It was only until actually two years ago where we finally got our family photos… So, ya, thank God for Facebook and friends there at the time.
>
> -   Megan, 17, Philippines

> I guess [my family made sacrifices]. Cause my dad was a doctor back at home, and he can't be a doctor here. My mom was like a manager; she can't be a manager here either. We also had to like, learn more English and that was like, challenging, like everything else. friends and like starting a new life, starting from 0 pretty much.
>
> - Julio, 18, Guatemala

Many youth took a certain amount of responsibility for the sacrifices made by their families, recognizing that many of their parents made these sacrifices in order to give their children better lives.

> They sacrificed their jobs, they had very good jobs in China and they were pretty respected people in the community and they definitely sacrificed a very easy and very prosperous life, just to come here for me.
>
> - Rachel, 16, China

Although the majority of those who were interviewed felt that the benefits of immigration outweighed the challenges and sacrifices endured by their families, some felt that their lives were not improved by immigration. In the two examples below immigration is described as necessary, but not overly beneficial.

> The thing is, my family wasn't deprived of anything being in Sri Lanka. We had two houses, we were well off, like from the amount of money we earned, we could at least have at least lived a very comfortable life in Sri Lanka. The sacrifice of being here is simply for my sister, and now its from my side, its from my husband, because my husband wanted to pursue filming and filming careers are better in the US and Canada. So that's the sacrifice that I am making right now, without, like losing my friends, not having friends, kind of like that are not Sri Lankan so it's a big deal and my parents always want to go back and back and back and me the same, but its not financially possible if you keep going back every year. And that's a huge sacrifice in that way, I mean we didn't want to be here in the first place, it wasn't even on the, like we were not deprived of anything, we were not politically or economically challenged at all... My mom had to retire from her work, she was a very high position in the government, and she really missed working. And then I had to stop my university half way, and the UVIC credential transfer didn't happen the way I wanted, so I lost like 1 year of education there, because of the transfer credit thing, and once again, I had a business on my own, kind of a thing and I was really happy doing it, and now I'm here, I am a trainer, but its nothing like my capacity. I was a manager, I was managing people and if its, its not at all, I'm not satisfied that it's a better option.
>
> - Ramya, 27, Sri Lanka

> Yes. [I made sacrifices] I quit my job, I left my family

Interviewer: Now did you have any benefits from immigrating?
(thinks for a while) no... Well my English has improved... this is not necessary though, if I did not move here I would not need to learn English
- Emily, 29, China

While the majority of participants described sacrifices made by themselves and or their families in immigrating, one or two didn't feel that they made sacrifices, emphasizing continued connections to family (often through Facebook or social media.)

Not really no. [I didn't make sacrifices]... Like just friends, which are not really sacrifices, just friends,
Interviewer: Did you have family that you left behind?
Yes, back in Iraq, but we are still connected so it doesn't feel like I didn't lose anything.
- Rashed, 14, Iraq

The above was an exception; the majority of youth did focus on sacrifices made by their families to immigrate. Surprisingly, few of the participants focused directly on experiences of discrimination or racism. When it was discussed, discrimination was often discussed in the context of employment opportunities.

In my own experience there is very very [more] inequality in racial, culture, ethnicity here than in Vancouver...its not diverse here like in Vancouver and you don't have much opportunity here if you are person who is... like I have experienced it a lot when there are high end job opportunities and I was the finalist with another white person and I didn't get it, simply, the only answer they gave was you haven't worked here, well I am trying to work here and you have to give me a chance to work here... Whereas, I am not stuck in Safeway, but I am keeping this right now because it allows me to go to school, so I am really grateful to them to give me the opportunity to do this and to go to school, but I would have liked to do a better job... So its like, those experiences like make you feel very very unwelcomed once again, cause Canadian immigration policy welcomes immigrants saying they will support and do everything and that they need people. But at the end of the day, all immigrants are stuck in lower level jobs. I have 2 uncles who are

neurosurgeons who at the moment, one works as a volunteer doctor, without getting any pay, and one works as a pharmacy assistant... So its very unwelcoming, whereas everything said that there would be lots... So its not an open opportunity place for immigrants right here. So I don't believe that.

- Ramya, Sri Lanka, 27

Several of the interviewees also gave examples of discrimination due to ethnicity or language ability in school or in the community.

Well, of course, when you leave your country and think of moving to different country and language is different, although I always taught in English when I was even in India, but still, the accent is different and everything. So it wasn't really stressful, but yeah, every point, I have to think "wow! What's next." coz you cannot guess how is your life going to be... [There's] not really language barrier, but there is something that makes... Something difficult. Maybe coz... Maybe skin colour... Maybe? Cause not everybody accepting you right?

- Sanjay, 18, India

This one time in class, because immigrant language has obstacles so when they are doing presentation, I heard some of the local teenagers call them idiot.

- Daisy, 26, China

Yes. Well most of the time I had negative experiences, like walking into places and having people looking at me differently, maybe because of my skin color or maybe because of my accent, and they wouldn't understand what I was trying to say, and they would just you know 'I can't understand what you are saying' or they would just ignore me, and that was hard you know, one of the hardest things. Having to just see someone walking away from you cause they couldn't understand my accent... And sometimes even today, because I walk in and sometimes I mumble, and they are like what? You are stupid, or like what the heck are you saying? What are you doing here you don't even speak English...

-Marianna, 30, Brazil

Choice in the Immigration Process & Motivations for Immigration

Several participants, particularly those who were over 20 at the time their family decided to immigrate, described making the decision to immigrate with their families. Other older youth immigrated on their own, or with partners.

> I felt that immigrating would provide me the ability to choose my future life… It was a choice for me.
> -Fay 19, China

> Yes, I did [want to come]. Actually it was my idea to immigrate to Canada. [It took] Ah… Almost 2 and a half, yeah, 2 and a half…Yeah like, yeah, almost 3 years. It took a long time for us to wait the process.
> - Ken , 25, China

However, the majority of youth described having very little say in their families' decision to immigrate.

> Ya, my parents both decided that we should move to Canada cause my dad was gonna retire and my mom was kinda out, didn't have a job, so we had to come. And so I didn't really have a choice and even though I said no a few times, but it's not like I could just stay there alone.
> -Felipe, 17, Mexico

> I moved to Canada without knowing we were moving here permanently. As I said, I am a refugee and my dad made the decision that we had to leave the country because of some concerns of safety. Upon coming here we originally thought it was a vacation for two or three months and then we would go back home… but then my dad told us that we were here to be permanently so I had no involvement with that decision at all.
> - Megan, Philippines, 17

> My immigration was a family sponsorship and it was done by my sister and it was done when I was really young, so I was just 16 and I was in high school right? So I didn't want to leave my friends and stuff like that, and then when the whole process was complete, when I got the permanent residency right away, then I was in university in Sri Lanka and I didn't want to come. But due to my parents being here, and my sister and

husband wanting to be here, so they said come here, so I came without liking it, and I still don't like it.

- Ramya, Sri Lanka, 27

However, many of the participants interviewed described positive expectations and feelings related to the idea of immigrating, despite their lack of decision-making power.

> I thought [moving here] was good, it was like a fresh start to Canada, like I could do whatever I wanted, so that was one thing I liked... Yes, like nobody knows me so I can do what I want....Well I wasn't involved in the decision right, but I didn't oppose the decision. So, I never said anything against it, but I wasn't involved in the decision to immigrate... Well, they were like "what would you rather, Australia or Canada?" And I said Canada, not Australia.
>
> - Alejandro, 16, Peru

> Well sure, yeah. [I wanted to come]. Well I was living in Iraq, which is a warzone, so I was so excited, just to leave Iraq. I mean, its not the kind of country you are going to miss, its like, you just want to get out. And other than that that is pretty obvious I guess.
>
> - Rashed, 14, Iraq

> It's kind of not my choice but I was just like fine with it, cause I get, hey, I'm a business minded person and if there is an opportunity there, you just have to grab it right?
>
> - Henry, 24, China

Despite acknowledging that their families were immigrating to increase their opportunities, and particularly opportunities for their children, some participants described strong feelings of not wanting to immigrate, leave their friends and/or be separated from their extended families.

I didn't want to come here and I imagined that it would be very cold. But I thought my parents would have many more opportunities here… I didn't know anything about Canada. I didn't speak neither English nor French. And I had lots of family and friends in Europe…I never imagined that this would be a permanent thing. I thought we'd come, check it out, we'd get our citizenship, work for a few years and then go back. So, I wasn't completely turned off or scared by the idea because I never saw it as a permanent thing…It was a decision I wasn't involved in… At all. At the age of ten they weren't consulting me.

- Ella, 26, Ukraine/Somalia

To be honest no [I didn't want to come]. Well I like to be close to my family, like my whole family, so I didn't like the idea of leaving behind my family, and my mom's sick so yeah…my parents said 'we're going' and I was like 'fine.' So I had no choice.

- Julio, 18, Guatemala

With the recognition made by many youth participants that families decided to immigrate for the sake of improving their children's futures, education, health care and safety were listed as the primary motivations for immigration.

Education for us that was it… Cause for university education, like you can get university education in Peru too, but its more expensive, like here, every single public university is really good, like UBC is the third in the country and it's a public one. That's what we came here for, for education.

- Alejandro, 16, Peru

Well, the Canadian passport is wonderful. (laughs) You can go anywhere. We live in a safe country. I know that my rights will be protected. I don't have to worry about a civil war starting anytime soon (knocks on wood). And I was given the opportunity to go to school and continue my studies… use my languages…

-Ella, 26, Somalia/Ukraine

I think – it's just for me, because I'm in college… it's just for a lot of good opportunities in Canada… and uh, better life… and… like, you can survive by yourself. It's not like any other country. Sometimes people can't survive. On their own. But here you can.

-Sanjay, 18, India

Decision-making in immigration and motivations for immigration will be discussed

further in chapter 6, in the context of resilience and the desire of many of the youth

involved in the project to focus on the positive outcomes of immigration. Despite

the positive motivations for immigration described by several participants, many

described experiences of loneliness and/or isolation after arriving in Victoria.

Loneliness and Isolation

 In the image below, one participant presents his perspective on loneliness,

described as his biggest challenge since arriving in Victoria.

This picture of a lonely bench at James Bay represents my lifelong struggle in finding and maintaining friendships; my biggest challenge ever since coming to Victoria. Making friends has been very difficult because of the hatred and fear that I have faced. Many have judged me based on my ethnicity, appearance, manner of dress, manner of speech or my status or abilities. I am classified in a competition style mentality based upon whether I am a winner or a loser. My honesty is not

appreciated and many consider me to be a problem person or a negative when I express my personal opinion about something or call out hypocrisy, injustices and lies. It seems that I am supposed to repress all of my consciousness and become society's idea of a perfect individual.
- Sebastian, Chile/Guatemala, 24

When asked, several youth were unable to think of a single time when they felt welcomed or included since arriving in Victoria. Many spoke of a deep sense of loneliness. When the interviewers asked these next participants to talk about a time they felt welcomed, neither was able to provide examples.

> no...Not at all...[I have no examples of feeling welcomed] For example, umm.. I'm in school... I'm an Asian in classes... I don't have a Canadian friend when I was in grade 9, first year in school. So hmm... And I can't talk English well, speak English well... So I felt I'm alone.
>
> - Mary-Ann, 17, Korea

> Wow... welcomed? Um... Not really I guess... I never felt so welcoming, ever... Yeah. No.
>
> - Neena, 19, India

Several participants described Victoria as having 'closed' social circles, making it harder for newcomers to make friends and overcome loneliness. In the discussion below, the idea of a more individualistic society in North America is suggested as a key factor in some of the challenges facing immigrant youth.

> Challenges...I think many people come from different backgrounds and in Canada – maybe North America – we're pretty cold and standoffish and we live in an individualistic society and places like Eastern Europe or Africa, Latin America, we're used to having a large community and a large family and that's where we get our sense of support and community and we don't have that at all in Victoria...and these kids need it on a daily basis... and we

don't have it here and it's not normal to have that here, so I think a lot of
people... I don't know... experience alienation...

- Ella, 26, Somalia/ Ukraine

Challenges? Well, there can be stress in your life. Coz you never know
right? How to step forward, and there can be a problem with your
language, your accent, and there can be a factor where you don't have
anyone alone with you and you are just by yourself.

- Neena, 19, India

Loneliness and its relationship to stress and the physicality of stress will be
discussed later in this chapter. While many youth did describe their experiences of
struggling with loneliness and isolation, these discussions were balanced by a
prominent focus on support and resources that enhanced the ability of newcomers
to cope with the challenges they encountered in Victoria.

Being away from my family is really stressful when I'm dealing with a difficult situation, we do what we can to keep in touch and ignore distance, but sometimes is not enough and even though I'm great today, tomorrow I may need them and that's how it goes... Learning to keep going even if your support system is missing.

- *Isabela, 18, Brazil*

Several questions in the interviews focused on support, where youth found support in Victoria, and how existing supports and services could be enhanced for immigrant youth. Discussions of support from external sources (people, services and programs) were matched by discussions of internalized coping and resilience. The research team also expressed a strong desire to focus not only on the challenges and stresses of immigration and 'being an immigrant youth,' but also wanted to focus on the positive or on things that could be seen as improving aspects of their lives. This

will be discussed in more detail in the context of resilience in Chapter 6. This section

will provide examples of the types of support and resources accessed by immigrant

youth in Victoria to help them cope with adjusting to a new community.

Many of those interviewed discussed positive experiences with particular programs

or services designed to support immigrant youth.

> Yeah, counseling. The people really helps you. And then they treat you well, like, what happened, how did it happen, are you safe at home, like... they like ask you everything to make you like, like... to be happy, like... they're like... they're asking you everything, like, are you okay?
>
> - Sanjay, 18, India

> Services that were most useful... umm.... First, ESL teacher, second, friends. Cuz.. Umm.. I came to know about VIRCS because of ESL teacher. And if the teacher didn't let me know, I couldn't be involved in that group. And I didn't even know that kind of service supporting immigrants except ICA [the Intercultural Association]. Um.. So mostly from ESL teacher.
>
> - Sherrie, 19, Korea

> I find, number one, VIRCS... because like, if... I didn't went to Life Skills, there would be no Youth Night. There would be no The Crocs. There would be no band. There would be no... I would, I would end up being the same person in isolation and... I would never met like, those people from Life Skills who were graduating. (laughs)... Megan [Youth Worker] said, we have a Youth Night happening right now so if you wanna go, we can go. And then we went there and there was only a couple of us and then the next week, we invited a couple of Filipinos again... and then we ended up having this huge Filipino, um... like... we get involved in the community way better.
>
> - May, 18, Philippines

> I'm going to go with VIRCS, like if you don't know something you can just go there and ask them...Like I had a silly question like at camp, about the loonie and toonie and what was that? And they told me it was like a dollar and two dollars, but like who needs silly names? ... I thought it was a joke. So I guess I could ask them anything... they are good guys.
>
> - Rashed 14, Iraq

Others focused on the importance of building a community around them, and of using family and friends as primary sources of support.

It was a process of adaptation and we were fortunate that we met good people along the way that helped us out.
- Ella, 26, Somalia/Ukraine

Other Chinese people, older immigrants, they helped us a lot, so they share the information with us and they taught us a lot and they told us how to deal with some specific problems while we are living in Canada… Yeah so basically VIRCS and other Chinese people, also definitely some local people, some Canadians, but for my parents the problem is they can't really communicate with local people. So basically the centre and Chinese people…[And then in school]. So this is the last semester so I really felt like I had to be good, I had to be better than others… how did I manage it? The pressures, ok… ummmm so I talked to a couple friends of mine, I told them about my pressure, and they you know, yeah, they are so nice, they helped me a lot, they talked to me , they had a walk with me or, we went to have some good food… so yeah my friends helped me a lot to solve my problems, and also my parents, my parents they support me so much.
- Ken, 25 , China
-
[To manage stress] I listen to music, I don't really have time to manage it, but if I do I would probably read, listen to music, draw, play the piano-playing piano is actually a good source of releasing stress, and just talking to someone I trust, like a close friend.
- Rachel, 16, China

The support of family and friends was important for many youth. With Facebook and social media as key tools for communication, several youth described the importance of extended networks of support.

Support [is important]. Well family. Even though we're here in different country, I still have family in Canada, in the US, or not the US, like in Vancouver a lot too. So it's really nice that even though, like in the beginning I was super shy at home and at school and I couldn't voice myself and bring up my own personality, when I went home I had a family was accepting and when we go to Vancouver I can be as loud as I want and stuff like that… At school it was kinda hard in the beginning but I learned

to be myself now at school... [you need] somebody you can relate to, a kind of support that you're comfortable with. And that, again, listens. That's the biggest thing.

- Megan 17, Philippines

This picture represents support for me because I can see in it my family and my friends helping me cope and live my everyday life. As living so far away from home I've learnt that home is where I am at the present moment and that my family is now the friends I've made in Canada. I have learned that we are here for each other and to support each other. My friends are my support and they help make my every day life easier and blissful. I love being here and I am thankful for having this wonderful gift life has given me.

-Elisangela, 30, Brazil

Many of the participants also described escaping to private places, on rooftops, or in

nature to help them cope with stress.

Like, [when I'm stressed]... I go, like... go by a beach. Like, I just want to be alone, first of all. And... in peace, like... you know, like... I don't want any noise or anything like that. And, just like... was it my fault or was it their

fault. Some people argue… because you get stressed, too… and, but… it's not you're fault… but you're like already getting stressed, like, what did I do? Why does it make this guy look like this? So, it's really hard, right? I just like, leave like… if you're stressed, just like… first of all, calm down, right? Don't-don't do anything stupid.

- Sanjay, 18, India

One research team member, who, in the past five years has become an accomplished long distance runner, described running as his means of escape, as something both painful and exhilarating that provides him with an outlet, and a way of managing stress.
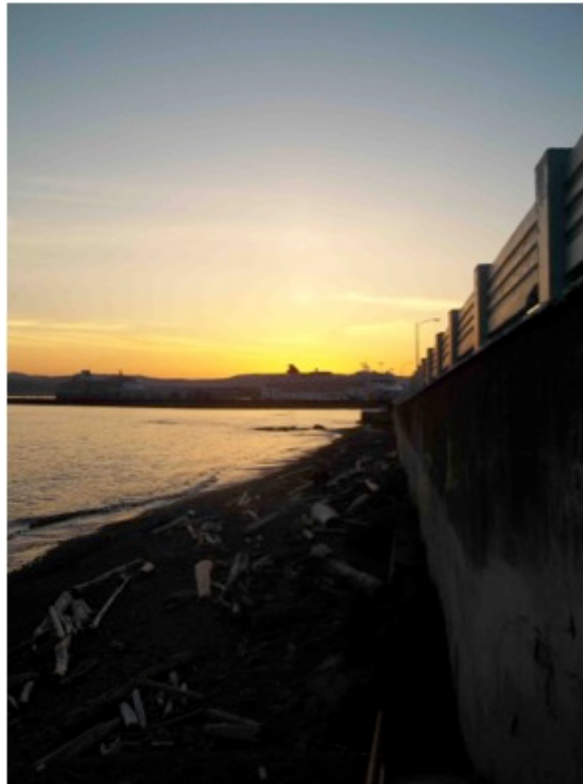
This is my favourite place to go running: James Bay. Ever since I got to Victoria, I decided to go running. It just felt so natural for me to run here, that I eventually got pretty good at it. I never would have dreamed that I'd run a marathon one day, but here I am, doing one of the most painful things I can think of.

-Estuardo 20, Chile/Guatemala

The same participant who talked about running as his escape used an image of a stack of books to depict the 'stress' he feels when things in his life 'pile up' to a point that isn't easily manageable. Another research team member used a very similar image to talk about support, describing her escape into books as a resource that allows her to cope with challenges.

Easy Life
I love reading. I always find life easier when I read books. It expands my thinking and met new people with different auras, egos and personalities. Reading takes me to another universe and it feels really good. I am being influenced and inspired by reading that I usually add a new perspective because of the characters in the book.

-Julia, 18, Philippines

This section has described the many ways in which youth spoke of and experienced immigration and what 'being an immigrant' has meant in their lives. I return to

several of these themes again in Chapters 4 and 6. Just as the participants described different ways in which they coped with stress and accessed supports in Victoria, they also talked about 'stress' in a number of different ways. As our research focus was on immigrant youth experiences of stress in particular, and what people meant when they invoked the language of stress, the following sections explore the theme of 'stress' in more detail.

PART 2: Sources and Experiences of Stress

The primary focus of this research project, first suggested by VIRCS youth program directors as an area that needed more research, was on stress; how youth were experiencing stress, and what could be done to decrease stress and enhance resilience in the lives of immigrant youth in Victoria. In this section I focus on how youth talk about stress; what they identify as sources of stress, and how they describe experiences of stress. Although stress emerged as a general thematic category in the first round of youth-led analysis, I returned to the data for a second level of analysis, considering the nuanced ways in which it was discussed. From this secondary analysis, as I describe in more detail below, three ways of talking about stress became apparent: the physicality of stress and the use of the body; the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress; and, the importance of considering everyday stress or 'the little things'.

The Physicality of Stress and Experiences Directly Referencing the Body

> What is stress for me? … A headache…(laughing)… yeah I say it's a
> headache because it is something that is there that is bugging me because
> it is there and it feels like a pain, and sometimes it is hard because I feel it
> and I know that I want to slow down and relax a little bit, but then it just
> keeps on letting it happen and the amount of it piles up and then a small
> thing, I make it a huge thing and that is part of my stress… yeah and
> worrying too much, that is kind of what helps my stress level increase too
> much, you know small things, big things, things that are maybe not even
> there, and I am stressing out about it which is not good.
>
> – Marianna, 30, Brazil

Marianna, a first generation immigrant from Brazil, was one of the older

participants in the NMW project. She was first interviewed and then joined the

research team in the photovoice phase of the project. She balances a full time job

with being a single mother, and in her interview, focused largely on embodied

experiences of stress, tying them back to social and financial pressures and the need

to manage multiple aspects of her life and responsibilities. Her description of stress

resonated with the experiences of many of the youth who participated in our

research. Many individuals discussed stress in physical terms, as 'pressure' or

medicalized experiences using disease-based terminology or talking about stress in

terms of pain manifested in the body.

Descriptions of tiredness, or trouble sleeping, described by some as full-blown

insomnia, were also tied to stress. Sherrie, a recent immigrant from Korea talked

about stress in detail, directly making the connection between stress and trouble

sleeping.

When um.. Like a year ago, or few months ago, my stresses are at the highest point. I didn't sleep... Like... I only sleep like only 2 hours per day... And my sleeping routine or life routine is not regular. So my stress was getting bigger and bigger... And my ESL teacher catches that... Notice that my condition is not normal. So she helped me to see some counselor... And that really helps me to get in a regular routine.

-Sherrie, 19, Korea

Particularly in the context of their initial experiences after arriving in Victoria, many youth talked about jet lag, trouble sleeping and the idea of 'being in a fog.' In her photo voice images related to 'biggest challenges' Julia included an image of a glowing alarm clock, using this as a starting point to discuss her own challenges and the stress she experienced as a result of insomnia.

As I migrate to Canada, the biggest challenge that I ever face is time. I developed insomnia a couple of months after my arrival and it totally affected the sector of my life; from school to my health. However, as time flies by, I get the hang of it by injecting my mind with determination that I will be able to manage to get a complete cycle of sleep in a sleepless town.

- Julia, 18, Philippines

Although our sample size was not large enough to justify exploring gender differences in the ways in which stress was physically expressed by youth, several male participants referred to expressing stress as 'anger'. Descriptions of stress as 'anger' focused on physical reactions and bodily experiences of anger. As Julio, an 18 year old interview participant who immigrated from Guatemala 3 years ago explained, "stress to me is ... umm, is something when I get under pressure and I get like really anxious and I start like getting angry and I am moving my feet, like shaking and stuff, that's stress."

The body provides a rich backdrop from which to draw metaphorical explanations of stress. For many youth, physical experiences of stress were the most easily discussed, regardless of level of English. One participant, a Filipino first generation immigrant studying to be a nurse, drew frequently on biomedically oriented bodily metaphors, describing stress as "like cancer to me." Something that is constant and persistent, that she described as almost an integral part of her life: "something that is always there that I can't get rid of and can't live without." She also described stress as a metaphorical 'blockage' in the body:

> Stress for me is kinda like... it's like... for example, you're a vein in your body and then you have a fat, and then that fat is the stress and it blocks the blood. Something like that...So stress for me is kinda like the bondage or the hindrance in my plans... Something that interferes with something that's really good and... stress for me, I experience it, well... especially each and every day I experience it.
> – Julia, 18, Philippines
> –

This same participant, who began as an interview participant and went on to join the research team for the photovoice project, struggled with her weight and related her body and her desire to achieve a more conforming body directly to stress. Her image of 'stress' was a measuring tape.

> *Personally, I can handle a bunch of stress like school, work and opportunity. However, being physically fit is my Achilles heel. Throughout my childhood, I have been called "fat", "pig", "whale" and other things that describes being physically big. I guess I got accustomed to it that I didn't mind whether I'm going to get skinny or not. However, as I get older, I realize that society will always be the boss of vanity. So right now, I am doing my best to be physically active but in an emotional state, it's like stabbing me with a knife while others cheer for me.*
> *– Julia, 18, Philippines*

The emotional and physical aspects of stress were often closely intertwined in youth narratives, as evident in their references to loneliness. Although research on immigrant youth often references loneliness in the context of adjustment, belonging and identity, the youth in this study also focused on the physical and emotional sensations of loneliness.

Isabela chose to express her reflections throughout the project in poetry. Loneliness, and in particular the bodily manifestations of loneliness, figured prominently in several of her pieces.

Hopefully

I want to feel again,
I want to start living again.
I don't recognize myself,
This is a different ride
That might change our lives forever
Which could be good,
But who knows?
I am scared,
Scared of loneliness,
Scared of all the choices,
Scared of losing,
Scared of all the possibilities.
Please,
Never
Ever
Forget me.
Good times or
Bad times.
Please,
Please,
Miss me.

