

Negotiating Tricky Territories: Filial obligation, caregiving experiences and processes of  
acculturation among recently-landed South Asian immigrant women

by

Mushira Mohsin Khan  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2012

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Karen Kobayashi, (Department of Sociology)  
**Supervisor**

Dr. André Smith, (Department of Sociology)  
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## Abstract

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In recent years, Canada has seen a significant increase in the South Asian immigrant population as well as a concomitant rise in multigenerational South Asian households largely due to the sponsorship of older parents. These two socio-demographic trends have increased the likelihood that South Asian immigrants who provide care to older relatives will encounter unique challenges as they try to reconcile two cultures – a traditional one in the family home, espoused within a culture-specific discourse on filial obligation, *dharma* (duty) and *karma* (fate), and an acculturated one outside the home. Based on the findings from qualitative interviews with eight South Asian immigrant women, and employing an integrated life course and intersectionality theoretical framework, this study explores the feminization of care work in immigrant families, and the complexities inherent in intergenerational relationships within the diasporic South Asian community. It provides insights into the ways in which structural barriers and the multiple intersections among various axes of inequality are represented in the subjective lived experiences and everyday interactions of these immigrant women who provide care to their older relatives at home. Finally, it discusses how they: (1) perceive their social world as immigrants and caregivers; and (2) negotiate and re-negotiate notions of the self and personhood over time.

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## Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to Dr. S.M. Mohsin – a brilliant scholar, a magnificent human being, and a loving grandfather.*

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy – a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding. Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect.*

(Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*)

These lines, borrowed from the Pulitzer prize-winning novelist Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (Lahiri, 2003, p. 26) brilliantly capture the conundrum of the immigrant through the metaphor of pregnancy – the protagonist Ashima, an Indian immigrant in North America, is caught between two worlds: the ‘alien land’ which is now her new home on the one hand, and on the other, the world she has known all her life, a world endearingly familiar and secure, a world which although she has left far behind, thrives within her, refusing to whittle away and perish. Inspired by this story, this thesis explores the dual themes of acculturation and familial ties in the lived experiences of immigrant South Asian women as they simultaneously traverse the dynamic and ‘tricky’ territories of migration and caregiving in Canada.

### **Situating the Study**

It is a well-known fact that Canada is a nation of immigrants. Each year, thousands of individuals from all parts of the world immigrate to Canada in search for a better life. Visible minorities<sup>1</sup>, of which South Asians<sup>2</sup> are now the largest group,

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<sup>1</sup> The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean (Statistics Canada, 2012).

surpassed five million in number for the first time in Canadian history (Statistics Canada, 2006). South Asians accounted for one-quarter (25%) of the total visible minority population and 4.8% of Canada's total population in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013). A parallel demographic development is the rise of multigenerational households in Canada, largely due to the sponsorship of older parents. In fact, recent research suggests that immigrants are twice as likely to live in multigenerational households, as compared to non-immigrants (Battams, 2013). India and Sri Lanka in particular, with close to 5185 landings between 2005 and 2010, top the list of source countries with the highest number of parent and grandparent sponsorships (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013).

These developments have important implications with regard to evolving intergenerational relationships and the provision of care within immigrant South Asian families. Adding to the challenges of settlement and the complexities of multigenerational living is the feminization of care work in immigrant families. George (1998, as cited in Spitzer, et al., 2003), for example, has pointed out that care work within South Asian families is highly gendered, to the extent that it is deeply embedded in the very formation of women's "ethical and moral selves" (p. 268). Despite these significant socio-demographic developments, little attention has been paid to the unique acculturative and caregiving needs of this population sub-group.

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<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Statistics Division (2012) defines South Asia as a geographic region comprising nine countries from the Indian sub-continent: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

## Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research was to explore the dual themes of acculturation and familial ties in the lived experiences of recently-immigrated (approximately within the past 10 years)<sup>3</sup> South Asian adult women in Canada who co-reside with, and provide informal care to older relatives at home. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight South Asian women who co-resided with their parents/parents-in-law in a large metropolitan area in the province of British Columbia between September and December 2013. All women had immigrated to Canada within the previous 10 years, and were university-educated, highly skilled professionals.

Building on the findings from this qualitative study and employing an integrated life course and intersectionality framework, this thesis explores the feminization of care work in immigrant families, and the complexities inherent in intergenerational relationships within the diasporic South Asian community. In this thesis, I argue that in order to fully appreciate the complexities of settlement and care provision, it is important to contextualize migratory and caregiving experiences based on biographical, historical, structural and cultural factors. Further, the findings from this study indicate that while the culture-specific values of *dharma* (moral duty) and *karma* (fate) may operate as coping mechanisms in the context of caregiving as well as in processes of settlement, these traditional beliefs may also act as barriers in accessing support services. Similarly, the creation of a ‘transnational self’ in the process of migration and resettlement may

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<sup>3</sup> A period of 10 years has been chosen since 1) the Canadian government, until 2013, expected sponsors to assume the complete financial responsibility of their older parents/ grandparents for a period of 10 years; 2) official data indicates that under the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP), new immigrants continue to use ISAP up until a period of 10 years (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012); and 3) research indicates that while the ‘healthy immigrant effect’ (which demonstrates that the health of immigrants is generally better than that of the Canadian-born) applies primarily to new immigrants – those who immigrated less than 10 years ago and are between the ages of 45 and 64 – a different picture emerges in old age (65 years and over), where recently-landed immigrants have poorer overall health compared to Canadian-born persons (Gee, Kobayashi, and Prus, 2004).

facilitate as well as constrain the acculturative and caregiving experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrant women. In particular, this thesis points to the ways in which structural barriers and the multiple intersections among various axes of inequality are represented in the subjective lived experiences of these immigrant women who provide care to their older relatives at home.

### **Overview of the Thesis**

This thesis comprises five chapters. Following this chapter, **Chapter 2** provides a review of the relevant literature, and also establishes a conceptual framework to help contextualize the research. In particular, it discusses the core concepts guiding this study, namely, (1) acculturation; (2) filial piety and obligation; and (3) informal care, and highlights a gap in the existing literature with regard to the unique caregiving and settlement experiences of recently-immigrated South Asian women.

**Chapter 3**, the methods chapter, addresses the research design and methodological aspects of this study. The purpose of this study, and the research questions directing my inquiry are outlined in greater detail. Next, the theoretical framework guiding this research is presented and an integrated life course and intersectionality perspective is discussed. An overview of the methods employed in data collection, including ethical considerations, sampling and recruitment, instruments of research, and issues of validity follow. Finally, the methods of data analysis employed in the exploration of the life stories of recently-landed immigrant South Asian women are discussed.

In **Chapter 4**, the findings from the semi-structured interviews I conducted with eight recently immigrated South Asian women who co-reside with and provide informal

care to their older relatives in Canada are presented using the organizational framework of the life course perspective and by situating the findings within five key domains: ‘the interplay of human lives and historical time’; ‘timing of lives’; ‘linked lives and social ties with others’; ‘human agency and personal control’; and ‘heterogeneity or variability in life experiences’ (Elder and Johnson, 2001).

Finally, **Chapter 5** discusses how the emergent themes from the analysis of the data can be used to answer the research questions guiding this study. Briefly, the findings from this study indicate that although migratory processes and the acculturation context often acted as a ‘moderator’ in the expression and enactment of cultural values, the participants’ attitudes and behaviour were, for the most part, deeply-rooted in traditional values. This chapter discusses how, for the participants in this study, the challenges of settlement as recent immigrants were exacerbated by the complex and dynamic interplay of multigenerational living, their early-to mid-life socialization in the country of origin, and adherence to culturally-prescriptive, gendered ‘rules of conduct’. In particular, it discusses how they: (1) perceive their social world as immigrants and caregivers; and (2) negotiate and re-negotiate notions of the self and personhood over time. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for policy and practice, the limitations of this study, and some directions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

*Let us stay here, and wait for the future  
to arrive, for grandchildren to speak  
in forked tongues about the country  
we once came from.*

(Tishani Doshi, *The Immigrant's Song*)

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the relevant literature. I begin by situating this study within a specific socio-demographic, political and historical context. Next, I establish a conceptual framework to help contextualize the research. In particular, I discuss the core concepts guiding this study, namely, (1) acculturation; (2) filial piety and obligation; and (3) informal care. I also highlight a gap in the existing literature with regard to the unique caregiving and settlement experiences of recently-immigrated South Asian women. Finally, I conclude with the research questions guiding this study.