-Isabela, 18, Brazil

The challenges of making friends and of experiencing loneliness, often discussed in relation to questions of belonging and identity, were repeated topics of conversation. Loneliness was described by many youth as a form of stress that is experienced as physical or emotional pain. Some referred to feelings of depression

or isolation while others focused on more physical manifestations. As with many of

the themes that emerged from the data, loneliness was seen not only as a challenge,

but also as something to be overcome, something that could be sometimes viewed in

a positive light. This positive focus was reflected in the interviews of many

participants and will be discussed in Chapter 6, in the context of resilience. The

poem below exemplifies both the physical effects of loneliness and the strength that

one individual draws from learning to cope with loneliness.

I am strong
Though sometimes it hits me. Or I let it hit me. The loneliness touches my skin and I
have no say anymore, there is nothing else that I am able to believe. I feel lonely. At
times it's a good loneliness, where you can find yourself and listen to your own
thoughts. Now, in nights like this I can honestly say there is nothing good about the
way I'm feeling, it comes without notice and suddenly I'm overwhelmed with the
unpleasant solitude. It takes over my entire body and even my soul is victimized.
What would heal moments like this is a person. A simple human being willing to
hold my hand and saying that everything will be alright even if that person has no
idea of what is about to come. You see, what keeps me going after these little
collapses is the fact that I've been here before and I am stronger than any loneliness.
I am stronger than this.
<div align="right">–Isabela, 18, Brazil</div>

Particularly in the context of the process of immigration, references to the spatial

and temporal dimensions of stress emerged as another central theme.

Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of Stress

Secondary analysis of the data highlighted the spatial and temporal aspects of stress.

The image below was captured by Paulina to depict stress. Her caption, and the

introductory quotation taken from Eckhart Tolle elegantly presents an aspect of the

temporal dimensions of stress that can confront youth after immigration. Nostalgia

for the past and concern about the future (which again is often tied into a desire to

meet expectations, to fulfill one's potential and make the sacrifices that often

accompany the process of immigration 'worth it') can leave people with little time to

engage with the present. The stories told by many participants give a sense of

operating in a reactive temporal framework, struggling to cope with daily

challenges, dealing with stress as it emerges. This image also demonstrates the

relational dimension of stress, with some youth internalizing the stress felt by their

families and particularly the stress that their parents may be experiencing.

"Unease, anxiety, tension, stress, worry — all forms of fear — are caused
by too much future, and not enough presence. Guilt, regret, resentment,
grievances, sadness, bitterness, and all forms of non-forgiveness are

caused by too much past, and not enough presence." - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

My dad and I share the same life path number: 3. We also happen to share many of the same self-inflicted burdens in our lives. Either we're nostalgically mulling the past or anxiously anticipating the future, but never fully living in the present. Our respective experiences in Victoria have been both stressful and challenging; a certain black hole of sorts. Of course, the grass is always greener on the other side, so that's where my dad is planning on going next.

– Paulina, 27, Bermuda/Poland/Canada

Immigration can also be construed as a disruption in time and space. Indeed, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four, psychological and developmentalist research focuses on the role of trauma and disruption in relation to identity that the process of immigration can cause in the lives of youth. In contrast, many youth interpreted their immigration experiences not as a temporal disruption or break but as part of an ongoing process through time. Paulina describes Ella, a first generation immigrant who reflects on what the process of immigration means to her, to represent the meaning of 'Navigating Multiple Worlds.'

"There is the feeling of being apart and the feeling of being a universe apart - the immigrant's strange knowledge that the language and lore that carry on in your own living space are so unlike the ones right outside." - Adam Gopnik

Ella is biracial; born in Ukraine to a Ukrainian mother and Somalian father, with her childhood spent in Somalia. On top of that, she is both an immigrant and a refugee. That's a lot of things to be. To me, navigating multiple worlds can best be defined by something that Ella had to say on the topic of being an immigrant that really resonated with me. She described immigration as a process; something that doesn't have a defined beginning and ending. Rather, immigration is an ongoing transition; a never-ending process of adaptation, much like the idea of navigating multiple worlds.

– Paulina, 27 Bermuda/Poland/Canada

The perception of immigration as a process that occurs over time, or as more of a gradual process is also reflected in the discussions of many youth with regards to how they identify themselves. Many youth saw their identity, particularly their ethnicity, as influenced by the passage of time and time since immigration. They also explained how their ideas about identity were also sometimes influenced by social

context (who they are with and where they are in particular moments in time) as well as individual experiences. The role of time and its effect on ideas about identity is described below:

> But right now I'm definitely Chinese, totally, 100% a Chinese, but I have no idea about the future. Maybe in a couple years I will be 50% Canadian, 50% Chinese, but, you know, when time goes by maybe I will feel: 'oh I'm more a Canadian!' Maybe later, you know, I will see… But of course, if everything goes well in Canada, I mean, I'm going to apply for my Master's degree later and; if everything goes well maybe I will do PhD and/or find a job to work a little bit; if everything goes well I'll build my family, I think, probably I will feel more Canadian, but if you know things don't work really well in Canada maybe I would move back to China or another place… Well I don't know, I don't really know.
>
> - Ken, 25 China

> I'm a Filipino. Maybe a Filipino-Canadian in a few months from now, but for now, just Filipino.
>
> - Jonathan, 16 Philippines

Youth descriptions of sacrifices made by their families to immigrate include another temporal dimension to stress for some, with the recognition that they are going backwards, or 're-starting from 0' when they leave their lives behind to immigrate. It is interesting to note however, that, as in the excerpt below, the idea of starting over, stopping time, or starting from 0, despite being recognized as a challenge, was not always seen only in negative terms. Participants described excitement related to the prospect of immigrating, or discussed their attempts to frame things positively in the face of major changes.

It was challenging cause all the idea to start from 0 and find new friends and not being able to be with your grandparents and the rest of your family. So it was hard I guess. It was stressful, it was hard. And like talking English at the beginning I was like super shy, and that was a big challenge and also like talking to people and then getting a job that was a challenge too, cause I was too scared to get a job. [To make it easier] I was just like, I was saying to myself that I was in a better place, like that I can be someone in this place, like start over. I was, I was far from… it took a while like, accepting that you're not going to see your friends in a while and yeah, it was tough.

- Julio, 18 Guatemala

Several participants also discussed the added challenges that can accompany increased responsibilities, particularly related to child-minding or translation responsibilities for parents with lower levels of English. For some, this related to temporal disruption as it translated to feelings of a 'lost childhood' or moving through time too quickly. Sherrie, a first generation Korean immigrant with a fairly good level of English comprehension and speaking ability explained:

Umm. To be honest I feel old. Because my parents they don't speak English well so I have to help them with documents, English documents, and I have a nephew here, he's going to elementary school now and I have to attend parents council stuff so that I can help my parents to understand English, and I feel really old cause I know the family money stuff, the financials, so when I compare myself to Canadian students they are like really enjoying their youth, but I feel like I'm not like them.

– Sherrie, 17, Korea

The stress of not knowing how much time an application for immigration would take and having to put one's life on hold was another example of the way youth discussed temporal dimensions of stress. Reflecting on his experiences, one newly arrived participant described the tension and stress caused by wait times and the uncertainty that can come hand-in-hand with the decision to immigrate.

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Yes, definitely is really difficult and stressful, hum… When we, when we started to… When we decided to immigrate to Canada to, I mean, to process, right? To do this, I was in university still, hum, in China and we were told that we were going to get the permission to come to Canada in one year or two years so, but actually we waited more… Longer than that, right? Longer than two years even so, you know, it was really frustrating actually, you just thought, you just felt like it should come… And every time, when you -- at that moment we could like check the process online and every time when I checked online it just said: 'is in the process,' you know? All the time, so we felt really, stressed, you know?

- Ken, 25, China

As well as the unknowns related to the time and procedures of processing immigration applications, as referenced earlier in the chapter, many of the youth interviewed in the project had little power or input into their families' decision to immigrate. For some, immigration was a time of great uncertainty and they described the continuation of this same uncertainty immediately after immigration.

Um, I don't know about my parents but I definitely did no research into Canada. I didn't know what things would look like, what people would be like, I didn't speak the language, I didn't know what kind of opportunities I would have here, so I wasn't mentally prepared to arrive here. I just kind of came and everything was a big shock…Everything unknown. It was like going to a brand new world.

- Chris, 24, China

This idea of a brand new world, seeing immigration as a both a disruption in space and time and as a new beginning, was also reflected in the experiences of multiple youth. The article excerpt, written by two members of the research team, and presented at the opening of this chapter, exemplifies this feeling of alienation. As immigrant youth arrive in their new host communities, there is no doubt that the process involves various forms of disruptions in both space and time, and that these disruptions may indeed make people feel 'alienated' as discussed in a wide variety

of literature related to immigrant experiences. In the image below, one participant

focused on the need to have a space, a place to 'feel,' to express oneself and to call

their own in order to facilitate coping with challenges.
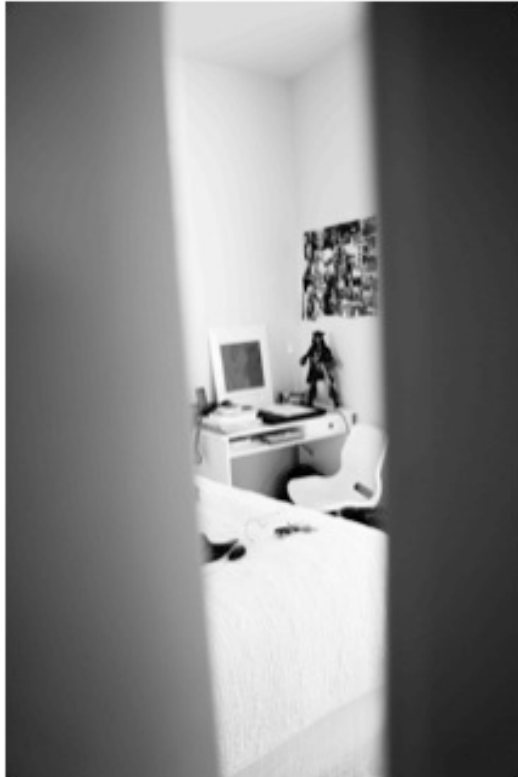
*This is my room, I made it my own, I made it feel like home. It has the
things I like, it has all I need and it's mine, only mine. When I want to sing
as loud as I can I'll run to my room and do it, happy or sad, I can sing,
dance, cry, write, read, draw, sleep and be alone when I need to. And we
all need a place to feel all we need to feel, right?*

- Isabela 18, Brazil

In the secondary analysis of youth perspectives and experiences of stress, it became

clear that in their descriptions of stress many were resisting the 'problematization'

of immigrant youth often presented in the literature. This will be elaborated in the

next chapter. Many youth spoke of positive as well as negative outcomes of

immigration and chose not to dwell on the 'trauma' of immigration that so often emerges as a focus in the literature. Instead, the research team and many of the youth interviewed emphasized their desire to focus, not only on the negative, but also the positive aspects of immigration, implying a desire to explore the power and agency of immigrant youth.

Although it was widely acknowledged by all that many aspects of the process of immigration and of arriving in a new city can be stressful, this was countered by descriptions of coping and the agency of youth in mobilizing new forms of knowledge to do so. Facebook and other forms of social media, along with Skype were often brought up in interview discussions as valuable communication tools for youth. As both tools and as new forms of knowledge and power that are frequently taken up more rapidly by youth than by adults, internet-based communication platforms facilitate continued connections to friends and family. Many of the youth emphasized their feelings of continued connection to family and friends, despite physical separation across countries or continents, and despite their repositioning in time and space through the process of immigration.

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, and in the photovoice images, many youth agentively moved from focusing on the bigger picture, expected sources of stress in their lives – expectations from family, peers and school, the trauma of disruption in space and time due to the process of immigration - to smaller things,

the daily stressors that many youth felt impacted their lives directly and that they felt needed more attention drawn to them.

"Sometimes It's the Little Things": Everyday Stressors

Like challenges, stress is just a small detour in our daily routine.
- Isabela, 18, Brazil

Growing up in a particular place, a person knows how to be in the world, what norms are there to be followed, and where the envelope can be pushed to express oneself, all structured by knowledge of the familiar. Over the course of the initial group analysis process undertaken by the research team, it became apparent that when the familiar no longer existed for many immigrant youth, they perceived that it was the little things, rather than the bigger picture 'challenges of immigration' that structured the ways in which they experienced stress in their daily lives.

One younger immigrant from Iraq spoke extensively of how happy he was that his family immigrated, insisting that it was for the best, describing where he was from as "somewhere he was not proud of" and "nothing but a warzone". He was unaware, at the time, that the research team member interviewing him was also from Iraq and had a very different perspective, a much more positive perspective of that country. Despite her attempts to have him think about the more positive side to Iraq historically and her questions related to his possible experiences of stress in the immigration process, he remained staunchly positive about his experiences with the process of immigration. When asked about his biggest challenge or stress, he described concerns related to wanting to fit in to Canada, and the challenges of figuring out daily things and new systems, recycling in particular.

> I'm going to go, my ... the only challenges I had here was like the laws here, like with recycling, like it took us a while to figure out... like learning the basic stuff ... cause there we didn't recycle at all... and it was all like... yeah like learning the basic stuff...
>
> -Rashed, 14, Iraq

In the focus group held with VIRCS youth night participants, the youth were asked to draw pictures of what stress meant to them, and of something that represented resilience for them. Having recently arrived from Cambodia, Noel, 13, attends Youth Night regularly and looks up to Danny, the youth night coordinator who is also from Cambodia. In the following paragraphs, taken from my field notes, Noel describes several of the everyday stressors that impact his life, as well as his pride in learning to navigate around his new surroundings.

Noel's pictures of something that represents stress, and something that represents resilience really stuck with me. They were simple. He explained that each of his pictures was both; something that was stressful before and now something that is not so stressful or not always stressful. On one side of the page he drew Vic High, explaining that when he got here it was so stressful because he didn't know anyone and didn't talk to anyone and didn't understand what was going on. And then he went to the counselor to change classes and he met one person and then that person made him meet other people so now he has 'lots of friends and its good'. He did say that it is 'not all good cause there are still people who are racist'. (The way so many of the youth casually talk about racism is really interesting to me. Mostly in the context of 'yeah, its good, well some people are racist but…') On the other side of his page he drew an intersection with yellow highlighter. I looked at this with interest and was expecting this to be some kind of metaphor for the different paths he had to chose from or something, but no. It went like this
Me: So this is… roads or directions or?
Noel: This is.. like how do you say… where you cross?
Me: Crosswalk? Intersection?
Noel: Yes see how there are no lights? Intersection with no lights. By my school. And I was so scared. And I had no idea when to walk or where to walk and I thought 'yes. I am going to die'. And now, now I can cross no problem. So now its good.

No metaphor. It's just hard figuring out how to cross the street in new place… It's a little surprising how much the youth talk about the challenges of getting around: the buses, driving in a new way, getting lost, as main sources of stress in their lives. It's also the ability to get around that is one of the things that many of the youth are proud of when they reflect of their experiences. Not Noel though, when we came to the last question, "what are you proud of," he had an interesting answer. I think he interpreted 'proud' more as what you like about Victoria, rather than a personal accomplishment. Noel is proud of the soccer pitches here. In his words, 'they are amazing. In Cambodia they don't even have grass and here they have turf'. This is what he is proud of. The soccer pitches… And the fact that he has friends now and he can cross the street without dying.
– Focus Group Reflections, February 15th 2012.

Going into this process, having read many articles focused on acculturation stress, family tensions enhanced by immigration, and emphasizing immigration as a traumatic process, I was expecting to hear many stories reflecting these types of negative experiences. However, while many youth did experience difficult

transitions, exacerbated by separation from family and sources of support, language difficulties, and challenges making friends or fitting in to their new environments, overwhelmingly, in interviews and in work with the research team, discussions of 'stress' were matched with or framed by discussions of resilience. Rather than traumatic experiences, so often emphasized in the literature, when they began to analyze the interviews, the youth research team found that really it was "the simple, menial, everyday things that can be what cause some of the most stress for people..." (Research Team Reflections, March 2012). This was exemplified in the number of times simple things, like taking the bus, came up in the interviews or were subject of photovoice work.

For youth who arrived in Victoria when they were school-aged, many of the daily stressors they focused on were related to getting around school, and navigating the system without getting lost.

High school was a really big challenge for me. Making friends and just getting through it was hard. This is a picture of where I went to high school.

-Estuardo, 20 Canada/Guatemala/Chile

Interestingly, lockers figured prominently into several discussions and images related to the daily stresses youth can experience. The same participant who spoke of the challenges navigating laws and recycling explained:

> What was the most stressful? I'm going to say my first week at school, cause I came in May, and I was like in Canada for four days, and went to school and could barely speak any English and had no idea what was going on, and I went to school to just like check out the place, like Vic High, and it wasn't bad so I came back... Yeah starting school and getting used to the routine [was hard]... Like we didn't have any lockers in Iraq and the whole school system was different, like here they have like 4 blocks and there we had like 7 and you can't pick them, and here you can pick whatever you want.
>
> - Rashed, 14, Iraq

The level of excitement in my body to go to school everyday was somewhere around -1 and 0, I was surrounded by people and yet I was always lonely. It was an interesting experience, where by the end you can only be grateful for the people who saw and helped you, or for the ones that made it just a little harder and made you just a bit stronger.

– Isabela, 18, Brazil

Over the course of our analysis, several gaps in supports available for youth in schools emerged. Many of the youth recounted struggling with school schedules. May described her first week of school after arriving from the Philippines:

> … in the middle of those days… I don't really feel acceptance. So, I ended up just like going to classes and there's even one time that I got so confused with the class schedule that… it's like, I didn't notice that each and every day the course changes from A block to B block and then next day, it's B block and A block. And nobody supported me on that…Well… it was the second day… where everybody's getting their books in the library. I don't even know they have a student ID card or something. So they, I form a line and I remember I was grade 10 and I was looking at all the books of all the students. It was grade 12. And I talked to the teacher and it

took me a lot of guts to do it. I was just like standing and shaking like and I said, um sir... I think have the wrong class. And he said, "can I see your schedule?" And then he said, "oh! You're in the other classroom. What grade are you in?" And I said, I think I'm in grade ten. And then he kind of assist me on going there. And it was in the middle of a class. So the teachers were just like talking in front of us and just staring at everybody and then I looked so confused and everybody just – one of them is kind of like laughing at me. Probably they think that I'm so stupid I can't even figure out some things.

-May, 18, Philippines

Many of these school related challenges persist as there are no translated resources to support youth working to understand their school agendas. This was one of the issues that the research team decided to address later in the project, discussed in detail in the dissemination phase described in Chapter 2 and again in Chapter 6.

This repeated acknowledgement of every day stressors, as opposed to the more common focus on extreme transitions, cultural dissonance and traumatic experiences, may have been facilitated by the design of the project. With immigrant youth interviewing other immigrant youth, a sense of shared experiences emerged. Less attention needed to be paid to the challenges of the process of immigration and the capital S sources of stress, (such as histories of trauma, or loss often focused on in the literature). Their common experiences allowed them to move to focus on the things that influenced their every day lives, what the research team labeled as 'the daily stresses.'

This is not to say that non-immigrant youth do not experience stress as a result of every-day pressures. Rather, this focus on everyday stressors in the lives of

immigrant youth specifically is an acknowledgement of their importance, in addition

to the stresses that can accompany the immigration process, and the complexities

faced by newcomer youth as they navigate daily life. The challenges of getting

around, negotiating expectations, and adjusting to new environments are

compounded by language barriers, competing expectations (e.g. from parents and

schools), changes in social networks and supports, and the financial pressures that

can often face new immigrants.

Focusing on everyday stressors also provided an accessible starting point from

which youth participants and the research team were able to discuss the challenges

they face. The purposive ambiguity of stress plays an important role here; in

focusing on daily stressors (exams, getting around etc.) youth may also be

normalizing their experiences to a certain extent, allowing them to 'fit in' or at least

discuss shared experiences of stress with their non-immigrant and immigrant

counterparts.

One of the youth researchers summarized our findings as follows:

> We are finding out that even though we all come from different places,
> with different cultures and languages, we all face the same obstacles and
> we all go through the same challenges. What is stressful for us is dealing
> with homework, tests and quizzes, but also learning how to live in a
> different circumstance, most times without people that were always by
> our side. So stress developed a whole new meaning for us, and that's what
> we have in common, that's how we are bound.

> Research Team Reflections, March 2012

Above all, this focus on the 'little things' may be the result of a certain functionality. The 'little things' are also the things that there may be potential to address, to take action. Many youth have no control over their family's decision to immigrate, but after arrival, these 'daily stressors' are the things they might be able to exert some form of control or power over. As previously mentioned, while learning how to navigate the city and get around on the bus was frequently discussed as a key source of stress, after asking youth to reflect on their experiences, it often also emerged as an area of progress and pride. This was also true of learning English and figuring out how to navigate the school system, among other things. The image below was chosen by one research team member, as a representation of what she is most proud of since coming to Victoria.

I overcame a lot of challenges, and had a lot of great opportunities that I could never experience in China. I am proud at the fact I came to Victoria and adjusted to my life here.

– Sinney, 17, China

As youth talked about and photographed scenes and objects that related to the

challenges they face in their lives and their perspectives of stress, they did so using

many frames of reference. The thematic areas elaborated in the above sections

were rarely discussed independently by the youth involved in the project. Often,

people moved fluidly between discussions of multiple themes, intertwining

descriptions of the physicality of stress with discussions of the everyday

contributors to stress, as well as the temporal and spatial dimension of stress. While

many specifically used the language of stress, others used the language of

'challenges' to include reflections on stress or used a mix of terminology. It is worth

noting that many of the youth interviewed, along with members of the research

team, emphasized the need to focus on the positive aspects of the challenges they

faced. Often discussions of stress were simultaneously discussions of coping with

and of overcoming challenges.

Described by one participant, a Somali-Ukrainian immigrant youth who also works

with immigrant youth herself:

> I used to use the word stress, but there's such negative connotations with
> that word that upon using that word, I'd feel even worse, so I try to view
> things as a challenge. Like challenges are placed before you to overcome
> and I feel like I've succeeded…
>
> - Ella, 26, Somalia/Ukraine

The desire of many youth to focus on the positive, which includes coping with and

overcoming 'stress,' will be further elaborated in Chapter 6, which will discuss the

potential of stress with regards to operating as an idiom of resilience, as well as an

idiom of distress. Although experiences of stress were thematically analyzed along

the lines of the physicality of stress, spatial and temporal aspect and the primacy of

daily stressors (often presented in negative terms), many examples illustrate the

desire of many youth to move beyond discussions of stress and challenges to

discussions of coping strategies and overcoming adversity. These three framings of

stress were used to describe historical, social, and individual contexts that

influenced the meanings given to 'stress' (or stress as a discourse) as well as how

stress was experienced by individuals (or stress as an idiom of distress).

Discussions of the physicality of stress can be linked to the ways that stress

functions as an idiom of distress while the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress

can be associated with the discourse of stress. The focus on everyday stresses

allowed youth to engage with stress as a discourse and stress as in idiom of distress

in ways that were relevant to their own experiences. In this context, the negotiation

of multiple expectations emerged as a meta-theme that tied together the ways that

stress is used by youth as both an idiom of distress and as a discourse. Exploring the

idea of expectations allows for further consideration of the ways that stress is

embedded in the bodies and lives of immigrant youth, and of the use of 'stress'

language as an idiom of resilience as well as distress. The following section returns

to a discussion of stress on a theoretical level.

Part Three: Navigating Expectations and Finding Balance

As described in Chapter 1, discourse is about *where meaning comes from*. As such,

framing 'stress' as a discourse allows for full consideration of the social and political

contexts that make 'stress' a valid system of representation, in a particular temporal

context, for individuals and communities. Discussed earlier in this chapter in the

context of the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress, discourses of family

sacrifice- people places and things 'left behind'- and immigration for a 'better future

for the children,' play a role in generating the meaning of stress for many immigrant

youth. Associated with the discourse of sacrifice, discourses of 'success,'

predominantly discussed in terms of the importance of academic success leading to

professional and financial success, also shape the meanings of stress, as do

discourses related to the importance of respect, and family values or traditions.

Foucauldian theory of discourse is premised on the belief that "changes of public

ideas precede changes in private individuals" (McHoul and Grace 1995) or in other

words, that discourse alone is what shapes individuals and their actions. In the

context of stress, this discounts the agentive aspects of expressing distress. While

many youth acknowledged the role of multiple discourses as influencing their

experiences of stress, a Foucauldian approach, looking only to the discourse of

stress, doesn't seem to accommodate the ways that youth navigate the multitude of

experiences and expectations shaping their lives after immigration as they

transform or integrate experiences of stress into their ways of being in the world.

In her keynote address at the 2013 Cascadia Conference in Vancouver, Margaret

Lock emphasized "getting stuck at the level of discourse alone is no longer enough in

anthropology." In focusing on *what meaning is,* idioms of distress respond to the

need to analyze manifestations of distress in the context of personal and cultural meaning complexes (Nichter 1981). Thinking about stress as both a discourse and an idiom of distress allows for a fuller consideration of the experiences of youth and in addresses some of the shortcomings of focusing on discourse alone. This approach also allows for an exploration of the role of flexibility in enhancing the resilience of immigrant youth, to be elaborated further in Chapter 6.

While the earlier discussion about the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress provides examples of how stress, as a discourse, is invoked by immigrant youth, the examples of the physical and emotional experiences of stress as grounded in the body suggest stress is also frequently used as an idiom of distress. In using and refining stress terminology, immigrant youth are adopting 'stress' as both an idiom of distress and as a discourse, as a normalized way to express distress, what it means, where it comes from, and ultimately, as a way to integrate stress and coping in a way that allows them to also engage with stress as an idiom of resilience.

Many of the participants, as well as members of the research team, discussed 'walking the line' between cultures, navigating or balancing various aspects of their lives in terms of expectations. The meta-theme of expectations and the metaphor of balance emerged as key to the ways youth talked about stress, allowing them to move between discussions of stress in the context of discourse, to the invocation of stress as an idiom of distress.