### **Background**

This research is premised upon two important demographic developments in Canada. First, in recent decades there has been a significant increase in the number of foreign-born persons in Canada. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, around 1,162,900 foreign-born people arrived in Canada between 2006 and 2011. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the total foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population in Canada. Visible minorities accounted for 78.0% of the immigrants who arrived between 2006 and 2011, 76.7% of those who arrived in the previous five-year period and 74.8% of immigrants who arrived in the 1990s. In 2011, 20.6% of

immigrants who identified as South Asian came to Canada between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Overall, South Asians comprise one of the largest non-European ethnic groups in Canada. They accounted for one-quarter (25.0%) of the total visible minority population and 4.8% of Canada's total population in 2011 (ibid.). As the fastest growing ethnocultural population, South Asians could represent 28% of the visible minority population in Canada by the year 2031, up from 25% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2010). Despite the rapid increase in the immigrant South Asian population in Canada, there is a surprising paucity of literature on the immigration and settlement experiences of this group (Kaul, 2001; Sheth, 1995)<sup>4</sup>.

The second important socio-demographic development in Canada in recent years is that along with the surge in the foreign-born population, the number of new immigrants arriving under the 'Family Class' category has significantly increased over the past five years. The right to apply to unite family members has long been a cornerstone of Canada's immigration policy under Canada's Family Reunification Program, and has been hailed as an important factor in “promoting newcomer integration” (MOSAIC, 2005, as cited in Koehn, Spencer and Hwang, 2010, p. 79). In the year 2010, parents and their dependent children and grandparents comprised 5.4% of newly-arrived Permanent Residents to Canada under Family Class sponsorship, leading to a rise in multi-generational households. In any given year from 1995 to 2004, 2-4% of immigrants arriving in Canada were older adults aged 65 or older, most sponsored by a family member (Turcotte and Schellenberg, 2007). India and Sri Lanka in particular, with close to 5185 landings between 2005 and 2010, top the list of source countries with the highest

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<sup>4</sup> This dearth of Canadian research necessitated that the literature search on diasporic South Asians be expanded to other immigrant-receiving countries, such as the UK, USA, and Australia.

number of parent and grandparent sponsorships (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

With regard to living arrangements, research suggests that ethnicity and immigration status are associated with multigenerational living in Western countries such as Canada (Chappell, McDonald and Stones, 2008). This indicates that families of Asian origins, particularly immigrant families, appear most likely to live in multigenerational households (Gee, 1997). In one Canadian study, for example, the authors found that among South Asian older adults living in Edmonton, Alberta, those who immigrated later in life were less likely than those who had immigrated earlier to live alone or only with a spouse, resulting in an increase in the number of multigenerational households (Ng, Northcott and Abu-Laban, 2007).

The sponsorship of older parents, however, does not come without costs. Up until 2010, sponsors (usually adult children) of older Family Class immigrants were required to make a categorical commitment to the Canadian government with regard to the provision of financial support to their dependent relatives for a period of ten years. This commitment has now been increased to twenty years so as to ensure that sponsors can adequately provide for their parents/grandparents, thereby reducing the net costs to Canadian taxpayers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013). Further, the Minimum Necessary Income (MNI) required for sponsorship has been increased by 30% to reflect the rising costs of providing financially for older relatives. For example, a principal applicant with a family of four (including the applicant) is now required to provide documentation demonstrating an MNI of \$54,684 to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for a period of three years, in order to sponsor an older relative (*ibid.*). As Koehn and her

colleagues (2010), commenting on the criterion around the financial ability to sponsor rightly point out, “the policy requires a significant feat of prognostication” (p. 85) as sponsors must consider their current position and also be able to project their financial ability for the following three years, in order to be eligible to re-unite with their older relatives. These policies also stipulate that immigrant older adults (over 65 years of age) may not be eligible for income security measures such as the Old Age Security (OAS) program until they have met the 10-year residence requirement. This may place enormous economic burden on sponsors, particularly those who have only recently arrived in Canada, as they face the challenges of resettlement and the uncertainties of a fickle job market.