Navigating Expectations

The finding that expectations placed on youth, by themselves, by their families and within the context of school, are identified as primary sources of stress by many youth is not surprising. Indeed, much of the literature that is focused on immigrant youth is framed in terms of the challenges they face, and frequently the expectations of others are identified as causal agents in the stress, levels of depression, or other challenges (largely related to adjustment) facing immigrant youth (Wolf 1997; Yeh et al. 2005). Many discussions of stress in our interviews were focused on expectations, and research team members identifying expectations as a key source of stress early on in the project.

Rachel, a Chinese-Canadian first generation immigrant youth, was finishing grade 11 when a member of the research team interviewed her. Rachel has been in Canada since she was 3 years old, and is very involved in extracurricular activities with a large network of immigrant and non-immigrant friends. She continually pushes herself to excel academically. Rachel was part of the first VIRCS theatre group where she contributed to the creation of a powerful skit, "What is my Culture?" that presented multiple aspects of a more traditional upbringing, and contrasted it to the expectations of peers in a school setting. In her skit, the main character introduces aspects of her 'culture' to the audience, and then slowly relinquishes certain aspects of her traditional upbringing and the expectations of her parents to leave the stage with a group of 'Canadian' friends, keeping only a few aspects of her 'culture' with

her. The rhetoric of balance is pervasive in Rachel's description of her experiences of stress:

> School, and probably my parents, [are my main sources of stress]. And trying to balance everything, like all my activities, mainly homework, like if I get too much homework I get really stressed out, and balancing that with like piano and volunteering and friends and family is really hard. And I also get stressed from my parents because I have problems with managing my time because, and then sometimes they get angry with me and they keep scolding me and it gives me a lot of pressure because they just say it over and over and over and I already know but its hard for me to change it and it just builds up. So, parents and school. And managing time.
>
> <div align="right">-Rachel, 16, China</div>

Similarly, Felipe, a 17-year-old first generation immigrant from Mexico talked about balancing the multiple demands of school with keeping parents happy. He also evokes the idea of the desire for balance and his generalized view of the discourse of stress in terms of where his stress comes from, but also discusses his physical reactions to stress as an idiom of distress, getting angry as a result of stress and needing to listen to music to cope.

> Well this past week was pretty stressful, cause I have got my school finals next week and I have so many assignments due this week and umm. They drive me crazy! I had to like do homework every day, and then my mom was like, cause when I get stressed I get mad, so my mom was like, "why are you mad at me?" and I'm like, "I'm not mad, I'm just stressed out, leave me alone." And then we start again and again. So this week I was listening to music 24/7- before going to bed, before going to school, the bus ride…
>
> <div align="right">-Felipe, 17 Mexico</div>

Stress that youth linked to school relates not only to performance on tests, and classroom abilities, but also to the stress of not understanding the language, not living up to the expectations of teachers (related to school performance) and not being able to make friends or live up to the expectations of friends (not being able to

go out, to go to parties etc.) As previously mentioned, there is also a real

consciousness among many of the youth of the efforts being made by their family to

provide a better life, with many expressing strong feelings of responsibility or

'owing it to their family' that they succeed.

Sanjay, an 18-year-old first generation immigrant from India who immigrated when

he was 12, talked about his original excitement about the prospect of immigrating,

as it would be an opportunity to fly in a plane for the first time and a chance to start

a new life. He reflected on all that his parents' gave up for him to immigrate and also

talked about his desire to do well, to meet the expectations of his parents and his

challenges in managing the stress of school.

I guess for me, [stress] is uh… first of all, homework… Okay. Homework is uh… first
of all… and… like, here, like, you know… in Canada… the people have their own life,
right? It's not like, people are doing work, people are doing this, people are doing…
they're like 24/7. They're on the work, right? And they're feeding their childrens.
Like, my dad, like he's doing seven days a week work. Pretty hard for us. And uh…
for-for, like pay the bill… like, pay the like… everything… like, it's really stressful…
for them. But for us, like… schoolwork… like, how can we handle this thing? Like, if-
if-if this is a question, how can I give the answer to them? Because I know the
answer in my language, but I can't speak it in my, in English. Like, you know, like?
Some-some of the words are really difficult. So yeah. So it gets really stressful. You
know, like, why can't I do this?
                                                                                            - Sanjay, 18, India

Youth frequently used discussions of expectations to talk about stress both in terms

of broader discourses and individual experiences that can shape individual

experiences of stress. Many youth were very conscious of their ability to 'walk the

line' between what they perceived as 'different cultural ways of life.' Many also

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engaged in a conscious decision-making process related to how they use stress terminology, how they embody stress internally and experience stress externally.

Jameela is a Canadian who immigrated to Egypt with her mother and stepfather at a young age and converted to the Muslim faith, only to return to Canada after her parents separated. She also recently stopped wearing the hijab and started an anti-homophobia Facebook page. She defines herself in terms of 'multiple layers' and presented many overlapping influences and cultural flows to describe both her sources of stress, how she copes with challenges, and what 'Navigating Multiple Worlds' means to her. In her descriptions below, she emphasizes the interconnections of her Canadian and Egyptian worlds, but also draws attention to her own, independent world.

This flower has multiple layers like my world. Every petal resembles an experience and each layer represents one of the worlds.
                                                    - Jameela, 18, Egypt

This represents multiple worlds for me; it represents both of my worlds; both the Egyptian, Canadian, and parts of my own world. I took a headscarf and taped on different flags, symbols of my life and words that are important to me that I drew and coloured. I left an opening so it appears that the person is looking into my world.

-Jameela, 18, Canada/Egypt

Expectations are often discussed in relation to identity and various forms of 'crisis' that immigrant youth can face. Identity and the common portrayals of immigrant youth in the literature will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. There has been little focus on the positive potential of learning to cope with varying expectations. However, it is worth thinking about the possibility that youth who learn to navigate multiple or conflicting expectations successfully (and indeed 'multiple worlds' in many cases) may in fact, with sufficient support, use these experiences to contribute to enhanced resilience. This argument will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Alongside references to the expectations, many youth used the metaphor of balance to describe their experiences of stress.

The Metaphor of Balance and Imbalance: Youth mobilizing Stress as a Discourse and as an Idiom

References to balance, imbalance and disruption reoccur across many of the thematic areas that emerged from the analysis of youth perspectives on stress presented earlier in this chapter. The value of balance and the problematization of imbalance, along with the popularized notion of stress as a generalized, negative force or outcome of pressure, anxiety or change, continue to be commonly referenced in the literature on immigrant youth and stress. This generalized view of stress was also shared by many of the youth involved in the project. Ideas of balance were frequently tied to notions of desired states, or good ways to be in the world.

When I began working with the research team, I referred to the project as "Navigating Multiple Worlds" simply because that was the name I gave to the original funding application. Early on in our research meetings, I worked with the youth to develop a new name for our project, and, then, a new name for the photovoice exhibit. We came up with several options, but in the end, the research team unanimously voted to keep the title of 'Navigating Multiple Worlds,' a title that, in itself, evokes the idea of finding one's way or finding balance. The need to balance multiple aspects of life, multiple expectations or multiple worlds, was reflected in many of the photovoice images. The image below, of a tree reaching out in many directions and the caption that accompanies it exemplify the underlying ideas of balance that comes hand in hand with many discussions of immigration and stress:

In this picture, the branches are the many worlds we are always navigating, sometimes we are in different places, different countries, but we are always dealing with many other worlds, other realities with our friends, with our families, in our respective schools, or colleges, or at VIRCS. We are surrounded by situations and people that make us navigate multiple worlds, they teach us and we move on to something different, that's how life works, it never stops, we just stop noticing.
– Isabela, 18, Brazil

In the example of stress described at the beginning of the discussion of the 'physicality of stress' (p 120), stress is tied to both the physical pain of a headache and the idea of balance and imbalance, the idea that stress is something that builds up over time, something that can only be managed or tolerated to a certain point, after which people reach some kind of breaking point. Particularly in descriptions of experiences of stress grounded in the body, the idea of balance, as being a desired state, a good way of being in the world was often referenced. When stress created an imbalance, physical symptoms of stress resulted. This framework of balance and imbalance provides the background to allow for a more thorough exploration of stress from the perspective of youth, how youth perspectives align with discussions

of stress and identity in the literature, and considering stress as an expression of subjectivity for youth, all central focuses of Chapter 4.

This chapter presented data related to the experiences of immigrant youth and the challenges they can face after immigrating to a new community. In part one, interview and photovoice material were used to present youth perspectives, organized by various themes that emerged through the initial analysis of our data. Part two moved to a more nuanced analysis and discussion of the theme of stress: as something physical and grounded in the body; in terms of spatial and temporal dimensions; and, in terms of everyday stress, or the little things that can impact daily lives. Part three returned to a consideration of stress as both an idiom of distress and as a discourse.

The following chapter will focus on how youth experiences of stress are discussed in the context of the assumptions and interpretations of immigrant youth in the literature, and predominantly as they relate to discussions of identity. The discussion will move to consider the agency of youth and how the language of stress may allow immigrant youth to talk about their experiences, their sense of self and their way of being in the world, in a way that can be easily understood by other immigrant youth and by their Canadian counterparts.

CHAPTER FOUR: Identity, Stress and Subjectivity

Through the interviews it became apparent that immigrant youth frequently engaged in discussions of 'identity' or used the language of identity to frame their experiences and to express how they defined themselves in their new surroundings. (In our coding structure, the theme of identity included: discussions of ethnicity, self-definition/self perception, and differentiation between self and others). The language of identity was frequently used in the context of discussions of stress. However, there are key differences in the ways that youth themselves perceive their own identities and engage with the idea of identity that can be contrasted with the dominant portrayals of immigrant youth identities in the literature. These differences provide a productive space to consider the use of stress and identity terminology in relation to expressions of subjectivity, and will be the focus of this chapter.

In the literature related to immigrant youth, the themes of identity and stress are frequently intertwined, often discussed in terms of adaptation, acculturation or adjustment. In this chapter, I discuss youth experiences of stress in the context of the dominant assumptions and interpretations in the literature related to immigrant youth, identity, and stress. Over the course of the Navigating Multiple Worlds research, identity terminology emerged as a pivotal way in which immigrant youth were discussing their way of feeling, being and interacting with their surroundings. In other words, discussions of identity were frequently part of the way youth were

talking about stress as well as being central to the ways in which youth were expressing their subjectivity.

Understanding how immigrant youth engage with notions of identity and stress, in contrast to the dominant assumptions in much of the literature, also establishes the ground-work for considering the added benefits that immigrant youth may gain: from being able to normalize challenging experiences through the use of ambiguous, flexible stress terminology, and from enhanced resilience as a result of learning to navigate multiple expectations. I provide a brief summary of the literature related to immigrant youth and identity before moving to a discussion of youth perspectives on identity as elucidated by the Navigating Multiple Worlds project.

Immigrant Youth Identity(ies) and Stress in the Literature

In chapter one, I reviewed the literature related to immigrant youth and stress and the theorizing of stress in anthropology. Here I focus specifically on the intersection of immigration, youth and identity. As introduced in Chapter 1, researchers have related many of the challenges facing immigrant youth to issues of adjustment, acculturation, changes in family structure, and changing or conflicting social, educational and familial expectations. These challenges, in turn, are often discussed in the context of broader questions concerning identity formation in immigrant youth and the impacts of changes in social relationships and cultural context on the

development of feelings of belonging and senses of self that can occur as a result of immigration.

The recognition of youth as a time of identity formation and development is longstanding (Caldwell, Guthrie, and Jackson 2006; Erickson 1968; Mistry and Wu 2010; Swanson, Spencer, and Petersen 1998). According to Erickson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, ego identity is a more or less actually attained but forever to be revised sense of the self within a particular social reality (Goodenow and Espin 1993). Erikson (1968) emphasizes the development of a sense of identity as the key task of what he describes as the 'crisis of adolescence.' Adolescence has been described as "the time of life during which concerns with the self are most salient" (Goodenow and Espin 1993). As dilemmas about independence, the future and sexuality take on new meaning, it is a time that involves the development of distinctly individual preferences and attachments to social groups (Khanlou 2008; Yeh et al. 2003; Yeh et al. 2005).

According to many identity theorists, the goal of youth engagement in the processes of identity formation is to develop and elaborate a dynamic and coherent sense of identity, which includes those aspects of the self that are felt to be central, important and valued (Goodenow and Espin 1993; Erickson 1968; Khanlou and Crawford 2006). It has been emphasized that this sense of identity must also be one that makes sense, and fits into larger society (Erickson 1968). However, the literature that focuses on immigrant youth and identity suggests that coming to an identity, or

identities that 'make sense' can be problematic when the 'society' in question is comprised of multiple social and cultural contexts, each with a range of norms and expectations (Bhugra 2004; Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt 2006). Suarez-Orozco (2001) elaborates,

> in an increasingly heterogeneous, transnational world… social spaces are more fractured and discontinuous than ever before. The Ericksonian theory of identity and sameness needs to be updated to effectively engage the complexities of experience in this area (92).

Newer work, acknowledging the flexible, negotiated nature of identity (Kondo 1990; Suarez-Orozco 2000; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Tsang et al. 2003) struggles with how identities are crafted and re-crafted as youth make their way in various social settings.

Much of the literature focuses on how identity formation is influenced by an individual's perception of intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences (Swanson, Spencer, and Petersen 1998). In schools, Suarez-Orozco (2000, 2001, 2007) discusses how negative attitudes of host cultures towards immigrants can take the form of 'identity threats' borne by veiled (or not-so-veiled) discrimination and stereotypes. Related literature also focuses on additional challenges faced by immigrant youth as they work to 'fit in' to their school environments; learning to communicate in a new language, and 'assimilating' certain aspects of their new culture: clothing, music, the use of language, and attitudes (Vargas 2009). At the same time youth are often under pressure from their families to excel academically, uphold family responsibilities, including care giving to younger siblings, and

maintain their 'culture' (Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010; Wolf 1997). As youth are often forced to adapt quickly (through exposure in school), they are often able to master the language of their new country faster than their parents. This can lead to increased feelings of alienation between children and their parents (Qin 2006).

Introduced in Chapter 3, the various contexts of family, school and peer groups create a web of expectations that all youth must navigate. Research has also focused on the profound changes in socioeconomic status, support networks, and family structure that can accompany immigration (Phelan, Davidson, and Cao 1991; Willgerodt 2008; Yeh et al. 2008a; Yeh et al. 2008b). In many cases, immigration also changes the dynamics in family relationships. After immigration, many women take jobs outside the home, which can result in changes in gender roles and power dynamics within the family (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Qin 2006; Yeh et al. 2003). Competing or conflicting expectations placed on youth from family, friends, and school are often presented as a source of inner or even outwardly expressed conflict, exemplified by stories of immigrant youth 'acting out' or 'not speaking to parents' and turning their backs on their traditional upbringings (Yeh et al. 2008a). Much of the literature emphasizes the additional differences in culture and lifestyle and the resulting challenges that can face immigrant youth, most often portrayed as working to develop a 'coherent sense of self.' This is problematic as it assumes an inherent incoherence in the identities of immigrant youth.

In the literature, identity in youth is also frequently discussed in relation to place and ethnicity. This take on identity is premised on the common idea that to develop a strong sense of personal identity, self-appraisal processes integrate many aspects of an individual's life, with perceptions of self gained through social relations and interactions with cultural context (Swanson, Spencer, and Petersen 1998). Caglar (1997) suggests that ethnic identities are often treated as the most basic of identities people possess, and although they are often claimed by individuals, they can also be imposed on individuals or groups. This can then create a challenge for many youth who may not personally identify with some or all of the aspects of their ethnic identity (Caglar 1997; Qin, Way, and Rana 2008; Qin 2006; Vargas 2009; Willgerodt 2008; Willgerodt and Thompson 2005).

Calgar (1997) critiques the increasing focus on ethnic identity in research, based on a broader critique of the use of 'culture' as an expression and determinant of difference. He suggests that ethnicizing 'cultural' differences marks boundaries between people, and goes along with a multicultural discourse that wrongly constructs culture as the 'reified possession of ethnic groups or communities'. Calgar (1997) also argues that in popular discourse, culture is merged with 'ethnic community' and 'ethnic identity' so that differences of culture are imagined to be homologous with differences between ethnic communities. When this occurs, ethnic identity can be privileged over other identities.

Despite these conceptual limitations, research has found associations between

strength of ethnic identity and resilience in immigrant populations and specifically

in youth (Espiritu and Wolf 2001; Gallo et al. 2009; Mossakowski 2007;

Mossakowski 2003). Resilience, in this context, is defined as a potential resistant or

positive trajectory in the face of adversity. Some research suggests ethnic identity

can be accessed as a form of social capital, influencing social and economic

opportunities and contributing to resilience (Zhou 2005).

In a study of perceived discrimination among Filipino immigrants, Mossakawski

(2003) also found that the strength of identification with an ethnic group was

directly associated with fewer depressive symptoms; ethnic identity buffered the

stress of racial or ethnic discrimination. In a similar vein, research suggests that

despite the disadvantages facing Hispanics living in the US (the stresses of

immigration and acculturation, low incomes, poor educational and occupational

opportunities, and exposure to discrimination), when compared to non-Hispanic

whites, Hispanics show better health outcomes (Gallo et al. 2009). This suggests that

features of the cultures and social relations of different ethnic groups, (like familism,

social resources or religiousness), may enhance resiliency in youth.

A major conceptual issue in understanding identity, and particularly ethnic identity,

as well as the role of cultural context in identity development originates from the

tension between mainstream development literature, which emphasizes individual

identity, and the cross-cultural development literature, which emphasizes group

membership (Tsang et al. 2003). While developmental research is interested in how the adolescent develops an individual identity, in relation to parents and peers, cross-cultural studies usually follow a group comparison approach that takes adolescents as members of particular ethnic groups (Tsang et al. 2003). All adolescents invoke different aspects of their identities in different contexts. Although this may be common sense, it is often overlooked in research focused on ethnic identities, as research continues to focus on conceptualizing 'ethnic identity' as a singular, unified concept (Tsang et al. 2003).

Social relations and various aspects of cultural context clearly influence identity development in immigrant youth. Youth use multiple strategies for negotiating identities and research demonstrates that time (after immigration) does not have a uniform effect in the lives of individuals (Tsang et al. 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2005). This lack of uniformity suggests that a more individualized approach is needed.

In framing the literature related to identity and youth, it is important to acknowledge that just as 'identity' is a dynamic concept, shifting, negotiated and flexible, so too is the category of 'youth' (Bucholtz and Skapouli 2010; Bucholtz 2002). Ongay (2010) suggests the idea of 'youth' can be characterized as a relational, historically built concept that is situational, in constant flux, transient and built on and between power relationships. The concepts of youth and identity, both dynamic, are also intrinsically linked (Ongay 2010). Described by Valenzula, "To talk

about being young is to talk about a process of shaping youth identities" (Ongay 2010:378).

It is clear that immigration may challenge the ways in which youth define their identities. The following section presents youth perspectives on identity that were emphasized in the Navigating Multiple Worlds project. These perspectives will be compared to the common focuses in the literature and the relationship between identity, self-perception, stress and expressions of subjectivity will be explored.

Youth Perspectives on Identity

In the literature related to immigrant youth, the challenges or stresses of immigration are often reduced to problems of identity formation or development. Suarez-Orozco (2000), in his work on immigrant youth and identity, exemplifies this, focusing on the 'drastic changes' that can be experienced by individuals engaged in processes of migration:

> By any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a person can undergo. Most critically, immigration removes individuals from many of their relationships and predictable contexts- extended families and friends, community ties, jobs, living situation, customs and (often) language. Immigrants are stripped of many of their sustaining social relationships, as well as of their roles, which provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world. Without a sense of competence, control and belonging, they may feel marginalized (Suarez-Orozco, 2000:195).

"Identities Under Siege" is the title used by the author of the above passage to describe the tensions and 'problematic' processes of identity negotiation that are faced by many immigrant youth. Across disciplines, the categorization of 'immigrant youth' is still dominantly perceived as 'problematic', with immigrant youth inhabiting some sort of liminal space, on the outside of both home and host cultures.

Assuming that immigrant youth identities are in flux, are contentious in some way, and are 'in development' is not productive, as it fails to acknowledge the agency of individual youth, and the ways that youth engage with their own ideas of identity, as full fledged beings-in-their own right. A more productive approach is emerging in literature concerning the development of identity and belonging: the concept of 'flexibility'. The shift towards understanding identities as fluid, dynamic and in constant flux, is important for deconstructing what Strathern (1992) calls 'our cultural fiction of the integrated and bounded individual who is presumed to be a member of a "culture" and who lives his or her life as a continuous, directed person' (in Caglar 1997:171).

Emphasized by Bucholtz (2002),

> The most productive view of youth cultures and youth identities, then, must admit both the ideological reality of categories and the flexibility of identities... draw[ing] from theories of practice activity and performance to demonstrate how youth negotiate cultural identities in a variety of contexts... (544).

In contrast to the common focus in the literature on the problematic aspects of immigrant youth identities, youth perspectives in the Navigating Multiple Worlds

research were dominated by these ideas of flexibility, with youth recognizing and valuing their varied experiences, the influence of these experiences on their 'identity' and the ways in which they experience and cope with stress.

So, while identity is often portrayed as a key source of stress for immigrant youth in the literature, youth themselves are talking about their ideas of identity and stress in ways that are very different. While concerns related to questions of identity can be found in some descriptions of sources of stress, in our research identity is most often discussed in terms of the value of flexibility and allowing youth to contextualize experiences and cope with stress.

This idea of flexibility in identity is also related to the discussion of balance, embedded in discussions of stress and coping. When asked, many of the interview participants perceived their identities as layered, describing their day-to-day lives as moving 'between' identities, in the home, at school, with friends or in the workplace. This idea of balance was also emphasized in the context of youth valuing the dynamic aspects of their identities; as youth, as part of their communities in Victoria and in Canada, as immigrants and as immigrants from particular places. Finding balance and getting to a place where individuals were able to recognize and value the dynamic nature of their identity/ies was described as a source of pride and as an important step in coping with the stress that can accompany immigration. To move away from conceptualizations of immigrant youth identities as

problematic, allows for consideration of how youth are manipulating ideas of

identity and stress in ways that allow them to express their subjectivity.

 In the image below, one participant compares the layers in a latte to the layers in

her 'identity', describing the value of having a multicultural background.

Layers of multiculturalism define me. The bold and rich flavors of a latte,
parallel that of my ethnicity. It builds me up, making me an open minded,
light-hearted individual like the frothed milk, but strong, still strong as a
spicy cinnamon stick.

- Tamara, 18, Iraq

As introduced in chapter 3, 'identity' was a theme that emerged from interviews and

photovoice work over the course of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project (see p.

45), discussed primarily in terms of youth ethnic identities. In response to the

question 'How do you identify yourself?' Some of the youth did describe their

identities as static:

> I think I am Chinese.
> [Do you always identify yourself in this way, or does it change depending on context?]
> Yes I do, it never changed.
>
> — Fay 19, China

However, the majority of participants described their identity as something that

changes over time, as presented in the discussion of the temporal dimensions of

stress in Chapter 3. Many described feeling 'in between,' describing their identities

as dynamic, and suggesting they changed their identities based on context (namely

who they were with) or that the ways in which they identified themselves would

potentially change over time. Sheila explained:

> I feel like something in between. I don't want to identify myself as Chinese for some reason, which I don't really know. Um, it's interesting actually. But I definitely don't feel Canadian either.
>
> — Sheila 26, China

Javier, a second-generation immigrant also elaborated on the feeling of being 'in

between:'

> I don't know, like for me I kind of felt in between being an immigrant and being Canadian, cause I still have, well my parents taught me their culture, they expect a lot of things, they kind of teach me what they went through in their countries, but they don't know what it is like to grow up in Canada right? So I am kind of in the middle of trying to grow up in Canada and in … having what my parents teach me …Well, I guess it is kind of hard for me to fit in with people who are from like, Chile or Guatemala, cause I can relate to them a little but…I didn't grow up there…But at the same time, with Canadians, I don't really share their culture either.
>
> –Javier, 20, Chile/Guatemala/Canada

In contrast to the focus in the literature, which for the most part assumes these

identity negotiations are problematic and harmful in some way, the majority of the

youth did not perceive their identities as problematic. If anything, they emphasized

the value of their multicultural backgrounds.

> Well, I identify myself as… for the sake of the government, I am a Canadian, but like, my roots are in the Filipino culture. But I… but, but like for myself, I identify myself as half of everything…because like… when I first came to Canada, I keep saying, go Filipino pride, be a Filipino, show the people… even other nationalities that you're Filipino. But then, as soon as I get older and get matured, everything's kinda have that similarity. And then, since Philippines is composed of different nationalities, then… I could really identify myself as – yeah, I think, I think I'm half of everything now. I don't even know my origin, like… yeah, you're Filipino, but what type of Filipino? Like, are you like a Spanish, a Chinese, a Japanese, an American… I don't know. So I think like, probably everything of the different side of the world is me. [So you think of yourself as a little bit of everything?] Yeah.
> -   May, 18, Philippines

Several of the youth described the benefits of cultural background and the value of

engaging with their 'multiple identities:'

> [So how do you see yourself in comparison to other youth in Victoria?] Ummm. I see myself as a luckier youth I guess, because I have my different cultural backgrounds. I have my culture from China and then I have my culture in Canada, so I'm a lot luckier, and I am able to be a lot more open minded this way and accepting of new people I think.
> -   Rachel, 16, China

Many of the youth also emphasized the multiculturalism of Canada as a positive

feature, suggesting that the openness of Canada made it easier for people to 'be

themselves' and to value and accept cultural differences.

Well, um, last year I was involved with the ... *Where is Home* Production. The title for that play is really symbolic because, again, I always have this question and I always find myself referring to the Philippines as home but just recently I found myself referring to Canada as being my new home... Well I am proud to be Filipino but I also like Canada. I would love to be identified as Canadian too, but I think it doesn't matter where you are, you are who you are inside. It's cultural differences and again Canada is a mosaic of different cultures and that's what makes it unique to other countries...That's why I like Canada, cause I get to be myself and that's being Canadian itself.

– Megan, 18, Philippines

Youth participants often described the benefits of immigration alongside discussions of challenges. Several interview participants eloquently described the self-discovery that they felt they gained as a result of immigration, emphasizing the value of understanding different perspectives.

[How do you think that living in Victoria has impacted your experience as a newcomer?]
I'm not really sure. It definitely changed me... I guess I can see myself almost as a different person now... I developed so many things, I guess in my personality, I don't know. It was just good to come here; I guess I saw things in my self that I wouldn't be able to see in my own country. I discovered a part of myself that I didn't know, which is good.... Well its not that my personality changed, I just discovered a passion that I have for art and I guessed I changed my mind about things, a different perspective.

-Elise 18, Brazil

While several of the youth acknowledged that their experiences gave them perspectives that were maybe different from those of their Canadian counterparts, these differences were frequently discussed, not as sources of concern or tension but rather as advantageous.

I feel like we've had different life experiences so sometimes I do feel different, like my understanding of social situations is different maybe? Like

I've experienced my parent's challenges as immigrants so I feel like I know something they don't you know?

- Sophia 27, Bermuda/Poland/Canada

In the photovoice work, 'identity and belonging' emerged as one of the main exhibit themes, in response to three of the photovoice questions: 1. Who are you?/your self-portrait, 2. What does navigating multiple worlds mean to you? and, 3. What does belonging mean to you? It became apparent in the analysis of the photovoice images and the interviews, that the youth themselves place more emphasis on the positive aspects of their identity negotiations, emphasizing their resilience and agency, as they navigate potentially 'stressful' experiences in their new communities.

In the image below, Tamara discusses the beauty, strength and adaptability of the peacock, despite its' being 'unindigenous' to Victoria. Many of the photovoice images emphasized the strengths and positive outcomes that can result from 'navigating multiple worlds' successfully.

These beautiful and majestic birds are 'unindigenous' to the city of Victoria but they do not fail to stand tall with pride and poise among the Giant Sequoias of Beacon Hill Park. Their abiding disposition of their situation resembles that of a successfully transitioned immigrant who has faced giant obstacles but found their own niche in the community.

– Tamara, 19, Iraq

While discussions of 'identity' were at the core of several descriptions of 'stress' the agentive ways that youth work with ideas of identity to emphasize the positive potential of their flexible or 'multi-cultural' identities demonstrates their resilience in the face of challenges.

In contrast to the literature that takes a developmental approach to youth and identity, Kondo (1990) conceptualizes identity as "not a fixed thing, it is negotiated, shifting, open, ambiguous, the result of culturally available meanings and the open-ended, power laden enactments of those meanings in everyday situations"(24). This understanding of identity - as flexible, shifting, and negotiated- seems to be most

aligned with how immigrant youth themselves engage with the idea of identity. This definition recognizes that while immigrant youth do work within power-laden constraints from their individual, social, and family contexts (discussed in our research largely in terms of expectations and elaborated further in Chapter 6), immigrant youth are also actively engaged in producing their own identities (Cohen 1997; Lee and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010).

The image below describes one participant's 'future hopes and aspirations'. In the description she places clear emphasis on the agency of individuals engaged in defining their own identities and determining their own futures.

One thing that I am slowly learning is that life isn't about "finding" yourself, it's about "making" yourself. It's about creating circumstances where there are none and being grateful for all of your life experiences - no matter how adverse - for sometimes figuring out what you don't want

is the most important lesson you can learn. Every experience is formative; a fortunate occurrence. "When you look at every experience as a lesson, then you are never the victim and you are always in a position to learn and that's a very powerful place to be." (Anya Ayoung Chee)

- Paulina, 27, Bermuda/Poland/Canada

Many of the interviews and photovoice images highlighted the agency of youth in managing their identities, navigating challenges and coping with stress. Many immigrant youth were often put in situations where their ethnic or cultural identity was emphasized or questioned. In youth nights and other VIRCS related services, 'where are you from?' is often the first question that newcomers to the activities are asked. Youth also talked about being asked questions related to their identities and countries of origin in schools and discussed the challenges of expectations associated with ideas of identity. While many of these discussions were serious in nature, several youth also provided humorous examples of times when their identities were questioned or were the source of unrealistic expectations.

The funny thing is some of my friends they know that I'm Chinese, right? So, sometimes they expect me to know about some Chinese things, for example, kung-fu, you know? Yeah, they ask me: 'hey, could you show me?' and I say: 'what?!' Yeah, because, you know, there is a mistake... Probably a misunderstanding, they thought that every Chinese guy could, you know, do kung-fu things, you know? Like, could fly or could kill others could, you know, could do all those things, you know just watch too many Chinese movies! So of course I have no idea at all... I mean I learned some tai chi or something at school, but that's not like kung fu ... you know I just can't fly, or punch all those windows!! (laughing)

- Ken 25, China

Many of the youth acknowledged a common perception; reflected in the literature and in some of their interactions with family, school, or services geared towards

immigrant youth, that their identities are contested, or problematic in some way.

However, in practice, youth repeatedly provided examples of working with ideas of

identity in productive ways; ways that saw discussions of identity as a source of

stress move very quickly to focus on identity as a source of strength or resilience.

Identity, and the challenges associated with immigration- often discussed in terms

of 'stress'- were central to the ways in which youth were talking about and

expressing the way they perceived, managed and experienced their interactions

with their surroundings, in other words, their subjectivity.

Identity and Stress as Expressions of Subjectivity: The Agency of Immigrant Youth

In Chapter 1, I introduced the idea of stress as an expression of subjectivity. The

following section will frame the ways in which identity and stress are discussed by

immigrant youth as expressions of subjectivity. This discussion will draw attention

to the agency of youth as they navigate challenges and engage in processes of self-

making. In emphasizing the agency of immigrant youth in the ways they are defining

themselves and talking about identity, as well as experiencing stress and using

stress language, my goal is to provide the background needed to consider stress as a

narrative tool and as an idiom of resilience.

While early philosophical works defined subjectivity in reference to the

consciousness of one's perceived states, current approaches view subjectivity more

as a "synonym for inner life processes and affective states" (Biehl, Good and

Klienman, 2007:6). Following the definition of subjectivity provided in Chapter 1, in this research subjectivity is "used to describe means of shaping sensibility; the continuity and shaping of inner processes and affective states, of personhood, or *as the expression of human agency amid contexts of social change* "(Biehl, Good and Kleinman, 2007 emphasis added). Thinking about how subjectivity is being expressed is particularly important in looking to understand the experiences of youth as they navigate the social changes that can accompany immigration.

In her discussion of subjectivity and cultural critique, Ortner defines subjectivity "as the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear and so forth that animate acting subjects... as well [as] the cultural and social formations that shape, organize and provoke those modes of affect, thought and so on..."(Ortner 2005:46). Biehl, Good and Kleinman (2007) add to this definition, stating:

> Only through explicating the logic of key emotional and intersubjective constructs do major social dramas become intelligible; and only amid such contemporary social enactments can we understand particular domains of affect and agency (10).

Identity and stress can both be considered as intersubjective constructs. Immigrant youth engage with these constructs in a number of ways; they are given meaning through individual and collective experiences, through self-reflection and social interactions.

Over the course of the project, it became apparent that identity terminology was frequently used by youth as a way to develop shared understandings and to provide a starting point from which to explore shared experiences. As many of the youth recounted their experiences of immigration, it became clear they were engaging with their ideas of identity to navigate multilayered expectations and to define and cope with sources of 'stress' in their new host country. Biehl, Good and Klienman (2007) emphasize that subjectivity provides the ground for individuals to "think through their circumstances and feel through their contradictions." For many of the youth, discussions of identity and stress were discussions of the ways they were individually expressing their subjectivity.

In many cases, talk of identity was directly tied to discussions of both expectations and, ultimately, more generalized discussions of stress. Javier's description of his feelings of being 'in between' Canadian and Latino culture exemplifies the common association between questions of 'identity' and experiences of stress.

> Ummm well I guess, with my Canadian counterparts, they kind of ... they do have different expectations for me, they expect me to speak English perfectly. They expect me to speak Spanish perfectly. They expect me to know everything about my parent's countries; they expect certain thing... like I know a bit of my culture, but not all the way... *And this is stressful*...Same with people from my culture, you know they also expect me to speak Spanish perfectly, to know... there are certain cultural things that they expect me to understand that I don't know ... again, its hard being split in these two cultures ... like some people understand, and my family, and some people understand that I don't really, I can't really, I don't have 100% in either culture and they don't really mind. And some people others, Latinos they maybe feel insulted that I don't know, but they don't know or understand that I am not really fully Latino. That I don't really know their culture.
> - Javier20, Chile/Guatemala

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While many youth discussed challenges they faced and some associated these challenges with ideas of identity, most were quick to move to focus on the value of these challenges, often framed in terms of building strength. Despite repeated acknowledgement of the role and importance of expectations in influencing or constraining individual choices and experiences, youth overwhelmingly emphasized their individual experiences and personal choices when reflecting on identity and its relationship to stress. Over the course of the analysis and within the themes of identity and stress, it was the agency of the youth as they actively engaged with changing social contexts that took center-stage.

Our analysis also suggests discussions of 'stress' may allow youth to reflect on the factors that can influence their way of being in the world by providing an ambiguous, polyvalent and universally understood way to describe the challenges they face. The notion of the 'embedded-ness of bodies' is used to emphasize the role that social context, individual histories and experiences can have in influencing embodied experiences, meaning that "knowledge about the body is informed by social worlds and the social world is in turn informed by the reality of physical experience" (Lock and Nguyen, 2010:91). Similarly, over the course of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project participants repeatedly demonstrated the embedded-ness of stress, both in and beyond their bodies, as they talked of the various ways stress played into their daily lives, both actively shaping and being shaped by their perceptions and experiences.

Discussed earlier in this chapter, in general, the youth involved in the NMW research chose not to focus on the 'problematic' potential of their identities. Instead they frequently discussed identity as flexible, and moved to focus on the value of their identity(ies) as a source of strength. As the project progressed, many participants similarly emphasized a desire to explore not only the negative aspects of stress, but also the potential for experiences of stress to lead to positive change. This desire to expand on or return to a positive framing of stress suggests there is value in considering narratives of stress as idioms of resilience as well as idioms of distress. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

This chapter presented the inter-related themes of identity and stress as expressions of subjectivity to begin to draw attention to the resilience of immigrant youth as they 'Navigate Multiple Worlds'. Before moving to a focus on the resilience of youth in the context of 'stress', I feel it is important to return to thinking more about the agency of the youth involved in the NMW project. In particular, there is value in focusing on the actions and processes undertaken by members of the research team and the ways that they chose to reflect on and disseminate our findings concerning the experiences of immigrant youth in Victoria to the wider community. The following chapter focuses on the development and process of the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit. The exhibit encouraged the youth involved to express themselves, to share their ideas with a wider audience and to assert their senses of self and personhood in the context of their experiences as immigrant youth. Chapter 5 will help to further elaborate youth perspectives on 'stress' and

'resilience,' highlighting the importance of the exhibit within the participatory

framework of the project.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit:

The importance of creating a "thinking space"- giving voice to immigrant youth perspectives

Photograph of the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit at the XChanges Gallery, Victoria BC, June 1-3 2012 – Han Lin, 24, China

Almost the whole research team showed up by 4:30 the day of the opening to help us get all the last minute pieces pulled together. Everyone came all dressed up...(Harry even wore a suit!); you could tell the group was very proud of what they had put together... It was more than just the exhibit, many of the team members put an unbelievable amount of effort into making amazing food... homemade Tabouleh and falafels, Brazilian cheese biscuits and a dulce de leche-like chocolate dessert, 100 mini cupcakes all beautifully decorated, an assortment cookies and a selections of meats and cheeses ...

The turnout was amazing. Barry [the photographer who worked with the research team during our photography workshop and the host of our exhibit] said later that it was the most successful opening the gallery had ever seen. I would guess that over the three days, over 180 people came through the exhibit. This is impressive considering the gallery is not in a location that would have any walk by traffic- in an industrial lot that is shared by Nation Wide Carpet Cleaning and a high-end furniture store, invisible from the street and only accessible down long driveways ... You definitely had to know about the exhibit to make it there ... I think everyone who walked in was impressed. The audience included a lot of parents, but there were also many others who were not directly affiliated with the photographers, who had heard about the

exhibit through our publicity and other avenues ... It was great to have the opportunity to showcase what we have been doing. Above all, it was so interesting to hear other immigrant youth and immigrant adults agreeing with the images and text on display around the room, and to watch non-immigrants, who maybe had never considered challenges in this way, coming to recognize some of the every day struggles that can face new immigrants.

At 7:00 we held the official launch; I had asked the youth, prior to the opening, if they were interested in presenting one of their pictures to the larger group and several of the shyer youth immediately said no. But, when it came time to officially open the exhibit, ALL of the youth decided to get up in front of the crowd to present one of their pictures (even those who were very reluctant initially.) They all picked their favorite images and spoke confidently.... Having the youth present their pictures really gave them the chance to own the exhibit. They were the experts, they were the ones that everyone had come to see... many people commented on the power of the words, and how, after reading the words they often had their eyes opened to a totally different perspective.

–Field Notes, June 3rd 2012

The above is an excerpt from my reflections on the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit, written immediately after it closed. From the perspective of the research team, the exhibit was the most important outcome of our research, and was described by the team as a key 'highlight' of the whole process. In their reflections and evaluation of the overall project, every research team member mentioned the exhibit as one of their favorite parts of the project.

My favorite part was the awesome awesome opening night. I think it was very professional and had a lot of artistic charisma. Our personal touches and write-ups made it more personal and relatable ... I think people got it. I didn't expect it to go so well in terms of turnout. The opening really felt like I expected it to in my imagination.

My favorite thing ... Talking to people who came to the exhibit and getting to know there are people who got inspired and want to take actions... What went well: The opening!! People listened and some talk[ed] to us about solutions.

What went well … everything did ☺ What I would change … have larger photos! What I liked the most: How we each described our favorite photo, personalizing this project further ☺ And the reflection book [photo book] turned out amazing!

In my opinion I think we did a very good job. I was happy to be able to send our message out there and have so many people come see our work. I wish that there were more young people who could have this opportunity as well and be able to share their experiences as well … I don't think there is anything I would change. I pretty much liked all of it. It was fun working with everyone and sharing time together.

- Individual Research Team Member Reflections taken from Exhibit Evaluation Exercise, June 3rd 2012

In this chapter I will discuss the development of the photovoice exhibit and its role in the Navigating Multiple Worlds project. As a mechanism that allowed the research team to manage the presentation of their experiences and perspectives, the exhibit created the space for these youth to showcase their individual experiences and express their subjectivity, asserting their agency in the context of the spatial and social changes that accompany immigration. It also provided an accessible way for the youth and the wider community audience to consider how various challenges and supports influence the ways in which youth experience and express their ways of being in the world, as well as highlighting the resilience of youth as they navigate various stressors and successes in their lives in Victoria.

The exhibit was a central part of the project for the youth involved. It also played a significant role in engaging the wider community in the research process. The photovoice process will be described in more detail in the following section. The end of this chapter will focus on the value of creating 'thinking spaces' with youth as

an accessible way to reflect on and disseminate the findings of participatory research efforts.

The Participatory Processes of the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit

In the initial research methods training workshop, described in detail in Chapter 2, participants were introduced to photovoice as a research method. Those who went on to form the core research team were keen to include photovoice as part of the research process. Indeed, several of the team members joined the project specifically due to their interests in photography. However, everyone agreed that photovoice alone was not enough. The research team decided it was important to gather feedback from their peers through interviews and focus groups prior to designing their photovoice process.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, involving the research team first in interviews, then in focus groups, before moving on to develop our photovoice themes was an invaluable part of our process. Photovoice efforts often begin by diving right into the process; providing participants with cameras and instructions on their use as well as the ethics of photography and often times (but not always), a discussion of the photovoice focus or research questions (Wang et al. 1998). Immersing the research team first in interviews and then in focus groups to identify and develop photovoice themes collaboratively helped to ensure that everyone had the same understanding of the background issues and contexts that can impact immigrant youth experiences

before they set out to capture their photovoice images. I strongly believe this process also enhanced the depth and quality of both the photovoice questions that structured the process, and of the final images and reflections produced by the youth. (See Appendix F for the list of photovoice themes).

This collaborative approach also helped to address several of the challenges that can arise when working in participatory paradigms with youth. The process of conducting the initial analysis helped to strengthen feelings of shared ownership, as it required the youth to engage in shared decision-making. As a result of this background work, the depth of consideration and reflection undertaken by the youth in setting up, choosing and describing their images was significant. (This is not to say that this process was without its own challenges, but that this type of design may help to move away from the danger of token forms of 'participation', discussed in Chapter 2, that can sometimes be a concern when youth are involved in research).

The process of taking photographs, talking and writing about them, and finally choosing photographs to exhibit, prompted deeper reflection by the research team on their own experiences. It was during the photovoice process that many of the team members realized their perspectives, while individual, also reflected shared experiences. It was also during the photovoice process that the team realized they not only had control over how their experiences were presented to the wider community, but that there was a particular way that they wanted their experiences

presented to the public. Overwhelmingly, the group wanted to emphasize 'the positive' side of experiences: challenges in the context of challenges overcome, sources of pride and demonstrations of resilience.

The photovoice process enabled agency in different ways for different participants. For some the artistic aspect of the images was most important, while for others, the stories or descriptions that accompanied the images took precedence. While there was a consensus among the group that strengths drawn from experiences should be an important part of the exhibit, this was matched by a strong desire to 'show things the way they are' explained by one team member: "We want to make it not just about the negative stuff ... but things can be hard, and I think it is important to show that as well" (Research Team meeting notes, April 2012).

There was a strong understanding among the research team members of the value of not just the photographs, but of the photographs and their captions taken together. Indeed, this was the focus of a entire research meeting, as those who were more comfortable with writing their descriptions talked through the process with others on the team who found writing the captions to accompany their pictures more challenging. The research team saw the presence of both the text and the images as a key factor in making the exhibit accessible to the wider community. The research team recognized that photovoice was a particularly engaging approach for younger participants, and for those for whom English was a newer language.

The photovoice images were grouped by theme in that each photovoice question focused on a specific topic that aligned with themes from our initial analysis process. In recognition of the effort and importance placed on both the images and their accompanying text by the research team, I made the decision not to make a visual content analysis part of this analysis. Instead, I chose to analyze the images with their accompanying text as the photovoice process made the image part of the narrative that the youth were creating. I felt that working with the images and text together also aligned with my desire to focus on the perspectives of the youth.

After the photovoice stage of the project was completed, the research team worked to put together a photo book as well as an exhibit. The photo book was a source of great pride for all members of the research team. The process of creating the book also led many team members to reflect on their images and edit their descriptions repeatedly. The photo book was seen as a permanent record of the project. The research team determined its contents, and developed the layout to ensure that it reflected how they wanted their experiences represented. Each team member received a copy of the book, VIRCS was given 10 copies of the book to share with their clients and partners, and copies were sold at the exhibit (with all profits re-invested into the purchase of additional copies.)

The research team decided that an exhibit, open to the public, would be an excellent way to showcase their work, and would be a great 'closing event' to mark the ending of the youth-led research phase of the project. The goal was also to create a space

that would promote discussion of and reflection on the experiences of immigrant youth in Victoria. The team determined the layout of the exhibit and several members spent the day before the opening of the exhibit painstakingly measuring, leveling and mounting the images and their accompanying descriptions, with the guidance and assistance of Barry Herring, the local photographer who both came in as a guest for the photovoice workshop and who sponsored our exhibit at the XChanges Gallery. (The following morning we experienced a brief setback as the mounting material we used, despite purportedly being able to hold up to 5lbs, failed... We returned to the gallery to find 17 of our carefully matted and mounted images on the ground! Luckily, the pencil mark guidelines were still on the wall from the mounting process, and we were able to set them all up again in time, with extra adhesive the second time round.)

Setting up the Navigating Multiple Worlds Exhibit- May 31st 2012

To publicize the exhibit, two of the research team members who were particularly

interested in journalism worked with the editor of the Ring (a bi-monthly

publication from the University of Victoria) to put together an article on the project

and to promote the exhibit. (An excerpt of the first draft of this article is provided at

the start of Chapter 3). For a full version of the article as it was published see

Appendix H.

The team also learned how to craft a press release and contacted local print, web,

radio and television media to invite people to the exhibit. Members of the research

team who were particularly interested in design put together the poster and flyers

for the exhibit. In preparing for the exhibit, as we did throughout the project, we

made efforts to enhance individual skills and experiences by matching the interests

and skills of the youth with appropriate tasks. This also allowed the research team

to take ownership of different parts of the exhibit process.

NMW Postcard- Front and Back, designed by Sebastian, 22
Chile/Guatemala
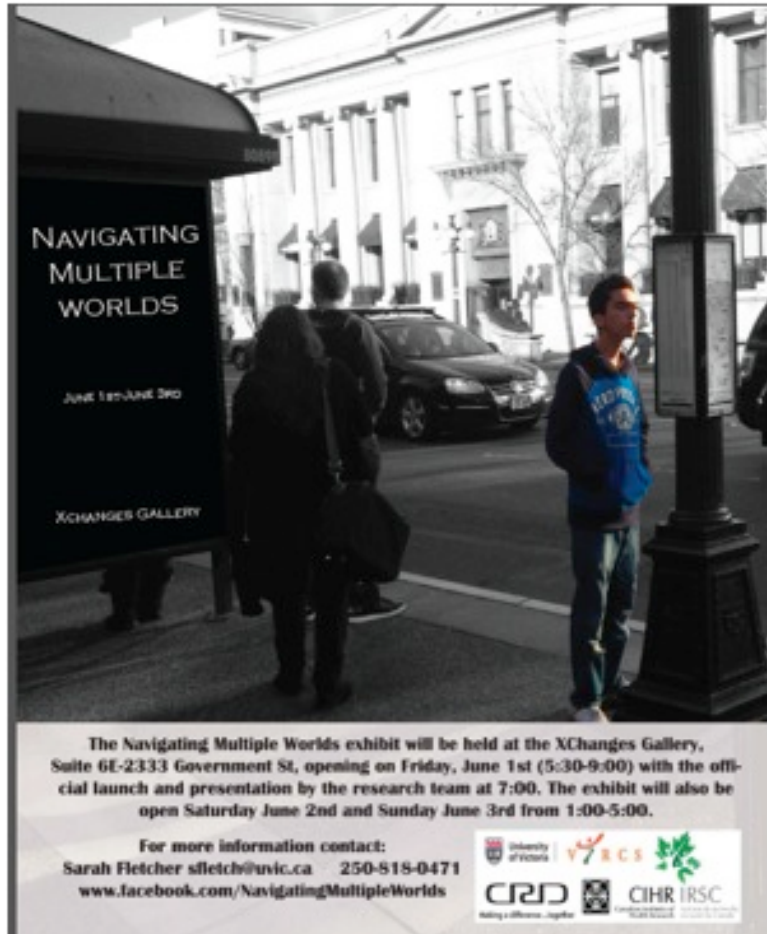
Image of the NMW poster, designed by Han Lin, 24, China

The Exhibit as 'Thinking space" and the Importance of Individual and

Community Witnessing

In his discussion of thinking spaces and research creation, McCormack (2008)

makes the argument that 'thinking space' entails both a process and a site, and that

the two aspects of thinking space are inextricably linked. As a technique of

experience, McCormack (2008) goes on to suggest that "thinking space might be

better understood as the co-intensive sensing, in affective-dynamic terms, of the

creative processuality of something in the world forcing us to think" (3). As the

processual arrangement of bodies and things in space and time, it is productive to apply this idea of 'thinking space' to the Navigating Multiple Worlds exhibit. As the exhibit was developed, mounted and opened, it became much more than pictures on a wall. As both a physical space, and as the ensemble of processes of interaction between and among research team members and community members that took place within that space, the exhibit became a space that promoted reflection and inspired conversation. The thinking space that was created through the exhibit was influenced by individual and communal perceptions drawn from the contextualized experiences of the photographers, the audience, and their interactions.

Creating 'thinking space' is about "producing facilitating contexts – sites of experience and experiment for thinking relations between bodies, concepts, and materials of various kinds" (McCormack, 2008:8). The exhibit brought a range of people together in a particular moment and time. In doing so, it generated a considerable amount of discussion, feedback, reflection and action related to the experiences of immigrant youth in Victoria, their reflections on 'stress' and their recommendations related to addressing gaps and enhancing existing supports and services to foster resilience among immigrant youth.

Considering the exhibit as thinking space reaffirms its role as more than just a presentation. Instead, it shifts the exhibit into the realm of participation. The exhibit became a dynamic space, constantly changing, as much about the people in attendance, their questions, their own life experiences and their reflections as it was

about the images on the wall. As a 'thinking space' everyone in attendance became participants in the exhibit.

In working with youth in participatory paradigms, I suggest this creation of thinking spaces is a critical consideration. 'Thinking spaces' are about creating facilitating contexts, contexts that value the experiences and perspectives of all who are present in the space. The creation of 'thinking spaces' as part of participatory research endeavors limits the opportunities for tokenistic forms of 'participation' that are sometimes found in youth-involved research. Without these spaces for reflection, youth engagement in research can stall at the level of presentation.

The exhibit and the opening night events created an interactive space, which allowed the research team to share their perspectives, to present their findings from the earlier phases of the research, to discuss the experiences of the immigrant youth who participated in interviews and focus groups, and to represent their personal experiences. Feedback from members of the public who attended the exhibit emphasized the value of creating this type of space for reflection. A guestbook was included in the exhibit in which everyone in attendance was encouraged to provide feedback and record reflections. Excerpts from the guestbook reiterated the value of the exhibit as 'thinking space' and the importance of the exhibit in terms of the processes of both individual and community witnessing that it encouraged.

> *This exhibit has been a wonderful window into not only the lives of the photographers but also into this city of Victoria, and how it can be for those who haven't lived here as long as I have.*

These are amazing, wonderful and powerful images. They bring us all closer be allowing us to see through another person's eyes.

Great exhibit. It hits all the points regarding new immigrants. It took me 46 years back to when I first arrived in Canada.