To sum up, the surge in recently-landed South Asian immigrants and the rise in multigenerational South Asian households with the sponsorship of older parents, make it more likely for recently-arrived immigrants who co-reside with and provide informal care to older relatives to be socio-economically disadvantaged, to experience burden and stress, and encounter unique challenges in reconciling two cultures: a traditional one in the family home and an acculturated one outside the home. There is a need to further investigate these socio-structural issues, particularly in terms of how they might be experienced in the day-to-day lives of recent immigrants.

The preceding discussion established the background of this research. In the following section, I discuss the core concepts guiding this study, and highlight a gap in the literature with regard to the unique acculturative and caregiving experiences of a rapidly expanding population sub-group, recently immigrated South Asians who co-reside with their older relatives in Canada.

## Conceptual Framework

### Acculturation

Acculturation has been variously described as the strategies of negotiation employed by cultural groups in their daily encounters with one another (Berry, 2008); the process by which culturally diverse groups become more homogeneous through changes in identity, values and beliefs (Greenland and Brown 2005); and as the "process whereby immigrants change their behaviour and attitudes towards those of the host society" (Rogler, Cortes, and Malgady, 1991, p. 585). Past research suggests that acculturation comes with certain challenges in the form of logistical and psychological barriers to well-being, such as social isolation and the stresses of migration and cross-cultural adjustment (conceptualized as 'acculturative stress' in the literature) (Cuellar, 2002; Williams and Berry, 1991).

In his famous four-fold bi-dimensional model categorizing acculturation strategies, Berry (1997) has 'compartmentalized' acculturative processes by pointing out that an immigrant identifies with the processes of: assimilation (associating with the dominant culture, and a concomitant low orientation towards the heritage culture); separation (a strong orientation to the heritage culture, as well as a rejection of (or by) the receiving culture); marginalization (a failure, inability or lack of interest in association with either heritage or host culture); and integration (an incorporation of both cultures), at different points in his/her life course. The four categories of acculturation, according to Berry, are derived from the intersection of: (1) the extent to which an individual (or group) is interested in cultural maintenance; and (2) their interest in having contact with

and participation in the receiving culture. The source of this "interest" could be internal or constrained by external circumstances (ibid.).

Berry's conceptualization makes an important contribution to the understanding of acculturation as a process that is not 'unidimensional'; in other words, it takes into account both receiving-culture acquisition, as well as heritage-culture retention (Schwartz et al., 2013). It is, however, not without limitations. For example, from a critical perspective, while Berry's theory does not explicitly call for stability of attitudes towards cultural retention and adoption, it does not explore well enough, the role of everyday experiences, life course events, and structural constraints, such as institutional racism, perceived discrimination, or cultural incompetency, and the degree to which these may shape an individual's identity as s/he chooses one strategy over another. A relevant example here would be the backlash against visible minorities in North America in the post 9-11 era, and experiences of discrimination that may have led to feelings of marginalization, alienation and ambivalence, even for those individuals who had previously successfully 'integrated' into the 'mainstream' culture. These feelings may, in turn, adversely affect their ability to prioritize one acculturative strategy over another. Further, in an era of globalization, it is difficult to imagine that there are clearly demarcated boundaries between the 'dominant culture' and the 'culture of origin', particularly in a richly diverse country such as Canada. Finally, it might be problematic to apply this model to those immigrants who reside in relatively isolated 'ethnocultural enclaves', such as some of the South Asian immigrant communities in Surrey, BC; given their limited interaction with the 'dominant culture', it would be difficult to determine at

exactly what point, if at all, these immigrants have successfully integrated into the 'receiving culture'.

From the perspective of cultural retention and adoption, such a situation could, arguably, be characterized as 'separation' because these individuals may have retained their heritage culture and not adopted Canadian culture. There is a strong need, however, to explore the unique individual, socio-structural, cultural, and historical factors, for example, perceived discrimination, an abiding awareness of an individual's own racialized identity, limited access to the 'mainstream' culture, linguistic ability, pragmatic issues such as the cold Canadian weather, transportation and mobility, the limited requirement/need to participate in the host culture, etc., that may influence these choices. It is of vital importance, then, to conceptualize acculturation as a complex, fluid and multidimensional process of cultural exchanges, everyday interactions, reconciliation, and identity formation, whereby recently-landed South Asians attempt to make sense of their own lives as immigrants, in addition to taking on the role of informal caregiver to their older relatives.

The tendency to 'categorize' the process of acculturation unfortunately extends to the bulk of the literature on visible minority immigrants. Specifically, the lived experience of acculturation in South Asian immigrants is conceptualized by the intersection of individualistic and collectivistic cultures in the literature. Briefly, the core aspects of individualist beliefs have been defined as including personal independence and uniqueness (Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier, 2002). Individual achievement, competition, personal responsibility for success or failure and a focus on internal attributes rather than on other people's opinions have been highlighted as important

features of individualist thinking, a hallmark of Western societies, primarily the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe (Triandis, 1994). Collectivistic worldviews, which are espoused by South Asians, are said to be characterized by a more cohesive, group-based perspective, comprising respect for elders, mutual care, group decisions (Sodhi 2008), a value system maintained through the expectation of responsibility to the group, commitment and the avoidance of shame (Triandis, 1994). A British study on cultural perceptions of caregiving, for example, found that caregivers from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent drew on a cultural biography, narratives of 'home' and a collectivist voice of 'we' and 'our' to describe their caregiving behaviour. In contrast, White British participants spoke of their personal life experiences or individual nature as a motivation to provide care (Willis, 2012). While it is important to acknowledge these differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, in this thesis, I have attempted to avoid the pitfalls of binary reductionism by not resorting to 'either/ or' debates on culture; rather, I have highlighted the attribute of fluidity in the lived experiences of the immigrant South Asian women who participated in this study.

Several studies have reported feelings of ambivalence among second-generation South Asians in Canada as they negotiate between so-called individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Defining biculturalism as the ability to "navigate two cultural worlds" (p. 187), Sodhi (2008) found that second-generation Indo-Canadians frequently find themselves oscillating between individualistic and collectivistic cultural values as they seek to incorporate the 'best of both worlds' into their lifestyle – the dominant culture promotes personal autonomy, whereas at home, the collectivistic culture emphasizes conformity, family interests before individual aspirations, and unconditional

love and obedience towards older family members. Furthermore, acculturated second-generation South Asians are nonetheless expected by their parents and ethnic community to adopt lifestyles espousing collectivistic culture, leading to situations where they are left wondering about their own identity (Segal 1998). Other researchers, following Berry's four-fold model of acculturation, have found that second-generation South Asians' efforts to incorporate both worldviews into their lifestyle might result in resentment towards the home culture even as they attempt to integrate into the dominant culture (Phinney, 1999; Triandis, 2001). In an interesting study, Inman and her colleagues (2007) interviewed 16 first-generation immigrant parents raising second-generation children about the influence of immigration on the retention of their own ethnic identity and their ability to promote a sense of ethnic identity in their second-generation children. The authors found that the retention of ethnic identity was linked to participation in cultural events, a need to maintain tradition and upbringing, family ties, social support, and a rejection of perceived Western values. The participants were concerned about losing the ability to 'have the best of both worlds' when dealing with challenges to ethnic identity, loss of familial support and cultural discontinuity.

Findings from these studies further underscore the value of conceptualizing acculturation as a dynamic process whereby recently-landed South Asian immigrants in Canada learn to navigate different cultural worlds as they make sense of their changing lives in a host society.

Research indicates, for example, that for non-European immigrant groups, those who arrive at young ages are more likely to acculturate to the host society's norms (Boyd, 1991). Similarly, newer South Asian immigrants from rural areas may face additional

pressures as they might be less fluent in English and may require assistance in functioning effectively within the dominant culture (Almeida, 1996). Relatedly, with regard to acculturative processes among immigrant South Asians, Safdar, Calvez and Lewis (2012) developed the Multi-Dimensional Individual Difference Acculturation (MIDA) model based on findings from a comparative study between Russian and Indian immigrants in Canada. The model reflects a conceptualization of acculturation as cultural and psychological changes that happen as a result of varied ethnic groups interacting with one another. The authors found significant differences in the acculturation experiences of Russian and Indian immigrants living in Toronto, particularly with regard to psychosocial variables such as the level of endorsement of acculturating strategies, family connections, and levels of stress and coping strategies. The authors contend that the 'visible' minority status of Indian immigrants, as well as the historically wider cultural gap between India and Canada, accounted for differences in acculturation experiences between the two groups.