The photos and words are so captivating and moving. It's inspirational to read these stories and witness the photographs. Thank you to all the participants for sharing so that we may learn and grow together.

- Guestbook Excerpts (June 1, 2 & 3 2012)

The visitor last quoted above, wrote about the value of 'witnessing' the photographs. Scheper-Hughes (1993) advocated 'witnessing' as a way of re-inserting the ethical in anthropology, a move that has largely been accepted in the discipline, where calls for a more 'socially engaged anthropology' have grown since the 60s (Scheper-Hughes 1993). As well as creating a valuable thinking space, the exhibit created a space that encouraged both individual and community witnessing. These acts of witnessing acknowledged and validated the experiences of those involved in creating and attending the exhibit.

The exhibit process allowed the youth involved in the research team to decide how they wanted their own experiences and reflections presented. Many of the research team members recognized the value of this in-depth reflection on a personal level. I met up with Isabela in Montreal about 6 months after the exhibit closed and the youth-involved research phase of the project had wrapped up. At the time of our meeting, Isabela was half way through her first term as a joint journalism and film studies major at Concordia. We talked about her program and her experiences in

Montreal and she brought a copy of her first published article, from the Concordia campus paper, to give to me. We reminisced about the exhibit and she explained:

> You know, the exhibit really was amazing … I didn't even realize until it was over how good it was … and it really made me realize some stuff about myself, who I am and about how my family has really played such an important part in my life. I think I know that even more now that I am here [away from family, in Montreal]." (Personal reflections, October 2012).

The audience who attended the exhibit, family members of the research and photovoice teams, people affiliated with VIRCS and members of the larger community of Victoria, also had the opportunity to witness, interpret, and reflect on the experiences captured in the images and captions. While members of the audience experienced this 'witnessing' on an individual level, their conversations, prompted by the images within the thinking space of the exhibit, also functioned as a second, community-level form of witnessing that served as a particularly valuable outcome of the process. This community witnessing was an integral part of defining, developing plans for, and implementing actions to address issues that were identified throughout the project.

First introduced in Chapter 2, there is a small amount of research, which emphasizes that when participatory research efforts with youth do not lead to action or change, they can sometimes result in more harm than good. Youth can become quickly disillusioned if there is limited follow-through on research efforts that start by promising to 'give youth a voice' or lead to change. These potentially negative outcomes of participatory research efforts are frequently ignored. The community-

level witnessing that occurred in the exhibit helped to ensure this potential pitfall was avoided in the context of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project.

The exhibit also promoted discussion of the recommendations and resource requirements identified by the core research team as action-outcomes of the research process. Throughout the exhibit, copies of the photo book were available for sale to the general public and a power point presentation, detailing the process and the recommendations that emerged from the project in terms of ways to address some of the challenges identified by youth, ran on a continuous loop. (For a list of the recommendations related to addressing gaps and enhancing supports for immigrant youth in Victoria, see Appendix I). The exhibit also showcased the three 'community resources' developed by the research team for translation into multiple languages, and designed to address particular challenges or sources of stress that emerged over the course of the NMW research process.

The research team realized that many of the systemic issues, such as visa application timelines, accreditation issues and family separation, all of which contribute to heightened levels of stress for immigrant youth, were outside their control. However, a number of smaller gaps in services and supports were identified over the course of the project that could be more easily addressed. These challenges were all related to a perceived shortage of translated materials available to new immigrants about various aspects of life in Victoria.

Previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the lack of translated materials related to public

transit, recycling, and school-related expectations, was among the items identified

by the research team as gaps they could potentially work to address. While many of

these resources already exist in larger urban centres like Vancouver, they do not

exist in Victoria. As a result, the team worked to create a 'guide to the bus system',

'guide to recycling' and 'guide to the school agenda' that could then be translated

into as many languages as possible. The English versions of these resources were

showcased as part of the exhibit and many members of the public, particularly adult

immigrants who attended the exhibit, agreed that there was a real need in Victoria

for these resources. This added further validation to the work of the research team[5].

(See appendix J for copies of the English versions of the community resources and

for a link to the web version of the photo book.)

These resources, along with the photo book, form the tangible legacies of the

project. Over the course of the exhibit, the importance of raising awareness in

Victoria related to immigrant issues in general (and to the challenges facing

immigrant youth in particular) was emphasized by members of the general public

[5] The translation of these materials is ongoing. I received a small amount of funding from the Myer Horowitz Award through the Centre for Youth and Society to help with the costs associated with translation. Sinney (who was a student at Reynolds when she began the project) worked with her ESL teacher to develop the guide to the school agenda, and the ESL class at Reynolds- also one of the schools in the city with the largest ESL student population- has worked on translating the guide into multiple languages. VIRCS is currently putting together a translation team to translate the transit and recycling materials as well as checking the school agenda translations. VIRCS is also following through on a number of the recommendations that emerged from the analysis of the interview and focus group materials, most notably, they are considering developing some sort of additional orientation to Victoria (or Victoria 101 class) for new immigrants as well as enhancing opportunities for immigrant and non-immigrant youth to interact within the context of their youth programming.

and the research team alike. In one reflection writing assignment, a member of the

research team highlighted the ongoing nature of immigration as a process, as well as

the importance of promoting awareness to promote change and enhance the

supports available for immigrants in Victoria. She explained:

> *We can't change Victoria overnight, just like an immigrant can't move in one day and voila, immigration complete. Change is an ongoing process, but we can speed it along with awareness and acceptance. As one individual aptly pointed out, people need to remember that, like change, immigration never ends; it is a lifelong process to which you continually adjust.*
>
> > – *Paulina, 27, Bermuda/Canada/Poland, Reflection*

The exhibit provided a venue to showcase immigrant youth perspectives, creating a

space that promoted the 'awareness and acceptance' identified in the above excerpt,

as a necessary step in addressing the daily challenges currently facing many

immigrant youth in Victoria. It also allowed the youth involved to express their ways

of being in the world in a way that was accessible, engaging those who came to view

the exhibit in interactive reflection and discussion.

"It means more when you see it:" the Exhibit, Agency, and Subjectivity

The exhibit served to encourage the youth involved to both consider and express

their way of being in the world in a way that could be shared with others. The

exhibit also highlighted the shared aspects of many immigrant youth experiences.

Described by one research team member during our evaluation of the exhibit:

I'd say it has been one of the best experiences of my life. It allowed me to meet people who understand me and have gone through the same experiences as me. I also learned a lot from other people's difficulties and I started to see how beautiful it is to overcome all of them. Now we're ending the project with a photovoice stage, which amazes me because I am discovering a whole new area of expression while sharing our points of view with the community.

The exhibit created a space that allowed for recognition of the resilience of immigrant youth as they engage with their surroundings and negotiate the 'stresses' that they face on a daily basis. The exhibit also changed the way some of the research team members viewed their own experiences, moving individuals to focus on strengths in the face of challenges more by the end of the exhibit than they had at the beginning. The participatory nature of our research process meant that the process itself, as a process that was empowering for those involved, was also an outcome of our research. The research process, enhanced by the thinking space of the exhibit, led to a change over time of how many of the youth framed their own experiences.

Although the desire to 'focus on the positive' was present in the research team from the beginning, it was the process of the exhibit that sharpened this focus. The images and descriptions in the exhibit underscored the resilience of immigrant youth as they engaged with the 'navigation of multiple worlds'. Many of the image descriptions emphasized the pride felt by individuals at overcoming challenges. Many of these images were also tied to ideas of identity. In Chapter 4, I argued that in contrast to developmentalist views of youth identity, the research team and youth participants emphasized their agency in the ways they defined themselves. This was

also highlighted by several youth who presented images that contained notions of moving forward and meeting future expectations. Presented in the image and description below, this can even be true when the future is unknown.

As I am finishing high school, there is a really long way for me to go and explore. It's like this road, there are turns and shadows that turn me down, but after that, it's the bright side.

– Sinney, 17, China

From our initial research meeting on, the research team emphasized their desire to draw attention to positive outcomes as well as to the challenges that can face immigrant youth in Victoria. Many of the interviews and the photovoice work mirrored this desire, with descriptions of challenges framed in a positive way, or discussed as something that can be overcome. For many of the youth involved,

discussions of stress were also stories of resilience. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

During the exhibit, I overheard a second-generation immigrant mother with her young, Canadian-born son talking about one of the images in the exhibit: a family of ducks representing support, with each duckling going off on its own direction, under the watchful eyes of the parent.

These ducks represent a family experiencing the natural course relationships take. Tides of opportunity will inevitably drift us physically apart but kinship will over power distance. This is depicted by the subtle watchful eyes these birds have on each other.

- Tamara, 18, Iraq

The 10-year old boy spent a long time in front of this image and, when asked, said that it was definitely his favorite image in the exhibit. Comparing the image to his

own family and experiences, he explained to his mother: "This is like us, our family, isn't it? You know, it just means more when you see it."

The exhibit presented and validated youth experiences of stress while highlighting their strengths and, I suggest, created or strengthened a sense of belonging for many of those in attendance. Through the process of the mounting of the exhibit and within the thinking space of the exhibit, the research team and those who came to see the exhibit engaged with ideas of stress, identity, change and the 'navigation of multiple worlds.' It was through the processes of reflection encouraged by the exhibit that narratives of 'stress' emerged not only as idioms of distress for immigrant youth, but also as idioms of resilience, central to the ways that youth were expressing their subjectivity.

This chapter underscored the importance of the photovoice exhibit in the research process of the Navigating Multiple Worlds endeavor specifically, and provides a more general argument in support of engaging with arts-based 'thinking spaces' in participatory research and particularly in the context of research with youth. The exhibit translated the individual experiences of the research team members, as well as the more generalized themes and findings from the interviews and focus groups, to a visible, accessible platform, used to provoke discussion and reflection. For the research team, it was important that their voices were represented and their perspectives shared with the wider community through the exhibit. The exhibit created the space for both individual and community witnessing, a space to not only

draw attention to youth perspectives, but also to encourage discussion and reflection, engaging the wider community in the process.

Continuing the discussion of stress and its relationship to the agency and resilience in immigrant youth, the following chapter focuses on the distinctiveness of our findings and explores 'stress' as an idiom of resilience as well as an idiom of distress. Thinking about stress as an idiom of resilience, the ways that immigrant youth work at the intersection of ideas of stress, identity, expectations and balance to express their subjectivity through narratives of stress and resilience are emphasized.

CHAPTER SIX: Stress and Resilience

In Chapter 4, I began to discuss the distinctiveness of our findings, presenting youth perspectives on identity in the context of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project and challenging the dominant construction of immigrant youth identities as inherently problematic. In this chapter, I provide a deeper discussion of several other key elements of my research to frame a discussion of stress and resilience among immigrant youth.

In a systematic review, Salehi (2010) highlighted three major areas that need to be addressed in research at the intersections of health, immigration and youth. The three areas identified in the review included: (1) the health of immigrant youth in Canada, (2) the "tone" and approaches of existing studies, and (3) methodological challenges. Although I had not read this review until our research was well underway, our research focus and approach begins to address each of the areas it highlighted, and can be tied to three key elements that contributed to the distinctiveness of our findings. In the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, these elements (listed in the order in which they relate to the shortcomings of research identified in Salehi's systematic review) included:

1. Ethnographic focus on stress and immigrant youth and exploring stress as a narrative idiom (Response to the call for research).

2. Voice (focus on youth perspectives and youth-involved/collaborative research processes).

3. Method (participatory, flexible, mixed methods approach).

These three key elements are intrinsically linked. Our mixed methods approach allowed for a high degree of flexibility that ensured the voices and perspectives of immigrant youth were emphasized throughout our research processes and that youth voices remained the central focus. Our ethnographic focus on stress allowed for an exploration of stress as a narrative idiom, and the participatory nature of our research allowed us to work within a methodology that highlighted narrative complexities, drawing attention to the different ways that stress terminology was used by the participants. Our research process created an understanding of stress as an idiom of narrative expression, and saw stress emerge as an idiom of resilience as well as distress. Working with multiple methods in the context of a collaborative research team allowed us to reflect on the fluidity of experiences in a way that other methods, particularly those that conceptualize stress as an index created by the researcher, would not have allowed.

The combination of these three elements allowed us to move beyond the negative conceptualizations of stress and acculturative stress that dominate the literature related to immigrant youth. Instead, our approach allowed us to consider the multiple meanings immigrant youth give to 'stress,' the many ways that stress can be experienced and how these experiences can influence 'ways of being in the

world' for immigrant youth. Our findings suggest that there is value in adding both a focus on youth perspectives, and understandings of stress as a narrative idiom to existing theories of acculturative stress.

Ethnographic Focus on Stress and Immigrant Youth

Discussions of acculturative stress dominate the research focused on stress and immigrant youth. As described in Chapter 1, acculturative stress refers to the potential challenges immigrants face when they negotiate differences between their home and host cultures (Berry 2006; Berry and Annis 1974; Berry 1997). In a review of the role of acculturative stress on the mental health of immigrant adolescents, Sirin, Gupta and Sirin (2013) describe sources of acculturative stress as including:

> learning new and sometimes confusing cultural rules and expectations, dealing with experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and managing overarching conflict between maintaining elements of the old culture while incorporating those of the new (737),

as well negative stereotypes and attitudes that the host culture might harbor about immigrants in general (Sirin et al. 2013; Mahalingam and Jackson 2007; Portes and Rumbaut 2005). The findings of Sirin *et al.*'s 2013 review mirror much of the research on immigrant youth and stress, emphasizing the degree to which immigrant youth are at risk for psychological vulnerabilities as a result of acculturative stress. The availability of social and emotional support emerges as a

key mediator in alleviating acculturative stress and its negative impacts for immigrant youth (Yeh et al. 2008a; Katsiaficas et al. 2013).

In our research, the experiences and perspectives of immigrant youth in Victoria gathered in response to questions about stress confirm much of the research focused on acculturative stress. Our finding that contrasting or conflicting expectations underlie many experiences of stress for immigrant youth was not surprising and is reflected in much of the research, as is our finding that youth use the metaphor of balance in relation to stress and coping. For example, research exploring the challenges facing Korean immigrant youth, (Yeh et al. 2005) highlights the challenges of negotiating and shifting identities to meet differing expectations across interpersonal contexts; this study also emphasizes the challenges of 'balancing' cultural values and norms and the importance of social support networks in overcoming these challenges. Another example is provided by Wolf (1997) who emphasizes the importance of family in the lives of Filipino immigrant youth. By focusing on the gap between family ideology and practices, she suggests that many Filipino second generation youth struggle with an 'emotional transnationalism' that situates them between different and often conflicting generational and locational points of reference (Wolf 1997).

As a result of a combination of the methods used and our ethnographic focus on stress and immigrant youth in the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, dimensions of stress also emerged that were distinctive from the standard focus on

acculturative stress. Our research process and questions were developed in collaboration with the research team using the generalized language of 'stress,' --the terminology identified by VIRCS during my proposal development (and the language used by the youth)-- rather than 'acculturative stress.' This choice may have enabled a more flexible and open understanding of youth perspectives on stress than would have been possible had I used the language of acculturative stress and its focus on 'cultural' differences or tensions. While youth referenced 'culture' and the challenges of changes in ways of life, these discussions tended to be framed in terms of overcoming challenges or demonstrations of strength and resilience. This focus on the positive aspects of experiences of stress was very important from the perspective of the youth involved in our project and was highlighted throughout our exploration of narratives of stress. Looking at stress as a narrative idiom also helped to ensure that the voice of the research team and the youth participants remained central to our research.

 Voice & Method

The centrality of the voice of the youth involved in the research was reflected not only in our research focus but also in the participatory nature of our project, our research design and choice of methods. Discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the collaborative nature of the research team was instrumental to the success of our research. The involvement of the research team in decision-making related to the

directions of the project, the design of research questions and choice of methods helped to ensure that youth voices were not overwhelmed by external agendas.

I have already emphasized the value of involving the research team first in interviews and analysis and then in the development of the photovoice themes, but this process was also key to making youth voices and perspectives the centre of our showcase event for the project and the exhibit, discussed in Chapter 5. The thinking-space of the exhibit also created the space for youth voices to be brought into conversation with the wider community, which was essential in working to build on the sustainability of our action-items that emerged over the course of the project (building support and awareness related to the concerns of immigrant youth and the resources created by the NMW team in response to these concerns).

As a participatory endeavor, the process of our research was also an intervention, and was an important part of the outcome of our research. As the research team collected and analysed the narratives of immigrant youth, they reflected on their own experiences. As participants in the exhibit engaged with the research team and with their photovoice work, many came to new realizations about their own experiences or the experiences of newcomers to Victoria. The *process* of the research itself enhanced the resilience of the youth participants. Stress emerged as an idiom of resilience only *after* the youth took ownership of the process. In emphasizing the strengths of immigrant youth as they confronted stressful experiences, many of the youth participants also came to recognize their own

strengths in previously unconsidered ways. The research process highlighted

shared experiences of immigration. This allowed participants to realize that while

individuals experienced stress in different ways, many experiences of stress were

shared by other immigrant youth and were relatable even to those who were non-

immigrants.

The use of creative methods, and the photovoice method in particular, was an

engaging process for the research team and the wider community who came in

contact with our research through the exhibit. Notably, the use of arts based

methods facilitated overcoming language barriers for team and audience members

through the creation of 'objects for reflection.' In his work focused on liberation

pedagogy, Paulo Freire introduced the use of 'objects for reflection' as tools to

encouraging dialogue and for teaching critical thinking (Friere 2000; Freire 1972).

Freire first introduced the notion of 'conscientization' as the process of creating

spaces for reflection and encouraging 'thinking about thinking.' Our process and the

space created by the exhibit supported this type of critical thinking.

Our research process also allowed for the re-conceptualization of stress as a

narrative idiom that can function in multiple ways. The methods used drew

attention to the typical ways that people talked about and experienced stress- as

negative tension or pressure, but they also highlighted the frequency of the positive

re-framing of stress by our youth participants. The following section elaborates on

the emergence, over the course of the project, of the fourth key finding of our

research: the use of stress as an idiom of resilience, facilitated by the underlying importance of flexibility and the accessibility of stress terminology for immigrant youth.

Stress as an idiom of resilience

Resilience research informs a wealth of anthropological inquiry, where risk, resilience and vulnerability are understood to exist as potentials, influenced by a combination of individual experiences and social and cultural factors (Robinson 2005). Although resilience research has been criticized for its lack of scientific rigour and for the ambiguity or heterogeneity in definitions of resilience, the concept of resilience continues to be widely applied and is a useful theoretical construct (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000). Khanlou and Wray (2014) argue for a hybrid approach to the study of resilience that recognizes the value of combining multiple theoretical perspectives, and mirrors how we came to think about stress in the Navigating Multiple Worlds project. They emphasize the importance of thinking about resilience as: a) a process (rather than a single event), b) a continuum (rather than a binary outcome), and c) likely a global concept with specific dimensions, all influenced by individual, family and social environmental factors (Khanlou and Wray 2014).

Kiramyer et al. (2011) propose a similar approach, and present a social-ecological understanding of resilience. They suggest sources of resilience can be understood in

dynamic terms as emerging from interactions between individuals, their

communities, and the larger regional, national, and global systems that locate and

sustain agency and identity (Kirmayer et al. 2011). These approaches to resilience

are helpful for linking experiences of stress among immigrant youth to interactions

that influence their ways of being or expressions of subjectivity as they strive to find

balance; to cope with stress and to manage expectations.

Research on resilience is often set in contexts of extreme poverty, political unrest,

violence or inequality (Scheper-Hughes 2008; Kirmayer et al. 2011; Zraly, Rubin,

and Mukamana 2013). For example, Scheper-Hughes reflects on the resilience she

witnessed during her work in the favelas of Brazil and in South African townships

during the transition to post-apartheid South Africa. She refers back to George

Valliant and his early studies of resilience that link personal resilience and strength

to "having to overcome the odds" (Scheper-Hughes, 2008: 43). She elaborates:

> While for many years searching in the nooks and crannies of oppressed and
> excluded communities for political mobilizations and organized resistance in
> the face of terror as usual, I found instead forms of everyday resilience (52).

Our research also suggests there is value in considering resilience and 'suffering' or

'stress', in contexts that include more of a focus on everyday experiences. This focus

on every day aspects of life made our research questions and findings more relevant

to the youth and promoted useful community outcomes (such as the guide materials

that were created in the context of the Navigating Multiple Worlds Project).

Rather than framing resilience as something that is expressed in spite of, or as a response to stress, many youth used the language of stress to speak directly about resilience. Working with stress as a narrative idiom creates the space to understand not only disorder, but also resistance to disorder. Reflecting on her experiences with loneliness after immigrating to Victoria, Isabela's photovoice image simultaneously draws attention to the challenge or stress of loneliness and the benefits of her experiences in terms of building strengths and facilitating processes of self-discovery.

I was walking around when I saw this man, just sitting there on his own, I soon decided to take a picture and I realized it turned out to be a really sad picture. I see a lonely man. And loneliness, yes, I know what that feels like. When I moved to Victoria I had no idea of the true meaning of this word, but now I understand that even though it was hard (and unexpected) I realized that sometimes loneliness has its benefits, behind all of the chaos I was discovering a new me. It might be painful until you

understand it, then you will see that sometimes loneliness is easier than being surrounded with other people.

– Isabela, 18 Brazil

Isabela credited the loneliness she experienced after immigrating as key to spurring the development of her 'creative' side, something she repeatedly emphasized as a valuable outcome of the process of immigration. Her reflection on overcoming loneliness as a source of pride, demonstrates both the agency and resilience of youth as they cope with stress.

Again, what I am most proud of is overcoming loneliness and now believing that it doesn't have to be a bad thing.

-Isabela, 18, Brazil

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the exhibit became a key space in which

youth perspectives on stress were shared. Following Mahmood's (2009) definition

of resilience, the youth involved in our research frequently focused on their capacity

for action in the face of challenges. In their analysis of social stress Korovkin and

Stephenson (2010) present convincing evidence of the vulnerability of certain

individuals to pathological responses to stress that include serious physical

consequences, even death. However, they also emphasize:

> Social stress can be useful and productive. It can be a stimulating vehicle
> whereby an individual's perception of reality receives a healthy shot from
> actually being in the world. That is, when the individual understands the
> pressure and is able to cope with it (Korovkin and Stephenson, 2010:120).

Several of the photovoice images emphasized the importance that many youth

placed on inner strength in overcoming or coping with stress.
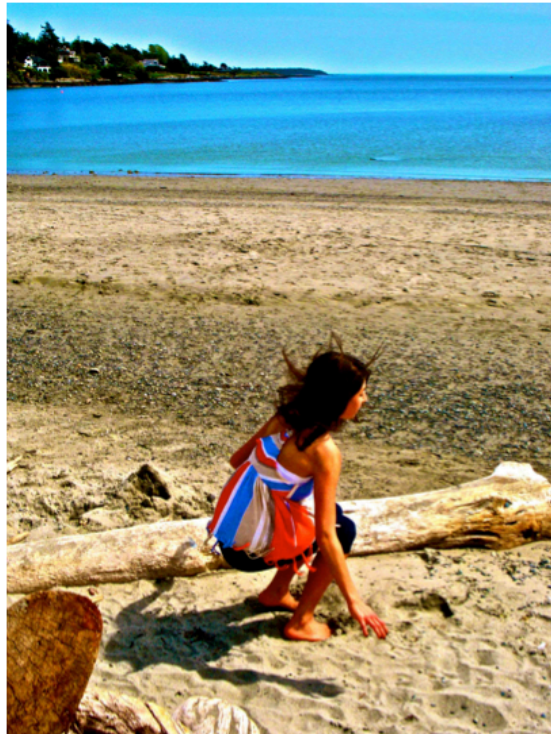
Building inner peace allows one to independently support them from a fall, especially when familiar networks are hard to seek solace from.

- Tamara, 19, Iraq

What made my life easier and reduced stress was going by the water where no one else was. I am able to vent and think when I am there and I am able to let go of any stress and worry.

- Jameela, 18, Egypt/ Canada

Stress was first described as an 'idiom for resilience' by Obrist and Buchi (2008), in their work on the meanings given to health and wellness by immigrant adults. Our research also suggests that as a result of the flexible, dynamic ways that immigrant youth work with ideas of stress and identity to address the challenges they face, discussions of stress can become a way to reflect on their own resilience. Framing stress as an idiom of narrative expression, our research revealed how stress has become part of the world-view of many immigrant youth who use stress terminology to describe a range of experiences and ways of being. In interviews, in our research meetings and throughout the exhibit, as youth talked about stress, they

consistently moved from focusing on challenges to talking about lessons learned,

emphasizing their pride in overcoming obstacles and focusing on strengths.

Although all youth may use the language of stress, our research suggests that the

flexibility and polyvalence of stress language and its relationship to context may

make stress language particularly useful to 'immigrant' youth. The language of

immigration itself is multi-valent, calling on individuals to be both displaced from

their countries of origin and emplaced in their new host countries. The Navigating

Multiple Worlds research team added to this idea, agreeing with a description of

immigration that was provided by one participant as 'an ongoing process.' This

description of immigration was referenced throughout the project with an added

emphasis placed on the value of flexibility in dealing with expectations and

adjusting to life in Victoria. The research team recognized that while aspects of

immigration experiences are often shared, processes of immigration are dynamic

and are also context dependent, shaping individual experiences in different ways.

In her discussions of youth, migration and continuity, Coe (2011) frames processes

of immigration as 'everyday ruptures'. She suggests:

> Migration is inherently characterized by rupture-a break, change, distance,
> division- and it necessarily includes the everyday: even in, during or perhaps
> because of cases of acute disruption, social life persists... The theme of
> "everyday ruptures", then captures the seemingly contradictory processes
> shaped by, on the one hand, disjunctures and breaks, and on the other, the
> consistency that accompanies everyday life (1).

Coe (2011) suggests children and youth are at the nexus of rupture and the

everyday. This framing of youth resonates with the findings from the Navigating

Multiple Worlds project, particularly in the importance placed by youth on what they perceived as 'everyday stressors'. However, the emphasis placed on ideas of resilience and strength in the face of stress also suggests that for many of these youth, incidents of 'rupture' can become spaces of opportunity.

Ethnographic accounts of youth experiences can draw attention to contested areas, to experiences labeled as 'stress', and to the different ways people cope with stress or express agency in times of change. In an analysis of the need to move from focusing on managing risk to building resilience Obrist *et al* (2010) discuss the value of "strategies that provide 'layers of resilience to overcome waves of adversity… with the aim of enabling people to cope with and adapt to change, and even transform adversity to opportunity" (287). This also describes how immigrant youth in the Navigating Multiple Worlds project were often engaging with experiences of stress.

Like stress, the idea of resilience is widely applied across disciplines. Also like stress, it is important to recognize resilience as a process, rather than thinking about it as something that is tangible and measureable. Narratives of resilience that emerge from individual experiences of stress can help to contextualize and acknowledge the experiences of youth. Unlike stress, the language of resilience is widely used in professional and academic circles but is not common in popular vernacular. Expressions of stress and resilience occur in the stories of immigrant youth as they work with ideas of identity and flexibility to positively re-frame challenges or

experiences of 'rupture' that occur sometimes daily. However, in these stories the language of stress is much more accessible and prominent than the language of resilience.

Although I expected some talk of resilience by the youth, the extent to which the youth moved from discussions of stress to a focus on resilience was a surprise. Initially I considered resilience in terms of the capacity to act (or agency) in the face of social change or other challenges (Mahmood 2009; Obrist, Pfeiffer, and Henley 2010). However, our research process demonstrated that resilience is more than the capacity to act. It is also choosing to act. For the youth in our research, resilience meant engaging with ideas of flexibility, identity, place and belonging that allowed challenges to be reframed and created opportunities for change, while developing capacities for the future. As such, resilience, and the engagement of youth with narratives of stress is something that emerged as both reactive and proactive.

At its core, resilience research asks: what enhances capacities of individuals, groups and organizations to deal with threats more competently? (Obrist, Pfeiffer and Henley, 2010). Our research suggests narratives of stress assist immigrant youth in enhancing these capacities. Resolving discrepancies in expectations or coming to terms with discrepancies in expectations are key to enhancing capacities to deal with challenges, or resolve situations of 'stress'. Finding balance and using flexible ideas of identity and place to enhance feelings of connectedness (to friends, family,

futures and past and present homes) also improved the ability of youth to deal with threats or challenges.

Always embedded in broader structures, the agency of youth, like adult agency, is inevitably partial and conditioned by multiple factors (Coe 2011). All youth work with narratives of stress and resilience as they engage in the processes of building capacity for action in various dimensions of their lives. However, the Navigating Multiple Worlds project highlighted aspects of these processes that are unique to immigrant youth. Specifically, shared experiences of immigration frequently manifest as specific forms of constraint placed on the agency of immigrant youth. These include: constraints in terms of language barriers, day-to-day knowledge, and the need to navigate expectations in a way that can perpetuate the sense of being in or moving through 'multiple worlds'.

While youth frequently engaged in discussions of stress in ways that emphasized their resilience, as I now consider, many faced challenges that restricted their agency and had implications for their experience of stress.

Constraints on agency and the role of flexibility: Why youth may be engaging with stress as an idiom of resilience

In the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, youth repeatedly focused on the idea of expectations as a source of stress. This included expectations from school, friends, from themselves and overwhelmingly from family. For many, these onerous

expectations created webs of obligation that influenced the decisions they made and the ways they expressed themselves. Parents can wield power over their children and often control access to resources, limiting the agency of youth in very real ways. Most of the youth involved in our research talked about having little control over their family's decision to immigrate. Many youth discussed their reservations related to the prospect of immigration, and many described anger, particularly towards their parents, as well as the loneliness and feelings of alienation they felt after immigration.

As we worked through narratives of stress, and particularly through discussions of expectations, we found many iterations of the notion of working towards a 'better future' and success measured in terms of academic excellence, material wealth and financial security. These themes were discussed both in terms of motivation for immigration in the first place, and as part of descriptions of future goals, and good ways to be in the world. They were discussed as sources of stress, and as motivation for 'achieving balance' or coping with stress.

Sophia's summary of her experiences of stress and her plans for the future draw attention to the pressure of expectations and her desire to find a 'way of being' that will allow her to find balance in her life:

> I feel like sometimes there is pressure for me to pursue something that is stable and established and that many people will recognize as a respectful career. So that is a challenge that I feel like I have to negotiate; staying true to my strengths and what I love to do, instead of just finding something where I can have financial stability and just ... Trying to find something where I can have both those things.

After reading through a draft of this chapter, Sophia commented on this interview

quote, explaining that notions of success and balance are about more than financial

success:

> This comment (which I would still repeat today) is very much influenced by "standards of success" that my parents had engrained in them growing up. In Poland, and especially among my parents' generation, a good job equals having a title that one could only achieve through extensive schooling and exceptional grades, for example: doctor, lawyer, professor, engineer, architect, etc. At the time, being a professor wasn't even a well-paid job, but it carried with it a tremendous amount of social prestige which, in turn, reflected/reflects favourably upon your family.

The metaphor of balance was used by many of the youth to mediate the influence of

forces that were outside of their control with the idea of an achievable mid-point, or

'good way to be' in the world. The act of balancing expectations involves balancing

the forces that limit the agency of youth with the aspects of life over which youth DO

have control. Using stress as an idiom of resilience can be seen as a response to the

very ways that the agency of immigrant youth is constrained, by expectations, by

power relations and by engrained discourses of capitalism that lead to many

immigrant families measuring success in economic terms.

Simmons (2010) defines immigration in Canada as 'a political, economic and

cultural process linked to global and transnational forces (2)' with 'global forces'

including Canadian trade patterns and their effect on the demand for immigrant

workers and transnational forces, including the social links between migrants and

their home communities (Simmons 2010). The move from thinking about

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immigration as a process of 'uprooting' and disconnection to ideas of transmigration

which recognize multiple and constant interconnections across international

borders that many immigrant families maintain and depend on (Schiller, Basch, and

Szanton Blanc 1995) also contributes to the emergence of stress as an idiom of

resilience. Rather than focusing on ideas of disconnection and separation, many of

the youth engaged in our research emphasized the continued connections (often

facilitated by social media) maintained with families and friends in their countries of

origin.

Although a significant amount of the literature focuses on the very real

disadvantages that immigrant youth can encounter, several of the participants

discussed advantages of 'being an immigrant youth' in Victoria in terms of being

able to access resources from the perspective of more than one culture. One

participant described the process of finding a balance between her Chinese and

Canadian values as something fun and interesting.

> I think the only thing I can rely on is myself in trying to keep the balance
> between those two cultures, but its fun, its interesting trying to hold on to
> those two cultures at the same time. Before it was confusing but now [as I get
> older] its getting better.
>
> - Rachel, 16, China

In their work on youth identity practices, Bucholtz and Skapouli (2010) describe

youth as advantageously positioned to navigate the cultural and social networks

that dominate today's world (Bucholtz and Skapoulli 2010). They suggest that:

> As broader categories and categorizations become fluid in an era of
> transnationalism, subjects and objects in motion, including people and their

artifacts, images, texts, technologies and techniques, ideas and ideologies – in Appadurai's terms "ethnoscapes" "mediascapes" "technoscapes" and "ideoscapes", rapidly navigate across boundaries to shape the construction of the self and other.

They go on to explain:

Young people may be particularly inclined to embrace and refine such cultural flows, due to their distinctive generational experience as well as youth culture's demands for innovation and originality" (1).

While it may be true that, as suggested by Bucholtz and Skapouli (2010) all youth are inclined to 'refine cultural flows,' I suggest that *immigrant youth* might be particularly well positioned to work in this way, to navigate across boundaries, and to succeed in doing so. However, from the perspective of the youth in our research, these cultural flows are not necessarily as fluid as implied by Bucholtz and Skapouli.

In contrast to the idea of fluid cultural flows, most youth discussed their cultural backgrounds, past experiences and their family values as separate and distinct from what they perceived as the 'Canadian' culture, or way of life. In the examples provided in Chapter 4, youth discussed feelings of being 'in between.' While they adopted the title of 'Navigating Multiple Worlds' for the exhibit, in the exhibit, a sense of overlapping but distinct worlds prevailed. In many of the narratives we gathered, particularly those from school-aged youth, individuals described drawing on both their cultural background and their experiences in Canada to define their sense of self. Emphasized in Chapter 4, many youth described actively choosing to draw on various aspects of their home or host cultures at particular moments in

time, recognizing the advantages as well as the challenges that these opportunities can hold.

Bringing attention to the 'here and now' of young peoples' experiences and the social and cultural practices through which they shape their worlds, previous work by Bucholtz emphasizes identity as agentive, flexible and ever-changing (Bucholtz 2002). Our research supports this definition of identity but also draws attention to additional dimensions of flexibility that can be required and invoked by immigrant youth, not just in the context of shaping identities but also in their negotiation of multiple social and cultural contexts, and in the ways they experience and cope with stress.

The notion of 'flexibility' has been widely debated (Kondo 1990; Bucholtz 2002). In particular, discussions of negotiations in the construction of 'cultural citizenship' as a practice of subject-formation, have adopted the language of flexibility (Ong 1999; Ong et al. 1996). In the context of our research, the multiple and sometimes conflicting expectations placed on youth were described as primary sources of stress. These types of expectations coupled with a strong desire to achieve balance are central to the way youth cope with stress, and may amplify the need for flexibility. Discussed in terms of the physicality of stress, the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress and stress as a feature of daily life, flexibility was also key to the ways youth talked about and reflected on experiences of stress.

Emphasizing the 'flexibility' that is embedded in the navigation of contextual

elements that influence the meanings given to 'stress' provides a new perspective on

both the challenges and the successes of immigrant youth engaged in processes of

'belonging.' In most of the literature that focuses on immigrant youth experiences,

the 'navigation of multiple worlds' is often associated with increased stress,

depression, confusion, and feelings of alienation (Kilbride et al. 2003; Phelan,

Davidson, and Cao 1991; Qin 2006; Rumbaut 1994; Yeh et al. 2008a; Zhou 1997).

However, our research suggests that these conflicting expectations can also be

understood as key 'sites of flexibility' in the lives of immigrant youth. The processes

of negotiation that occur in these 'sites of flexibility' as youth use the language of

stress to name challenging experiences and overcome them, may also contribute to

the resilience of youth.

It is clear that cultural context and competing expectations based on diverse social

relations create very real challenges and stressors in the lives of many immigrant

youth (Yeh et al. 2008b; Wolf 1997; Phelan, Davidson, and Cao 1991; Bhugra 2004).

However, the majority of immigrant and non-immigrant youth live in an

increasingly globalized world. With the growth of transcultural ties and

transnational networks, and the proliferation of diverse social relationships, the

ability to negotiate expectations in multiple contexts emerges as a significant asset.

Immigrant youth who manage to 'negotiate multiple worlds' successfully, may in

fact be better equipped to function in today's increasingly interconnected world.

Acknowledging the flexibility that immigrant youth employ to navigate across

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'cultural flows' may be a more pragmatic way to view the immigration process as opposed to portrayals of disruption and separation, presented in much of the earlier literature related to immigrant youth, identity and stress.

As previously noted, significant constraints are placed on the lives of youth. However, throughout the NMW project, the research team's desire to emphasize the positive and the repeated framing of stress as an idiom of resilience in the narratives of immigrant youth suggests, as emphasized by Bucholtz and Skapouli (2010):

> Young people are not simply victims or cogs of these processes. Rather, they are social and cultural agents, who despite very real limitations, manage to accomplish their most immediate goals... to position themselves as particular kinds of youth and thereby to produce new cultural practices." (p.11)

It is worth noting that the immigrant youth involved in our project were, for the most part, a 'particular kind' of immigrant youth. With one exception, they came from immigrant, rather than refugee, families who actively chose to settle in Victoria. In order to access services from VIRCS, immigrants must be permanent residents or citizens. As such, most of the youth in our project came from families that were fairly settled; there is less of a 'transient' immigrant population in Victoria than what is found in larger urban centres. Many of the youth involved had also been previously engaged with other programs offered by VIRCS and were accustomed to actively positioning themselves as 'immigrant' youth to access programs and services.

The fact that the immigrant population in Victoria is relatively small and the majority of the youth involved in our research were comfortable identifying themselves as 'immigrant youth' rather than immigrants from particular places, may also have contributed to the widespread agreement in the thematic analysis of our data. From their previous involvement in VIRCS' youth oriented activities, many of our participants had already been encouraged to reflect on their experiences as 'immigrants' in a number of ways, and to think about the challenges they face. Much of this reflection was framed by discussions of 'immigrant experiences' that emphasized shared experiences. Undoubtedly, the collaborative process we used to develop the coding structure for the data also contributed to this agreement.

While our analysis process led to the development of a thematic coding structure that was agreed upon by the group, there were certainly things that emerged over the course of the project that we chose (as a group) not to focus on or that I chose to exclude. In the final chapter, I will discuss some of these decisions as well as possibilities for future research that emerged over the course of our work.

Throughout our research, our findings were influenced by the three distinctive elements described at the beginning of this chapter, namely our ethnographic focus on stress, the centrality of youth voices throughout our research and our use of mixed methods to support our participatory approach. The combination of these elements created the space for us to consider stress as a narrative idiom, and saw stress emerge as an idiom of resilience as well as distress. However, our findings are

also very tied to place and context, firmly situated in Victoria, focused on a particular kind of immigrant youth and influenced by the ways in which I placed myself, as the research facilitator, in the process. In the following chapter, I will reflect on my role in the project and some of the challenges we encountered to inform recommendations for future work in anthropology focused on stress and immigrant youth.

CHAPTER 7: Reflections, recommendations and suggestions for future research

Over the course of our research, the themes that emerged from our data were fairly consistent. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the smaller immigrant population in Victoria, and the prior affiliation of many of the youth with various services offered by VIRCS may have contributed to this consistency. However, there were aspects of our data that the research team and I chose not to emphasize, and outliers that were not included in the majority of our discussions. In this final chapter, I discuss some of the decisions that were made that influenced our process and findings. I also reflect on the role that my social and cultural location, as a young Caucasian, Canadian, female research facilitator from a relatively privileged background, played in the process and outcomes of our research. I consider the challenges we encountered and what I would do differently in hindsight. I suggest future areas for research and present the recommendations that emerged from our work related to what could be done to decrease stress and enhance resilience for immigrant youth in Victoria. Finally, I conclude with a series of better practice recommendations for future work in participatory paradigms with youth, and research in anthropology focused on stress.

Reflections on our Process and Findings:

The use of stress as an idiom of resilience by youth emerged as a central focus in our research. However, this focus on resilience was definitely influenced by the individuals who made up the research team and the approaches they took to

examining experiences of immigration. The desire of the research team to focus on the positive aspects of immigrant youth experiences as well as on the challenges they encountered directly influenced the tone of our research questions. Although our participatory approach was an invaluable part of our research process, it did mean that some aspects of our findings were not emphasized or were excluded.

In particular, several of the interview participants were very negative in the way they discussed their experiences in Victoria. This small group (3 participants, all over 22 and all working) described experiences of blatant racism, primarily in the context of applying for jobs. They all repeatedly emphasized feelings of frustration and expressed strong senses of being treated unfairly in a number of different contexts in Victoria, attributing these experiences directly to their immigrant status. (Other participants also mentioned discrimination as a challenge but emphasized that other aspects of their journeys outweighed or countered their negative experiences).

One interviewee discussed her frustrations with VIRCS as an organization and her perception that the organization continued to place immigrants in entry-level jobs rather than the jobs for which they were qualified. She accused them of practicing an 'any-job-counts' approach that she saw as reinforcing racism. Although this was something I would have liked to explore further, one research team member recognized this story and felt very strongly that this particular individual was 'stuck' on this version of her experiences and would re-tell it to anyone who would listen,

so the group was encouraged to move past her story. (As the majority of the

research team had accessed services from VIRCS, many had strong loyalties to the

organization.) As a group, we did discuss the challenges of racism and

discrimination in Victoria, but there was a strong sense among research team

participants that negative aspects of immigrant youth experiences were common

focal points in research and in discussions related to the needs of youth. As a result,

the team chose to focus their discussions primarily on other aspects of our findings.

The research team felt that focusing on expectations and other aspects of youth

experiences (particularly with loneliness and things that they saw as 'everyday'

stresses, such as getting around, understanding new school systems, etc.) were an

important part of immigrant youth experiences that were frequently overlooked. I

questioned whether this desire to focus elsewhere was the result of an inherent

acceptance on some level of a certain degree of racism or discrimination, or whether

the research team was perhaps uncomfortable discussing racism when, as a

Caucasian-Canadian, I was involved in the discussion.

From my previous experience in the theatre project at VIRCS, I had been party to

many discussions of racism, facilitated by the theatre facilitator who was herself an

immigrant. However, I was also aware that in the case of the theatre group, the

facilitator, when reflecting on her process after the completion of the first set of

performances, felt that she had taken too strong a role in influencing the direction of

the first theatre project by introducing themes, like racism, to the group and then

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having them work through them in theatre scenes. In the context of our research, many of the research team members felt that racism and discrimination were often talked about. Although these experiences were a part of immigrant youth experiences, they seemed to have incurred a certain degree of topic-fatigue.

On the other hand, the research team spent a lot of time focusing on the idea of discrepancies in expectations, with many of the interviews describing experiences of disappointment with Victoria as a city. Its size, 'whiteness', and its lack of 'cosmopolitan-ness,' were points of contention for many youth who expected more of their new Canadian 'home' upon arrival. As someone who has grown up in Victoria (and who has left Victoria in favour of larger cities frequently for school and travel but who has chosen to return to Victoria), I found this disappointment with the city surprising, and insightful.

There is a pervasive assumption, particularly among non-immigrants that those who choose to immigrate are immigrating to places that are 'better'; safer, cleaner, more stable politically and/or economically and with more 'opportunities' for young people. While these factors, along with access to better education, were frequently mentioned by the youth we interviewed as primary motivations for immigration, discrepancies in expectations, in terms of imagined versus real experiences, were something that the research team felt was an important aspect of immigrant youth experiences. This is also a side of youth experiences that I think would have been

missed had we not been focused on youth perspectives and on capturing youth voices.

Early on in our process, I made a conscious decision to focus on youth voices and to try not to suggest themes to the research team; instead I worked to allow the research team to guide our focus, though I am not sure whether I was completely successful in doing so. As mentioned in Chapter 2, despite my efforts to step back and leave the team to take a leadership role in decision-making, I was repeatedly looked to for affirmation. I often found myself asking questions to promote discussion that inevitably influenced the direction taken. This is a challenge of participatory work, particularly with marginalized groups and again particularly with youth. This is also challenging in the context of research as a graduate student: I needed to ensure that our project progressed in certain ways to meet the requirements not only of the group or community, as is always the case in community based research, but also the requirements of what I needed to accomplish in completing my degree. As I developed relationships with the research team, they also wanted to ensure that I was successful in this sense, which in turn also influenced our process. An important first step in addressing this challenge is acknowledging it, but I would suggest that sharing decision-making power and the influence of research facilitators within participatory paradigms remains an issue which demands further attention in research, and particularly in the context of graduate research.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, by the end of our process I was much more comfortable with the idea of working in ways that were 'as participatory as possible' rather than trying to follow all principles of participatory research to the letter at all times. However, working within a participatory framework requires flexibility and sometimes meant that our work was perhaps not as focused on 'stress' as I would have liked. For example, the photovoice themes that were developed collaboratively by the research team covered a range of topics under the umbrella of immigrant youth experiences, rather than just focusing on stress, as I had originally envisioned. While this was something that worried me during our research, I think the end result of a broader focus had both advantages and disadvantages that were fairly evenly weighted. While the breadth of the photovoice themes moved the focus of the exhibit from 'stress' in particular to immigrant youth experiences more generally, it also created the space to contextualize and give voice to youth experiences. This less focused approach helped us to explore stress as a narrative idiom and meant that all who engaged with the exhibit could find an image or narrative description within the exhibit that resonated with their own experiences.

I anticipated that maintaining the engagement of the youth research team throughout the project may be a challenge. I was fortunate that my funding allowed me to pay members of my research team for their time, acknowledging the value of their expertise throughout the process of our research. While I believe that the majority of the team members would have participated in the project without the honorariums, I think it would have changed the dynamics of the research team;

clarifying expectations, particularly in terms of time frame and time commitment, was an important part of creating shared understanding at the start of the project. In other youth-involved projects I have participated in, even projects that pay individuals an hourly wage, attrition and continuity in terms of attendance and group membership have been issues. The contractual agreement, including payment at the end of the project, encouraged team members to take ownership of the process, helped to maintain accountability over the course of the year, and is a format I would recommend in youth-involved research if it works for the youth participants. (However, I also recognize that when working with marginalized youth, continuous payment may be more useful or even necessary, particularly if they are in financial need.)

Beyond payment, I believe that sharing in decision-making, ownership of the process, and products of our research facilitated and maintained an engaged research team. As our research questions were developed collaboratively, and the team identified our areas of focus, individual team members were invested in our process from beginning to end. It was also extremely beneficial to have Paulina, who worked with VIRCS and was involved in the delivery of youth programs, as a member of our research team. She had pre-existing relationships with many of our participants and research team members. Her connections garnered support for our research. Her positive relationship with many of the youth who accessed services through VIRCS also made her a key gatekeeper in terms of recruiting participants and keeping the research team engaged throughout our process.

The recruitment of participants is something I could have done differently. As I had

previously worked with VIRCS in a volunteer capacity and I had spoken to VIRCS

staff members in the initial stages of narrowing down my research focus, it made

sense for me to recruit youth through VIRCS. While the project was not carried out

through VIRCS, it was affiliated with the organization; this had its benefits but also

led to some challenges. As mentioned in the first Chapter, there are two service

organizations that work with immigrants and refugees in Victoria, VIRCS and ICA.

The two organizations have a historically tenuous relationship, influenced by the

fact that they frequently compete for funding from the federal and provincial

governments. Although this relationship has significantly improved of late, with the

organizations now working together more frequently, when I began my research I

could still sense some animosity between them.

I was unsuccessful in recruiting participants or garnering support from ICA youth

programs, which I felt was influenced by my affiliation with VIRCS. However, it may

also have been due to the fact that since I already had VIRCS on board, I did not

pursue a connection with the ICA after nothing came of my initial meeting with their

youth program coordinator. (It is worth noting that clients can access services from

both organizations with no problems and that several participants suggested that

increased collaboration between the two organizations would help to address gaps

in support for new immigrants to Victoria.)

When I initially set out to explore experiences of stress among immigrant youth, I considered trying to recruit those youth who were relatively unsupported. However, the task of accessing those youth proved very difficult (I was told by the support workers in schools program that unsupported youth existed but was never able to contact anyone directly). Due to my pre-existing relationship with VIRCS, their interest in the research, and my timeframe, I decided that recruiting through VIRCS was more realistic. I do think that recruiting participants principally through VIRCS influenced the type of youth we involved in the project, and contributed to the consistency in terms of themes in our data. (Posters were posted at UVIC and around Victoria as well, although I did no other active recruiting; one member of the research team was recruited through these posters).

Over the course of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, VIRCS also went through some difficult changes (cycling through three executive directors in less than a year and a half). This contributed to disillusionment and tension among many of the very dedicated staff and resulted in high staff-turnover. (Many of these staff moved from VIRCS to ICA). While the team of youth workers at VIRCS was very supportive of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, these changes meant that it was difficult to keep the executive informed about our findings on an on-going basis. At some points in the project, I felt as though the executive was completely unaware of the project and initial agreements relating to administrative and promotional support of the project; as a result, maintaining the momentum for the follow up and distribution of the resources we developed has proved difficult and is something I am still working on.

Had I spent more time expanding my recruitment network initially, I think this could have facilitated the follow up and expanded the potential reach of the exhibit, as well as the resources we developed.

The focus groups were a valuable part of our process, as they allowed the research team to confirm the themes that were emerging from our work in the initial stages of our analysis. They also provided a venue for the youth research team to put their facilitation skills into practice and provided the team with the opportunity to publicly take on leadership roles within the project. However, the participants in these focus groups were again all affiliated with VIRCS. In hindsight, it would have been beneficial to carry out more focus groups, with a more diverse group (including youth not already affiliated with VIRCS).

Despite the possible shortcomings of working primarily with youth who were associated with VIRCS, working with this group definitely facilitated our process, particularly in its initial stages. There were several other factors that worked in my favor at the beginning of the project. When I facilitated the training workshop that recruited the research team as part of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, I was 31 years old and as such, was very close in age to several of the team members. Along with the fact that I had previously gotten to know several of the research team members through youth activities offered by VIRCS, and consider myself to be good at building relationships, my age helped me to both gain credibility with the research team and allowed us to work in what I hope was less of an age-influenced

hierarchy. Throughout the project, we worked as a group to explore immigrant youth experiences.. However, it would be naïve to think that my position as a white, Canadian, educated female from a privileged background had no impact on our process or on my understanding of what we were hearing.

Many of the employees at VIRCS are immigrants themselves, and are thus able to use their shared experiences of immigration as starting points for discussions or for building relationships. I do not consider myself to be an immigrant, although my family arrived in Canada as Irish, Scottish and English immigrants six generations ago. While I have travelled to places where I have experienced temporarily being part of a minority, this has principally been in countries where being Caucasian makes you part of a very privileged minority, a very different experience from what visible minority immigrant youth would encounter.

My non-immigrant status eliminated the opportunity for sharing and reflecting on my own experiences as part of our discussions; however, it did allow me to position myself as a non-immigrant to ask clarifying questions. This helped to reinforce the position of the research team members as 'experts' in immigrant youth experiences. Despite working to share decision-making power whenever possible, in reality, as the research facilitator for the project I provided an introduction to research methods and facilitation tools to the research team, which indirectly reinforced my leadership position in the project.