Further, research suggests that the acculturation experience of migrant women may differ from those of men (Remennick, 2005). Read (2004) has pointed out that immigrant women may encounter unique challenges in settlement, particularly in the occupational sphere, by having to balance the responsibilities of paid employment and the demands of domestic duties at home, often having to sacrifice their own careers in order to allow their partners time to retrain to find work. Not surprisingly, immigrant men often have greater access to English language training and other employment opportunities as compared to immigrant women (Remennick, 2005).

While the above-cited studies offer a useful understanding of acculturation among South Asian immigrants as a broad, structural process of change and adaptation, more importantly, they underscore the need to further investigate the various axes of inequality, such as gender, time since immigration, language barriers, and ethnicity, which may influence acculturative processes among visible minority groups. They also call for conceptualizing acculturation as lived experience in order to better understand the micro-level strategies immigrants may employ in reconciling integration into the host culture and living with relatively more traditional values in the home setting where older parents are cared for.

### **Filial Piety in South Asian Culture**

Filial piety and obligation forms an integral part of many cultures of the East. As a Confucian virtue, filial piety (*Xiao*) in the Chinese context is described as emotional support for parents by their children and contains an element of authority, including “support, memorializing, attendance, deference, compliance, respect and love” for older parents (Yeh and Olwen, 2003, p. 215). Similarly, linking caring to the cultural notion of filial piety, Hsu (1991) has found that among Chinese communities, obedience and service to one's parents and elders manifested through care work, forms an integral part of filial piety, with the expectation of blessings and benevolence in return. The notion of filial piety has been termed variously as *seva* (selfless service), *dharma* (duty) and *karma* (fate) in the South Asian context (Sharma and Kemp, 2011; Sharma et. al, 2011; Acharya and Northcott, 2007). In Hindu mythology, the ideal offspring is epitomized through the enduring legend of Shraavan Kumar, a character in Valmiki's ancient epic, the *Ramayana*, who selflessly carried both his aging parents in two baskets fitted with a bamboo stick on

his shoulders as they went from one holy site to another as part of their religious pilgrimage. Relatedly, Sharma and her colleagues (2011) link the concept of filial piety to the doctrine of *dharma* (duty) found in Hindu religious scriptures such as the *Geeta* and *Upanishads*, which, they conclude, guided the ideology of caregiving among second-generation Indo-Americans in their research. The authors contend that all participants in their study expressed a "strong sense of duty to care for their parents", citing multiple reasons for this, such as "having observed the way their parents practiced filial duty; feeling a sense of reciprocity given their parents' sacrifices in raising them; the Hindu concepts of *dharma* and *karma*; and having a close parent-child relationship" (p. 314). Sodhi (2008) and Inman et al. (2007) have similarly highlighted the significance of respect for elders as a salient attribute of collectivist communities.

Upholding the norm of filial piety, espoused within the Hindu concepts of *dharma*, *seva* and *karma*, can also be perceived as an indicator of a person's respect and appreciation for their culture of origin. Specifically, Acharya and Northcott (2007) observe that older Hindu grandmothers from nuclear and extended families living in Great Britain consider ethnic identity and tradition as important indicators of mental health. Older adults whose granddaughters had an exclusively 'Asian', or 'Hindu' identity and espoused traditional South Asian cultural values were more likely to be perceived as having better mental health in comparison with those whose granddaughters reported a 'British' ethnic identity. Koehn (2009) similarly found that older immigrant women in her study tended to characterize the heightened independence of young women in Canada, and "the greater likelihood that they will work outside the home and prefer a nuclear-

family living arrangement", as selfish and robbing them "of the opportunity to be cared for in the way that they have provided care for their own elders"(p. 591).

Funk and Kobayashi (2009), however, argue that existing theoretical and empirical literature on filial care work inaccurately frames caregiving as either choice or obligation: choice is equated with inner control and affection whereas filial piety is portrayed as "an internalized sense of obligation toward parents that motivates care behaviors" (pp. 240-241). This dichotomy, the authors contend, inadequately accounts for the complexity of family caregiving experiences by presenting, for example, choice and obligation as mutually exclusive motivations. A sense of compulsion to love could still persist among caregivers who choose to engage in care work, particularly in the wake of cutbacks to formal care services, in the idea that if you love your parents, you provide for them. Rather, filial piety needs to be understood contextually as involving family and relationship dynamics and social, political, and cultural differences. In this sense, filial care work is subjectively experienced but to some extent determined by the caregiving context.