Suggestions for Future Research

Our findings were certainly influenced by the setting of our research. As previously
discussed, the size and nature of Victoria directly influenced immigrant youth
experiences. It is also important to note that our research took place on Straights
and Coast Salish Territory. Save for those with First Nations, Inuit or Métis ancestry,
the majority of the population of Canada is comprised of immigrants. Although this
history plays a major role in structuring Canadian society, most of the Canadian
population do not see themselves as immigrants. However, colonial history has
influenced the policies and attitudes that newcomers face in Canada, and this in turn
plays out in the experiences of immigrant youth.

Many of our participants mentioned the value of multiculturalism and acceptance as
positive features of Canadian society; however, the colonial history of Canada and its
First Nations, Inuit or Métis communities never entered into their discussions. As
immigrant youth perspectives were not focused on colonial history, it never became
a focus of our work. However, this history is part of a bigger global frame. Both
immigrant youth and Indigenous youth are marginalized in Canadian society in
different but possibly comparable ways. As is the case in the literature related to
immigrant youth identities described in detail in Chapter 4, the question of identity
for Indigenous youth is also often problematized (Chandler et al. 2003; Kirmayer,
Brass, and Tait 2000). Aboriginal communities across Canada continue to face
deeply entrenched discrimination and youth with First Nations, Inuit or Métis
ancestry can also be confronted with challenges associated with navigating the

multiple worlds of their Canadian and Indigenous cultures. These similarities, as well as the apparent lack of knowledge of some immigrant youth with regards to Canada's colonial history, suggest that an area for future research could involve bringing together First Nations and immigrant youth to share their experiences and to determine how their narratives of stress may overlap or may differ. Beyond the potential for the application of similar approaches in working with First Nations youth, our process demonstrated that exploring stress as a narrative idiom, and presenting research findings through arts based methods (in our case photovoice) has the potential to provide an accessible way to discuss challenges in any community setting.

When I looked through our data at the end of the exhibit, I was struck by the sheer volume and diversity of the material we had collected through our mixed-methods approach. As a result of my desire to really focus on youth voices, I made the decision to exclude the service provider interviews from this dissertation; the information contained within these interviews is rich and could be the source for future work, particularly because it focuses on policy and funding issues to a much greater extent than the youth interviews. (While the information from these interviews was not a focus of this dissertation, recommendations made by service providers were included in the list of recommendations provided to VIRCS as part of our feedback process.) Examining where the perspectives of service providers mirror those of immigrant youth and where they differ in more depth would be particularly interesting.

While most youth interviewed were able to identify a range of benefits gained as a result of immigration, several of our interview participants found the discrepancies in their expectations were so large that they felt they gained nothing, and in some cases believed they were worse off than before they came to Victoria. Most of these individuals suggested that moving to other parts of Canada, primarily larger cities, would give them more opportunities and make them happier. Exploring this idea of discrepancies in expectations for immigrant youth could be another direction for research in the future.

Our research suggests that immigrant youth engage with ideas of identity, stress and resilience in ways that emphasize the value of flexibility. From this perspective there is potential in exploring areas of contention or stress in the lives of immigrant youth, frequently framed in terms of expectations, as 'sites of flexibility'. The processes of negotiation that occur in the intersection of narratives of stress and resilience can benefit from further anthropological research. While there is value in adding to existing research that draws on cases of extreme suffering and inequality (often the focus of anthropological inquiry), our research suggests there is also a need to also add to research *with* youth that focuses on adversity, stress and resilience in the face of *everyday* challenges.

Further research, continuing with an ethnographic focus on narratives of stress among immigrant youth, could also be carried out with a larger sample size to determine what aspects of experiences of stress are shared are and where

experiences and understandings of stress may differ. As previously discussed, youth from larger urban centres with larger immigrant populations likely have different experiences. Work among larger immigrant populations could also allow for the exploration of perspectives on stress from immigrants from particular countries of origin and a comparison of experiences across ethnic or national boundaries.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that refugee youth may also use narratives of stress in different ways than immigrant youth who choose, or whose families choose, to immigrate. It would be particularly interesting to carry out similar work with recently arrived refugee youth from high-conflict areas to explore any differences more fully. Finally, this work could also be expanded to explore narratives of stress from the perspectives of other 'kinds' of youth to understand where experiences of stress may differ and actions that could be taken, or resources that could be developed to increase support or enhance resilience among various youth populations.

As we presented our work in the exhibit many older immigrants, as well as other youth, commented on similarities they could draw between their own experiences. Individuals across Canada with whom I have shared our work have had very positive reactions to the photo book, suggesting that while our findings are specific to the experiences of a particular kind of immigrant youth in a particular place, and at a particular time, there are aspects of their experiences that are widely shared.

As a community based, participatory research endeavor our findings are not necessarily 'generalizable' and, I would argue, they don't need to be. Generalizability is not the goal of research in this vein. As eloquently stated by Hirsch (2009),

> Any account of a culture or experience is necessarily partial (both in the sense of not being a complete whole and in the sense of not being impartial), and so the challenge is to strike a balance between this awareness that knowledge is culturally constructed and the need to make a coherent argument from a particular point of view. (29).

However, making our research process, including our methods and the outcomes that emerged during the course of our research, transparent, supports the validity of our findings. The community support and capacity building generated from the Navigating Multiple Worlds project suggests that a similar approach to research with immigrant youth in other settings may be warranted and that others engaging in research in this area may benefit from our experiences.

Throughout our process, the research team worked to enhance the supports available to immigrant youth and to address some of the challenges that were identified as contributing to experiences of stress. I now move to a discussion of the recommendations that emerged from our research related to what can be done to decrease stress, facilitate coping and enhance the resilience of immigrant youth in Victoria. Although these recommendations are specific to gaps in support identified in Victoria, they may be relevant to other communities looking to enhance services or supports for immigrant youth. I conclude with reflections and recommendations

for future work in anthropology related to the experiences of immigrant youth and the value of thinking about stress as a narrative idiom.

Enhancing the Resilience of Immigrant Youth in Victoria: Recommendations from our Research

Throughout our research, social support from teachers and counselors, immigrant service organizations, and particularly from family and friends, was described as a key factor that facilitated coping and contributed to the resilience of immigrant youth in Victoria. The importance of social support in the lives of youth is common sense to a certain extent, and is a frequent focus in the literature related to immigration, youth and adjustment (Portes and Rumbaut 2005; Sabatier and Berry 2008; Schiller 2009; Todorova, Suárez-Orozco, and Suárez-Orozco 2008; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Yeh et al. 2005b). The youth in the Navigating Multiple Worlds project described the value and importance of accessing support from a number of sources in person, as well as on-line.

Identifying gaps in supports and creating resources to address these gaps wherever possible was a very important part of our participatory research process. Along with the resources developed by the research team (described in Chapter 5), we also put together a list of recommendations made by youth participants and by research team members. These recommendations were shared with VIRCS, with ESL teachers and with the SWIS program. These recommendations addressed the research question that, from the perspective of the research team, was one of our most

important: "What can be done to enhance the resilience of immigrant youth in Victoria?"

Many of our participants were recruited through VIRCS and therefore had personal experience accessing a number of the supports and services offered there. The majority of the recommendations made by youth were focused on increasing available programs or supports, increasing awareness of existing programs, or changing existing programs to make them more accessible. Specific recommendations included: more support-oriented services for second generation immigrant youth, particularly for those who have parents with limited English; more programs that encourage inclusiveness- bringing immigrant and non-immigrant youth together; more programs that are geared towards parents and their children and improving communication (programs like the VIRCS theatre program were seen as very valuable as they encouraged dialogue and enhanced understanding between parents and children); the creation of a program specifically aimed at helping immigrant youth cope with stress; some kind of introductory 'Victoria 101' program facilitated by other immigrant youth that would also operate as a sort of 'buddy system'; and more programs for young adults (we identified a general gap in services and supports for youth aged 18-25).

A number of recommendations also focused on school and the supports available to students. Many youth discussed the value of ESL classes and suggested there was a need for more ESL hours (inside and outside of school time). Other

recommendations that were school-specific included: greater emphasis in the curriculum about multiculturalism (and discrimination); enhanced cross cultural training for teachers and counselors; in-school mentorship or buddy programs; and enhancing credential recognition/facilitating credential transfer. For a complete list of recommendations, see Appendix I.

Resilience research suggests social contexts and resource provision are of central importance in the consideration of turning points in fostering trajectories of resilience for individuals and groups (Panter-Brick and Eggerman 2012). The recommendations that emerged during our research mirror findings in the literature related to resilience (Panter-Brick and Eggerman 2012; Ungar 2011; Yeh et al. 2008a), and emphasize the importance of services aimed at facilitating transitions for immigrant youth, namely transitions to new schools, new social groups or employment.

With a rich history of ethnographic research and methods based on participatory observation, anthropologists have long been working in participatory paradigms. A number of recommendations or suggestions for better practices emerged from the process of our research that may be of interest to others looking to do further research in the area of stress, or to those involved in other participatory research endeavors with youth. In the design and implementation of initiatives that involve participatory research, understanding participatory research as an operation of power and being open to working in ways that are as participatory as possible is a

valuable first step. It is also worth spending time reflecting on participatory processes as they are designed and implemented. It is important to acknowledge when and where compromises may be necessary, and what you are comfortable with, as a researcher, in terms of flexibility within your participatory paradigm. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this approach may be particularly relevant to graduate students undertaking research, where timelines and requirements can make shared leadership and shared decision-making challenging.

The formation and continuation of the youth research team was the most important part of our research process and was key to the success of our project. When working with youth, taking the time to build authentic relationships and recognizing the value of the youth researchers as 'experts' in their own right, is essential. This can be facilitated by the provision of paid positions if it is feasible, but can also be reflected in the design of research processes, involving team members in the design as early as possible. Above all, flexibility in what is defined as 'capacity building' within research processes helps to address the challenges of attrition and disengagement that can often be encountered in research with youth. Building off the individual interests of youth research team members ensures that capacity building opportunities are ongoing and relevant (to the youth team members and not just to the research facilitators) and also contributes to positive outcomes of research. In participatory research, the process of research itself must be recognized as an intervention or outcome.

The photovoice process and the exhibit mounted as part of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project highlighted the value of arts based methods in work with youth on several levels. In terms of the design of research processes, having the youth research team involved in the development of the photovoice themes proved invaluable in terms of creating images that were meaningful. This, in turn, helped to make the exhibit a 'thinking space' of its own.

Our experiences suggest that there is value in working specifically to create thinking spaces as part of research that involves youth. Consciously developing opportunities for thinking spaces to emerge as part of research with youth and creating engaging spaces for the dissemination of research findings, can help to address some of the challenges of participatory research with youth. This approach creates a space that encourages action and reflection as a result of the research and engages the wider community in ways that promote the sustainability of said actions.

It is also important to recognize the value of arts based methods in their ability to engage individuals whose voices may otherwise be marginalized in research. In the case of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, the photovoice process was an accessible way for those members of the research team with lower levels of English to share their experiences. The photographs and the exhibit also created opportunities for other youth or older immigrants for whom English is a second language to engage with our findings and participate in the process.

Finally, I will move to looking beyond the process of our research to reflect briefly on our findings related to experiences of stress from the perspective of immigrant youth. Framing stress as a narrative idiom; as an idiom of resilience as distress; draws attention to the ways that immigrant youth work at the intersection of ideas of stress, identity, and the management of expectations to express their subjectivity. The ethnographic approach to the study of stress that was part of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project was instrumental in picking up the narrative complexities that influence the many ways that immigrant youth experience stress.

'Stress' can signify many things. Stress describes the tension, pressure, and conflicting expectations that face many youth. It can also signify the negative emotions and physical reactions, as well as meanings of stress linked to notions space and time, of separation and rupture. For many of the immigrant youth who participated in our research, the daily stressors – the challenges of acclimatizing to a new environment, a new language, new schools, new friends, and new family dynamics - were the most common sources of stress. However, along with the narratives of stress that related to experiences of distress, many youth were simultaneously using discussions of stress to talk about strengths, potentials, and resilience.

From the perspective of the immigrant youth involved in our project, 'stress,' functions as a narrative tool that is dynamic and fluid. As a narrative idiom, 'stress' has become part of the everyday language and experiences of immigrant youth in

Victoria, and part of how youth are expressing their subjectivity. Research focused

on illness narratives emphasizes the role of interactions between life and stories in

facilitating positive change (Witztum and Goodman 1999; Nichter 2010). Taking an

ethnographic approach to stress allowed us to focus on the personal experiences of

youth. The narratives of stress we collected mirrored the experiences of youth, but

also provided opportunities for those involved to create or change their personal

realities. First suggested in work done with *immigrant adults* (Obrist and Buchi

2008) our research confirmed that labeling something as 'stress' or 'stressful' also

allowed youth to frame the challenges they experienced in terms that allowed them

to express themselves as well as facilitating coping with change.

Stories of extreme suffering and inequality demand attention and are often the focus

of anthropological inquiry. So too is research focused on resilience in the face of

extreme challenges or 'stress'. However, there is also need for further

anthropological research on the perspectives of youth in the context of the everyday

challenges they encounter. In research that promotes reflection on the shared

experiences of youth, in the context of immigration but also in any number of other

contexts, participatory processes can provide opportunities for youth to share their

perspectives. Engaging youth in research does more than give voice to youth

perspectives. This can also provide opportunities for youth to reflect on their own

agency, which, in turn, can enhance resilience.

Our research supports an increased focus on resilience and the various aspects of 'flexibility' that immigrant youth engage with as they encounter and cope with experiences of stress. Understanding sources of stress (framed in terms of physical bodily reactions, spatial and temporal dimensions, or everyday stresses) as products of 'sites of flexibility' facilitates thinking about stress and resilience as processes that are both reactive and proactive. Many immigrant youth do face particular restrictions and constraints on their agency. However, their experiences 'navigating multiple worlds', learning to succeed in the face of change and to mobilize resources from multiple social or cultural contexts, can be considered as an asset. This perspective supports a re-framing of research with immigrant youth in anthropology to one that moves away from labeling the category of immigrant youth as inherently problematic.

With the growth of transnational populations and as rapid sharing of knowledge and dispersal of ideas is facilitated by technology, anthropology is uniquely positioned to carry out relevant research that can work to address challenges at the community level. At the beginning of our research the Navigating Multiple Worlds project was focused on stress, identified as something that was under-researched in the context of immigrant youth and was believed to have some influence on, or relationship to, their health and wellbeing. Through the process of our research it became apparent that the social, political and cultural contexts that influence experiences and understandings of stress are tied to the ways in which individuals navigate change and express their subjectivity. The findings of the Navigating Multiple Worlds

project reflect not only on the challenges that can face immigrant youth and the negative potentials of their experiences of stress, but also speak to the value of conceptualizing stress as a narrative idiom. Considering stress as an idiom of resilience as well as distress creates opportunities to recognize and enhance the strengths of immigrant youth and the supports available to them.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A : Research Process Design

Phase 1: Consultation
- Meeting with VIRCS Staff, SWIS workers, Youth→ Inform research design

- (Continuous Consent→ re-consent process throughout whole project)

Phase 2: Training Workshops
1. Research Methods Workshop
- Recruitment of Youth participants:
  - o VIRCS Youth night and social night
  - o UVIC list serves
  - o SWIS workers
  - o Facebook
  - o ICA
- 2 day Research Training Workshop (attended by 15 youth) → Invitation to become RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER (Research Team -10 youth in the beginning down to Core Research Team of 6 youth for the entirety of the project)

2. Photovoice Workshop: (Carried out much later in the project, with the core research team and 5 additional youth included under phase 2 here, as it was part of the training process. However, for ease of reading, it is discussed under phase 3- photovoice in the context of Chapter 2)
- Recruitment of participants:
  - o All Core Research Team members and additional youth who expressed interest in joining the project
- 1 day photovoice training workshop → photovoice as a research method, the ethics of photography in research and training from 2 professional photographers
  - o Introduction of photovoice themes/questions developed by core research team
  - o Invitation to new members to join research team for the photovoice project

Phase 3: Youth Driven research process
- *Research Process*
  - o **Weekly Research Team meetings to***:
    - ▪ Develop & enhance facilitation skills,
    - ▪ Discuss immigrant youth experiences to determine possible key themes
    - ▪ Develop research process

-
  - o **Interviews: (To gather immigrant youth perspectives and experiences)**
  - o 1. Interviews with Immigrant Youth
    - Questions developed by research team in weekly meetings
    - Practice interviews in research meetings between research team members
    - Recruitment of interview participants (youth) by youth research team members and by advertising through VIRCS
    - Conducting Interviews (Research team members interviewing other immigrant youth)
  - o 2. Service Provider Interviews
    - Questions developed by research team in weekly meetings
    - Recruitment of interview participants (service providers) through VIRCS
    - Conducting interviews (Research Team members interviewing Service Providers)
  - o **Focus Groups**: **(to confirm themes from preliminary analysis of interviews, to gather additional perspectives)**
  - o 1. With other immigrant youth groups
    - Questions developed by Research Team in Weekly meetings
    - Focus Groups facilitated by research team members with
      - VIRCS Youth Night
      - VIRCS Social Night
      - VIRCS Theatre Program

  - o **Photovoice: (to develop themes from interviews and focus groups and to share experiences and perspectives with the community in a way that is accessible)**
    - Photovoice themes/questions developed by core research team
    - Core Research Team + 5 'new' research team members (attendees of photovoice workshop) carried out photovoice project
      - Taking pictures
      - Discussing pictures in research team meetings
      - Developing descriptions to accompany pictures
      - Developing dissemination process
      - Selecting images for photo book and exhibit
      - Publicity/ mounting of exhibit
      - Participating in exhibit

Phase 4: Reflection and Participant Observation
- Carried out by myself (participant observation) and all Research Team members (core and new)
  - o Ongoing reflection exercises throughout training workshops phase and youth led research phase

- o Iterative cycles of reflection during and after each step in the research process informed the design and implementation of the following steps

Phase 5: Analysis of Data
- Ongoing process carried out in weekly meetings as well as individual analysis by Core research team members and myself
    - o Transcription and thematic analysis of interviews
    - o Development of thematic coding structure (in research team meetings) applied by core research team through Dedoose analysis platform
    - o First set of themes presented in Focus Groups to confirm them with other immigrant youth
    - o Second level of data analysis focused on contextual relationships between stress, resilience and subjectivity specifically (carried out by myself, after youth-involved research was completed)

Phase 6: Dissemination of Research Results
- Ongoing dissemination processes throughout the project
    - o Reporting of themes and recommendations to VIRCS at regular intervals
    - o Creation of community resources (action to address identified gaps) core research team (translated materials)
    - o Photo book
    - o Publicity/ Facebook page/ Publications
    - o Photovoice Exhibit

APPENDIX B: Research Workshop Plan

1:00 Arrive, Make nametags
1:10 Introduction to workshops, what we are going to cover, how it fits into the bigger research plan
1:15 Introduction to community based research, idea of using research in the community as action for social change,

1:30 Research ethics- description of plan of workshop, sign consent forms

1:45 Pair off – mini interviews with set questions- interview each other Learn how to use digital recorders (write your names on the tape on the recorder so that you can use the same one later)

Name:

Age:
   1. Where are you from?
   2. Where do you go to school? Or if you are not in school what do you spend your time doing?
   3. Describe 3 things you are interested in/ things you like to do:
   4. Tell me about why you decided to come to the workshop? What do you hope to learn or what are you most interested in learning about?

2:00 get back into the group and introduce your partner to the group
You have just done an interview- a structured interview.

2:15- 2:45 introduction to interviews, semi structured, critical incident interviews, prompting/probing questions.

Brainstorm:
   - Examples of bad questions – what could be done to make them better?
   - Examples of non-talkative interviewees?
   - How to come up with interview questions?
   - (Refer back to get to know you interviews- last two questions are better examples of questions that will get you more information than the first tow one-word answer questions…)

2:45 Coming up with questions: If you wanted to find out about the experiences of immigrant youth, maybe challenges they face and also positive things about living in Victoria, what kind of questions would you ask?

(Everyone write 4 questions on 4 post its and put them up at the front of the room, make at least one question a critical incident question "Tell me about a time when…")
→ Come up with practice interview questions as a group…

WRITE FINAL QUESTIONS AND FALL BACK QUESTIONS ON A FLIPCHART

3:00 Practice Interview (fall back questions):
1. How long have you lived in Victoria? Before Victoria where did you live?

2. What do you think are the best things or your favorite things about living in Victoria? (USE PROMPTING QUESTIONS)
      What do you mean when you say...?
      Can you tell me more about…?

3. What do you think are the biggest challenges you faced as an immigrant youth when you moved to Victoria?
      What do you mean when you say...?
      Can you tell me more about…?

5. Tell me about a time when…. You faced a challenge in your life and someone was able to help you deal with it
    OR
    Someone did something that made you feel welcome/at home/ safe after you immigrated

3:30 SNACK BREAK

3:45 → Value of arts based approaches
- theatre
- visual art
- Photovoice
- What it is
- Ethics of photography→ draft a photography agreement as a group/ show sample agreement

4:00- what makes a good picture, how to use your cameras

4:50 Homework assignment
- Go home and take pictures, think about what makes a good picture, think about what the pictures mean/represent for you. Take as many pictures as you want but send 5 to me…(if you don't have a computer don't worry! We can download them to my computer at snack break on Sunday)
Take a picture that represents:
- "Home"
- "'who you are"
- "A Challenge in your life"
- "Belonging"
- " Change"

Quick Check in
What went well today?
What was challenging?
What would you do differently?
Any questions?

5:00- END- Pizza party.

SUNDAY
1:00- Check in- how are you doing? Anything that came up yesterday that you would like to talk about more?

1:10 We talked about interviews and photovoice, now we are going to talk about some other facilitation techniques for when you are working with a group of people

- Brainstorming
- Challenge Walls
- Open Space
- Conversation café

- Now you are starting to see that there are a whole bunch of different approaches you can take to do research in the community, with the community...
- These facilitation tools can be used in Focus Groups

1:30 Focus Groups & Facilitation

What is a focus group, when to use it, focus group role play

2:00 Mock focus group practice (have a different facilitator/note taker pair for each question)

MOCK FOCUS GROUP TOPIC

- How could your neighbourhood be improved, made more safe, more youth friendly

PRACTICE FOCUS GROUP:

Possible focus group questions
1. What kinds of challenges do immigrant youth face when they come to a new country?

2. What kinds of supports are available for new immigrant youth?

3. What do you think could be added/improved/changed to make it easier for immigrant youth to feel at home in Victoria?

3:00 SNACK BREAK- anyone who hasn't sent pictures send them!
3:20 Photo presentations & Discussion
3:50 Themes?

4:00 What common themes/ similar ideas do you see that came out of the interviews and focus groups? (USE TRANSCRIPTS OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT QUESTION FROM DAY 1...)

Photographs- Common themes?
This is the start of how you analyse material...

FLIPCHART BRAINSTORM:

4:30 Next steps- what will be involved in the bigger research project & research team, importance of having youth perspectives all the way through, creating change, time commitment, honorarium

5:00 END- distribute youth researcher consent forms to those who are interested in continuing on.

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions for Immigrant Youth Participants

Interview Questions – Navigating Multiple Worlds

1. Where did you immigrate from and when did you immigrate? If you were old enough to remember, what were your expectations before you immigrated?
   o Did you want to come? Can you tell me how you felt about the idea of immigrating before you arrived here?
   o Was it a choice for you or a decision that you weren't involved in?
   o What motivated you/ your family to immigrate?
   o Do you feel your family made any sacrifices to immigrate? What sacrifices do you feel you or your family made?
   o What benefits do you feel you have gained or your family has gained from immigrating?

2. How do you identify yourself? (For example, as Canadian, as Chinese, as Chinese-Canadian)? Do you always identify yourself in this way or does it change depending on context (where you are/who you are with/what you are doing)?

3. Can you tell me what you remember about/ how you experienced your first week in Canada? When did you move to Victoria and what did you think about Victoria when you first got here?
   o After you immigrated were you in school, working etc? And now what do you do?
   o Would you say that the process of immigrating was challenging/ stressful or was it quite a smooth transition? What made it stressful or smooth?
   o If the process was stressful, how did you address this or what did you do to make it easier on yourself?

4. What resources or supports did you and your family access after arriving and when?
   o Were there any resources or supports that were particularly useful/helpful for you before you came to Canada?

5. Can you tell me about a time when, as an immigrant youth, you felt particularly included/ welcomed or supported?

6. Can you tell me about a time when, as an immigrant youth, you maybe had a negative experience? Where you didn't feel welcomed or supported?

7. What challenges do you feel can face immigrant youth in Victoria?

- Can you tell me about a time when you experienced a challenge as a result of immigration or that was related to being an immigrant? How did you respond to that challenge and what was the outcome?

8. Do you think that your family dynamics (relationships etc.) have changed since immigrating? How? (can you give me an example?)

9. Do you feel that you need to negotiate multiple expectations at school, at home and with friends? Do you think that as an immigrant youth, the expectations placed on you are different than those of your Canadian counterparts? Can you give me an example?
    - If yes, what do you see as the biggest challenges related to expectations?
    - What supports help you in balancing or managing expectations?

10. What kind of existing services or supports do you access or find most useful?

11. Start by saying " Ok so now I want to ask you a couple questions that are specifically related to stress and resilience among immigrant youth"

    - Do you use the word 'stress' to describe any challenges or tensions in your life? (IF they say no, then just move to the last question)
        - If you do use the language of stress, what does 'stress' mean to you and how do you experience stress?
        - What do you think are the main sources of stress in your life?
        - What do you do to deal with stress? If you are under pressures whom do you go to for support?
        - Can you tell me about a time when you felt like you were under a lot of stress or pressure and you were able to do something that you felt helped you deal with the pressure?

12. What gaps do you see in what is currently available for immigrant youth in Victoria? What do you think could be done to improve or enhance the experience of other immigrant youth in Victoria?

APPENDIX D: Interview Participant List [6]

ID #	Interviewer	Pseudonym	Age	Country of Origin	Status	Sex	Time in Canada
20	Harry	Daisy	26	China	First Generation	F	<2
13	Estuardo	Felipe	17	Mexico	First Generation	M	<2
24	Paulina	Ella	26	Somalia/Ukraine	First Generation	F	10+
2	Kay	**Javier**	20	Canada/Chile	Second Generation	M	10+
18	Kay	Danielle	21	Malaysia	First Generation	F	<2
6	Irwin	**Diane**	17	China	First Generation	F	10+
25	Sinney	Beth	16	Thailand	First Generation	F	<2
22	Paulina	Sheila	26	China	First Generation	F	<2
8	Sinney	Henry	26	Philippines	First Generation	M	2-5
4	Estuardo	Kelly	27	Philippines	First Generation	F	<2
21	Harry	Fay	19	China	First Generation	F	<2
17	Paulina	Sanjay	18	India	First Generation	M	2-5
3	Blair	**Chris**	24	China	First Generation	M	2-5
5	Tamara	**Sophia**	27	Canada/Poland	Second Generation	F	2-5
1	Harry	Tara	27	Philippines	First Generation	F	<2
7	Paulina	**Samara**	19	Canada/Iraq	Second Generation	F	6-10
12	Estuardo	Megan	17	Philippines	First Generation	F	2-5
9	Kay	Ahmed	20	Iraq/Palestine/Syria	First Generation	M	<2
15	Tamara	Emily	29	China	First Generation	F	2-5
14	Tamara	Rashed	14	Iraq	First Generation	M	<2
16	Paulina	May	18	Philippines	First Generation	F	2-5
19	Isabela Sasaki	Ken	25	China	First Generation	M	<2
23	Paulina	Alejandro	16	Peru	First Generation	M	<2
26	Sinney	Neena	19	India	First Generation	F	<2
11	Isabela Sasaki	**Marianna**	30	Brazil	First Generation	F	10+
10	Sinney	Sherrie	19	Korea	First Generation	F	<2
27	Sinney	Mary-Ann	17	South Korea	First Generation	F	2-5
28	Kay	Ramya	27	Sri Lanka	First Generation	F	2-5
29	Estuardo	Jonathan	16	Philippines	First Generation	M	<2
30	Estuardo	Rachel	16	China	First Generation	F	10+
31	Estuardo	Julio	18	Guatemala	First Generation	M	2-5
32	Paulina	Elise	18	Brazil	First Generation	F	2-5

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[6] Members of the research team who participated in interviews are included in this list. For all interview references pseudonyms have been used. However, for the photovoice work and any references to photovoice images within the text, the research team chose to have their own names associated with their images and the accompanying descriptions.

APPENDIX E: Focus Group Questions

1. *Start Focus Group with a brainstorming/artistic expression:* Either mind map (using words) or draw 2 separate images:
   - What does 'stress' mean to you?
   - Where you find support or how you cope with stress

2. We've heard in our interviews that some of the biggest challenges or sources of stress for immigrant youth are related to language, making friends and juggling expectations from parents, friends and school. Do you agree? Is there anything that you think could be added to this list?

3. Looking back on your experiences as an immigrant youth in Victoria, if you knew then what you know now, is there anything you would do differently to make the process of immigrating easier for you? What advice would you give to someone who has just arrived in Victoria?

4. What do you think could be changed, added, or improved to increase support /decrease stress or enhance resilience in immigrant youth in Victoria? Is there anything missing that might make immigration easier if it was available?

5. You are all here and you have all managed to navigate many challenges successfully. Looking back and comparing where you are now and how you feel now to where you were and how you felt when you first arrived, what are you most proud of?

APPENDIX F: Photovoice Themes and Instructions

The following statements were developed with the Navigating Multiple Worlds Research Team. To come up with the themes and statements the team reflected on what they had heard from immigrant youth and service providers, in interviews and focus groups.

Instructions: In taking your pictures, think about what an image/photo represents for you. (Since some of your photos may be part of an exhibit that is open to the public think about what you would like the wider community to know about your experiences and perspectives) . When you are taking your pictures you can use your notebooks to write down what the picture means/ what you like about it/ any other ideas you want to keep track of, if you want.

TAKE A PICTURE THAT REPRESENTS....

1. "Navigating Multiple Worlds" (what that means to you)

2. Who you are/ your self portrait

3. "Home"

4. The biggest challenge you faced since coming to Victoria

5. What you are most proud of since coming to Victoria

6. What 'stress' means to you

7. What 'belonging' means to you

8. Something that makes your life easier/ something that represents support for you

9. Transformation and progress... your imagined future.

Before we meet again I want you to pick your favorite picture for each statement or theme. It would be great if you could take a picture that represents each statement for you, but you can also choose to skip some of them if you want. It's up to you! Since next weekend is Easter, and a lot of people are on holidays we won't be meeting that week, giving you two weeks to go out and take your pictures. We will decide on a time to meet again over email. If possible, I would like you to email me your images before our next meeting so I can load them up so they can be projected onto a screen. Come to the next meeting ready to present your images to the group, telling us what the picture means to you. (If you can't email the pictures to me beforehand, we will load the images onto my computer at the start of the session!)

APPENDIX G: Photography Workshop Agenda and Instructions to Guest Photographers

Photography Workshop March 31st 2012 Draft Agenda
Rough Schedule
11am- arrive/ icebreakers
11:20 – Background on the NMW project, and what we are going to do today-
11:30 – Introduction to photovoice, have youth research team present the themes that we would like to have people photograph
12:00- Ethics of photography for photovoice work and research
12:30- 1:15 Lunch
1:15- 2:30 **Guest Photographer Presentations**
2:30-3:30 Hands on photo work in small groups (**with guest photographers**)
3:30-4:15 Show favorite pictures to the group
4:15- 4:30 Determine who is interested in photovoice project, hand out photovoice assignment and information to those who are interested.

Photographer Presentations and Hands on Photography Exercise (1:15-4:00ish (you could always leave early if you have to, and of course, you are more than welcome to come for lunch (pizza) or for the whole thing if you want!):

Confirmed Photographers: Jesse Moore; Barry Herring
If you could prepare to present a little bit of your background, how you got into photography and the kinds of things that you do that would be perfect. If you could present some of your favorite photographs to the group in a slideshow format, (or any other format if you want!) that would be great (The room will have full A/V capacity and I will have my Mac there. You can send me anything you want ahead of time or you can bring your presentation in on a stick, whatever is easiest!) . For each photograph if you could talk about why you took the picture, what it is that you like about it, how you took it, any story behind it/ what it represents or means for you. Any comments as to the structure of the picture, or advice for people who maybe want to take a picture like it would also be great.

For the hands on photo-work I'm thinking it would be great if we could break up the group, and head outside or into the hallways to take some pictures. I could give them a theme to take pictures of if you think that would be easiest. E.G. "Take a picture of something that makes you happy" …. I have little point and shoot digital cameras with screens for the youth who may not have their own cameras. If I don't have enough we can get them to share- 2 to a camera, but I should have enough. Many of the kids also have really good cameras of their own. I'm thinking that as they go out to take pictures, they could then ask for advice, get insight as to how to crop pictures, how close to be to take pictures of people, of landscapes of things… or whatever advice you think might be useful! We would then come back together as a group, and anyone who wanted to share one of their pictures could do so (if there is time).

APPENDIX H: Navigating Multiple Worlds Article – The Ring

Accessible on-line at: http://ring.uvic.ca/news/behind-accent-uvic-research-gives-immigrant-youth-voice-0

Behind the accent: UVic research gives immigrant youth a voice

- Paulina Jarmula

Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be an immigrant to Victoria? University of Victoria medical anthropology PhD candidate Sarah Fletcher and her team of immigrant youth research assistants are giving us a good idea. Since October 2011, they have been conducting research on the experiences of immigrant youth in Victoria. Their project, Navigating Multiple Worlds, explores how immigrant youth experience the transition from one country and way of life to another, as well as how they deal with and use the language of stress in everyday life.

Photovoice photo by Elisangela Pontedura:

"This picture represent support for me because I can see in it my family and my friends helping me cope and live my everyday life. As living so far away from home I've learnt that home is where I am at the present moment and that my family is now the friends I've made in Canada. I have learned that we are here for each other and to support each other. My friends are my support and they help make my every day life easier and blissful. I love being here and I am thankful for having this wonderful gift life has given me."

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The research findings to date have ranged from heartbreaking to hilarious. Some of the youths' first impressions of Victoria have included "quiet," "small," "boring," "very white," "lots of old people," and "like a zombie movie."

Some common challenges that have come up have been expected. There is always the issue of communication ("I'm just not funny in English."); finding new friends and fitting in ("I had never heard of Lady Gaga. In my language, 'gaga' means crazy. So Lady Gaga means crazy lady."); adjusting to a different school (finding your locker and figuring out what "block schedule" means); finding a

job and earning money (just as soon as you learn how to write a "Canadian" resume); and understanding Victoria's "recycling laws," which one youth noted as his biggest challenge. Cultural stereotyping has also come up on several occasions. One youth shared a story about his Canadian friends expecting him to know kungfu because of his nationality.

Linguistic barriers have also emerged as a primary theme; one youth commented on his difficulties in understanding English jargon. Newly arrived in Victoria, he had boarded a bus to be greeted by the driver with "Hi there!" He knew "hi" and he knew "there" separately, but the meaning of them together was lost on him. One thing is certain: many facets of our daily routines that we so often take for granted or tend not to think about altogether have proven to come up time and again throughout the interviews.

As for stress, there is no question that youth are resilient when it comes to dealing with life's obstacles. Some use the language of stress to express their hardships, while others prefer to describe these hardships as challenges. Some don't even know what the word "stress" means. ("What is this word? We don't have this word in my language.") Friends, family and community are often sought out for support, but for newcomers, such sources of support are not always close at hand.
The project also benefits the immigrant youth research assistants, helping them develop skills that will support them in their future academic and professional pursuits.

Having completed their research analysis and identified key themes throughout the research findings, the team is now moving on to the "photovoice" stage of their project. In this stage, the research assistants will be taking photographs that capture what each identified theme means to them. Some of the themes include "home," "stress," "belonging" and "your imagined future."
As one youth put it, "I'd say it has been one of the best experiences of my life. It allowed me to meet people who understand me and have gone through the same experiences as me. I also learned a lot from other people's difficulties and I started to see how beautiful it is to overcome all of them. Now we're ending the project with a photovoice stage, which amazes me because I am discovering a whole new area of expression while sharing our points of view with the community."

Navigating Multiple Worlds is focused on taking the youths' recommendations and turning them into tangible outcomes such as recycling information sheets translated into major settlement languages. The project is presenting a photovoice exhibit at Xchanges Gallery, which will provide Victorians with insight into the lives of the youth involved in the project. More importantly, Navigating Multiple Worlds is giving a voice to a minority demographic, allowing them an opportunity to share their stories and collectively fuel change throughout the community

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APPENDIX I: Recommendations from Navigating Multiple Worlds Interviews with Youth & Service Providers:

- Language Translating
    - Drivers test
    - Recycling instructions
    - Bus routes (bus schedules instructions)
    - Lockers how to work them
    - School schedules/ block schedules
- Cross cultural training for teachers/counselors (example of the theatre play as a positive impact / potential in this area)
- More services for 2nd generation immigrant youth- particularly for those youth who were born in Canada but whose parents don't speak English.
- Increase awareness of services that are available (figure out a way to increase awareness particularly for people when they first arrive- often quite a gap between arrival and accessing services)
- More programs that are geared towards increasing inclusiveness- programs for immigrant and Canadian youth together
- Greater emphasis in schools and in curriculum about multiculturalism (and about discrimination)
- Have more information available for people on arrival – at the ferries or in the airport- in different languages directing them to available services. (Ideas of welcome teams or information in different languages in pamphlets.)
- More dedicated ESL Classes in schools
- ESL classes outside of school hours (need more ESL hours)
- In school mentorship program or buddy program
    - Buddy program pairing new immigrants with older/more acclimatized immigrant youth, maybe who speak the same language
    - Buddy program pairing Canadian youth with newcomers
- There are lots of programs for youth and lots for adults, but very little for parents and youth together. Communication programs or something might be useful (this was also described as a possible benefit of the theatre program- opening up lines of communication, letting parents understand what their kids are experiencing)
- More programs for young adult immigrant youth (currently a bit of a gap for youth aged 18-25)
- More cultural events throughout the year.
- Enhancing credential recognition/transfer would decrease stress and frustration re. Employment
- Although sometimes entry-level jobs are needed, make sure immigrant youth don't get stuck in low level jobs just because of low levels of English
- Have something like the STRIDES youth camp more often
- More activities outside of school time (everything in Victoria closes very early)
- More counselors and multicultural counselors (wait list is too long)

- Something (program, workshop etc.) to help immigrant youth learn how to deal with social anxiety
- Program in youth night or life skills specifically for increasing ability to cope with stress
- Mentorship program like a big brother or big sister program for immigrant youth
- Victoria 101 class (providing an introduction to Victoria that includes how to get around, interesting places to go/things to see, how to access resources etc.)

Appendix J: Resources for Immigrant Youth Developed by the Research Team

1. **Photobook:**
2. **Guide to BC Transit**
3. **Guide to Recycling**
4. **Guide to School Agenda (Reynolds Secondary)**

1. Photobook:

Link to on-line (order-able) version of the photo book:
http://www.mypublisher.com/index/?e=OHm3Q8zJl3QtcFZ8Ajh7nMRX9XOCB5zl&showForm=true
Link to online PDF version of Photobook: http://sarahfletcher8.wix.com/sarah-fletcher#!nmw-project/c22j5

How to use the schedule:

Bus routes are named according to the destination of the route, for example, the **14 UVic** or **2 Oak Bay**. A letter may also appear with the destination name on the bus. The letter lets you know that the routing is different from the regular routing and maybe the **Express** or **Night** route. A **'Not in Service'** destination sign means that the bus cannot pick you up. The bus may be traveling to the next scheduled route or to or from the garage

Planning your trip:

There are three ways to get schedule information:

1. **Website:** Explore the website www.bctransit.com to view maps, schedules and route information. This website is the best source for the most up-to-date information on detours and delays due to road construction or bad weather.
2. **Rider's Guide:** This publication provides schedules and individual route maps. Important bus information is included in the footnotes of he schedules. Departure times may vary slightly due to customer loads and road conditions.
3. **Transit Info: 250-382-6161**
   BC Transit offers a 24-hour computerized transit information system for your convenience. For personal service, press "0" during transit information hours.
   - Have a pen and paper ready
   - Where you want to go
   - Know your exact location
   - The day you want to travel
   - Lost and Found items
   - Street names and block numbers give the agent a starting point to determine your best and easiest route

How to let the driver know when you want to get off the bus

As you reach your destination, you may want to signal that you would like to get off well in advance of your stop so that your driver can safely stop.
There are two ways to request for stop:
   - Pull the yellow string by the window, until you see "stop requested" by the front of the bus or
   - Press "stop" button on the handle, until you see "stop requested" sign light up by the front of the bus

Bus Stops

A long strip sign or a rectangular sign lists the names of bus routes serving that stop. Many downtown bus stops have information signs listing the departure times of bus routes

servicing that bus stop. Bus stops that are accessible to persons using wheelchairs or scooters have a blue wheelchair symbol decal.

Safety stops and after dark requests
After 7 pm, customers who feel that their personal safety is at risk can ask their driver to stop between regular bus stops. Ask your transit driver at least one bus stop ahead of where you with to get off. You will be let off at a safe location closest to your request.

Holiday schedule and snow days

Holidays and snow days usually follow Saturday or Sunday service schedule. See p. 12 of the riders guide or the online transit information.
Fare/Pass

| | Conventional Fares | |
	Effective April 1 2012	Effective April 1, 2013
Cash		
Adult / College	$2.50	$2.50
Senior* / Youth**	$1.65	$2.50
Child 5 and under: no charge.		
10 Tickets*		
Adult / College	$22.50	$22.50
Senior* / Youth**	$15.00	$15.00
DayPASS*		
Adult / College	$7.75	$5.00
Senior* / Youth**	$5.50	$5.00
Monthly Pass		
Adult	$85.00	$85.00
College	$77.00	$77.00
Senior* / Youth**	$52.00	$45.00
YouthPASS ($35 per month, 6 month min)	$35.00	$35.00

*Seniors aged 65+, with valid ID.
**Youth aged 6 to 18 years with valid ID.

Where to buy:
Website: http://bctransit.com/regions/vic/fares/pdf/BusPassVendorsVic.pdf for up-to-date places to get your fares or passes.

Accessible transit
Low-floor buses and community buses are equipped to carry one or two wheelchairs and some types of scooters. For customers who have difficulty boarding, the front of the low-floor bus can be lowered to within 4 inches of a standard sidewalk and a ramp deployed. Just ask your transit driver to lower the ramp. Customers using wheelchairs and scooters may board and exit from the bus only at accessible bus stops. To check if a stop is wheelchair accessible, call Transit Information at 250·382·6161.

Bike Racks

Most bikes can be accommodated on BC Transit buses. If you're considering travelling by bike and transit, please watch the instructional video to understand how to use the bike racks, found in front of all BC Transit buses. Before your bus arrives, make sure that saddlebags, antennas, child carriers or any other item that could interfere with the driver's vision are removed from the bike. Once the bus has come to a complete stop, step off the curb and lift your bike onto the rack from the passenger side of the bus. Please fold mirrors toward the roadway and leave the bike unlocked. Please note that bike space is limited and cannot be guaranteed. Electric and gas-powered bikes can't be transported on the bike racks.

Priority Seating

Although BC Transit serves everyone on a first-to-board basis, priority seating is considered to be the front accessible area of the bus. Priority seating meets the needs of all transit customers, and is especially vital to:
• customers who use scooters, wheelchairs, pediatric strollers or other mobility aids,
• customers with a disability or mobility issue, and
• customers with baby strollers.

Baby Strollers

As a parent or guardian you must hold onto the stroller at all times. Position the stroller with the brakes set. Keep your stroller clear of the aisles. The aisle is the width of the distance between the normal seats, not the width of the accessible area. Strollers should be collapsible. When wheelchair positions are occupied or required by another passenger using a wheelchair or scooter, you may fold the stroller and move to another available seat, storing the stroller between the seats.

THE CRD's Blue Box Program

Recycling is EASY!

Here is everything you need to know about getting started…

What will I need?
You will need a **CRD Blue Box** (for containers) and/or a **CRD Blue Bag** (for paper). Blue Bags can be purchased at retailers throughout the region for 50 cents each. Blue Boxes are available at the same locations for $4 each. To find a list of retailers, please visit: http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/bluebox/sales.htm. You should write your address with a waterproof pen on your Blue Boxes and bags so they can be returned to you if they blow away during bad weather.

When will my recycling be collected?
Every neighbourhood has a designated recycling pick-up day every two weeks. To find out the schedule for your neighbourhood, please visit: http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/bluebox/default.asp
You should place your recyclable materials at the curb in a visible location by 7:30am on the morning of your designated pick-up day. In case of missed or delayed collection, leave your materials at the curb and call International Paper Industries Ltd., at 250-385-4399.
There is regular pick-up on statutory holidays, except Christmas Day and New Years Day. Please check the online schedule for holiday changes.

What materials are accepted in the CRD's Blue Box Program?

Blue Box

- Rigid plastic packaging from consumer goods (e.g. electronics, tools), food (e.g. salads, baked goods), empty CD/DVD/VHS protective cases
- Rigid plastic containers, including milk jugs, yogurt and margarine containers, shampoo/liquid soap bottles, cleaning product containers, pill/vitamin bottles, plant pots
- Plastic and metal lids (including coffee and beverage lids)
- Glass bottles and jars
- Aluminum and tin cans
- Foil and foil plates (no food residue)
- Drink/soup/juice boxes
- Milk carton
- **No plastic bags or Styrofoam**

Blue Bag

- Newspapers and inserts
- Mixed paper products, including stationery, computer paper, file folders, envelopes, newsletters, flyers, magazines, catalogues, cereal boxes, detergent boxes, paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, greeting cards, paper egg cartons, paper sleeves, gift wrap

Corrugated Cardboard

- Bundle together with string and place next to your blue box on pick-up day

What materials are not accepted in the Blue Box Program?

- plastic bags and wrap
- coffee and beverage cups that are not exclusively paper or plastic
- polystyrene (Styrofoam)
- materials contaminated with food waste (grease spots on pizza boxes are acceptable)
- clothes hangers (wire, plastic or wood)
- containers which have held hazardous materials, like solvent or motor oil
- window glass
- light bulbs
- drinking glasses, dishes or ceramics
- plastic ribbons and bows, foil gift wrap

Where can I recycle plastic bags?

Many grocery and retail stores will accept plastic bags for recycling. Better yet, purchase cloth bags to reuse each time you shop.

Where can I recycle styrofoam?

Please check out http://www.myrecyclopedia.ca/ for local recycling options..

Preparation of Recyclables ***Make sure containers are clean!

How should my materials be organized for collection?

The **Blue Bag** is meant for clean newspapers, inserts and mixed paper. Place all paper loosely in the bag. The **Blue Box** is meant for clean metal, glass and plastic containers, as well as lids and rigid plastic packaging. Remove labels from cans. Labels may be left on glass bottles and jars. Remove all lids and place them loosely in your Blue Box with your other containers. Flatten plastic and metal containers whenever possible. Place lighter items in the bottom of the box so they won't blow away. Do not include any container larger than 10-litre size.
Cardboard should be flattened then bundled together with your pizza boxes using twine or string (no tape or wire, please), and place it next to your Blue Box. Bundles should be no larger than 90 cm x 45 cm x 20 cm (36" x 18" x 8"). Cut or fold oversized pieces down to size and tie large quantities of cardboard into several separate bundles.

What if I have more materials than will fit in my Blue Box or Blue Bag?

Place excess Blue Box materials in a second Blue Box or in a container of similar size. For excess newspaper and mixed paper, use another Blue Bag. There is no limit to the amount of material you may place at the curb.

Who can I contact if I have any additional questions?

Please contact the CRD Hotline
Tel: 250.360.3030

Reynolds Secondary School

Attendance
It is the responsibility of each student to attend all classes and
to arrive promptly with appropriate materials. If a student is
to be absent for legitimate reason a parent/guardian must
advise the school. There are 2 ways:
1) By email to: reynoldsattendance@sd61.bc.ca
2) By telephone: 250-479.1696

If a student accumulates three unexcused absences over a
two-week period, the parent/guardian will be contacted
directly by the school. Students with chronic unexcused absences jeopardize their
achievement and course completion.

Emergency Procedures
Regular fire, earthquake and lockdown drills are undertaken and regarded as
serious activities designed to acquaint students with emergency procedures to
minimize potential risks in the event of an emergency.

Library
The library is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and provides opportunities for
students to access relevant knowledge and information as well as serving as a
research portal. It is also a quiet place to read and study.

Computer
Each student should have their own computer user name and password in order
to access computers in school. Students can go to the school office to request ID.

Textbooks
Students may get textbooks from the library. It is their responsibility to keep
textbooks in good condition, and to return them to the library. If you do not
return textbooks or any materials from the library, you are responsible to make
up the loss. (e.g. Pay the fines)

Provincial Exams
Students in Grade 10, 11, and 12 may have to write the provincial exam for their
classes at the end of the semester. Provincial exam schedules are up in the
ministry of education website. http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/

Provincial exam marks will be release around a month after the exam. You can
check your result on the website http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/
In your first time accessing the exam result, you have to create an account. (*You
must know your Personal Education Number (PEN) before you attempt your
login. If you don't know your PEN, please check with the office.)

Lockers

Lockers are normally shared between 2 students and are distributed to those wanting them each fall. Here are the instructions for how to use a lock:

1) Turn the dial three times to the right, the stop when ____ (the first number) lines up with the indicator

2) Turn the dial ONE full turn to the left, passing ____ (the first number), and stop when the ____ (second number) lines up with the indicator.

3) Turn the dial to the right and stop when the ____ (third number) lines up with the indicator.

4) Either pull up on the shackle, or pull the lock down to open the lock.
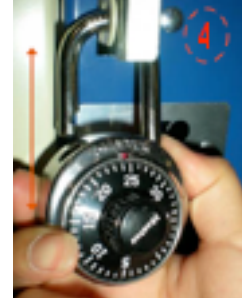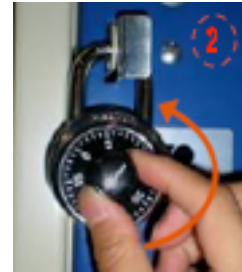
Resources:

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS)
   637 Bay St., 3rd Floor, Victoria, BC V8T 5L2
   Office Hours:
   9am to 5pm Monday through Friday
   Phone: 250-361-9433
   Fax: 250-361-1914
   Email: info@vircs.bc.ca

Enable Program (for children and youth under 25 years old.)
http://www.vircs.bc.ca/youth_young/enable.php
• Homework Clubs
• One on one tutoring
• Youth Activity Night
• Self Expression Theatre Program
• Children's English Language Classes
• Youth Summer Training Camp

SUCCESS61 (New Immigrant and Refugee Youth in School District 61)

Contact:
Reynolds Secondary: Liane Wohlberg: lwohlberg@sd61.bc.ca
Victoria High School: Laura McTavish: lemctavish@sd61.bc.ca

• Connecting to Community Resources
• Opportunity for School and Community Events and Outings
• Training Opportunites
• Camps and Summer Programming

Inter-Cultural Association (ICA)

930 Balmoral Road, Victoria, BC, V8T 1A8, Canada
(At Quadra Street, in the basement of the First Metropolitan United Church.)
Office Hours:
8:30am - 7:30pm Monday -Thursday
8:30am - 4:30pm Friday
Phone: 250-388-4728
Fax: 250-386-4395

Class Schedule

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur		Regular Fridays		Advisory Fridays	
8:25 9:50	1A	2B	1A	2B		8:25 9:25	1A	8:25 9:20	1A
								9:25 9:45	Advisory
9:55 11:17	2B	1A	2B	1A		9:30 10:30	2B	9:50 10:45	2B
11:17 12:12	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH		10:30 10:55	LUNCH	10:45 11:10	Lunch
12:17 1:40	3C	4D	3C	4D		11:00 12:00	3C	11:15 12:10	3c
1:45 3:10	4D	3C	4D	3C		12:05 1:10	4D	12:15 1:10	4D
3:15 – 4:30	After School Classes								

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