The above literature on the complex and contested nature of filial piety, therefore, highlights a need to conceptualize filial obligation as the subjective meanings attached to the idea of duty towards one's parents/ older relatives and caregiving, and examine how the experience of duty evolves in the context of acculturating to Canadian society.

### **Informal Caregiving**

The Canadian Caregiver Coalition (2009) defines the caregiver as an individual who provides ongoing care and assistance, without pay, to family members and friends in need of support due to physical, cognitive, or mental health conditions. The term is

sometimes synonymous with family caregiver, informal caregiver, or unpaid caregiver to differentiate from providers and other health care professionals who provide care (CHPCA, n.d.). Informal care provided by a family member plays an important role in ensuring the well-being of individuals living with a chronic condition, disability or with age-related needs (Chappell, 2011). The list of activities involved in informal caregiving is lengthy, and could include assistance with activities of everyday living (ADLs) such as personal care, bathing, feeding, toileting, etc., as well as support with instrumental tasks such as grocery shopping, transportation, cooking, cleaning, yard maintenance, etc. (Hollander et al., 2009). Further, although it has been suggested that "men are vital to caregiving networks more often than is reflected in the literature or acknowledged by experts" (Thompson, 2002, p. 24), and recent attempts have been made to address this gap in the literature by examining the work that men do as caregiving sons (Campbell and Martin- Matthews, 2000), fathers (Essex, Seltzer and Krauss, 2002), and husbands (Ciambrone and Allen, 2002), the fact remains that a higher proportion of family/friend caregivers over the age of 45 in Canada are women (56.5%) rather than men (43.5%). Women caregivers spend significantly more time than men providing care – the equivalent of 1.5 work days per week on average for women compared to one full day per week for men (Fast et al., 2010). Mellor (2000), for example, discovered that among children who provide care to their aging parents, 80 to 90 percent are adult daughters.

With regard to the types of care provided, women are more likely to provide 'traditionally female' forms of care. Adult daughters, for instance, are more likely to provide emotional support to their aging mothers (Houser, Berkman and Bardsley, 1985, as cited in Campbell and Martin- Matthews, 2003). Sons tend to perform different tasks

than female caregivers when they provide care. Daughters are more likely to provide hands-on or intimate care such as dressing, bathing, feeding, or cleaning up after a bowel accident (traditionally ‘female’ care); sons, on the other hand, are more likely to do household chores and assist with home maintenance, yardwork, etc. (traditionally ‘male’ care) (Chang and White-Means, 1991; Stoller, 1994). As Russell (2001) has articulately noted:

When men do care, they are occasionally acknowledged as caring *about* another in meeting instrumental needs...When caring *about* becomes caring *for* an elder (“hands on” care and assistance), men are frequently absent from the caregiving arena altogether (p. 353).

Interestingly, Horowitz (1985) discovered that for caregiving tasks that are not bound by normative gender roles, such as providing transportation, financial management, grocery shopping, etc. (gender-neutral care), men and women do not differ significantly in their level of involvement. Simply put, the general division of labour between men and women tends to be reproduced within the realm of caregiving as well. This adherence to stereotypical gender norms might be more pronounced within immigrant and visible minority families in Canada (Koehn et.al, 2011).

While the social problem of the feminization of informal caregiving cuts across cultures, it is particularly salient in ethnocultural families. In an ethnographic study on immigrant South Asian women in British Columbia, for example, Grewal and her colleagues (2005) found that an important theme running through interviews with their female participants was a sense of duty and obligation towards the family, which the authors describe as the culture-specific ideal of the traditional South Asian woman – the dutiful wife, the obedient daughter-in-law, the nurturing mother and the self-sacrificing caregiver. Given the gendered cultural norms surrounding caregiving, this study,

therefore, seeks to highlight the simultaneous acculturative and caregiving experiences of immigrant South Asian women, and the ways in which they negotiate and re-negotiate their sense of self and personhood over time.

In a qualitative study of the experiences of 29 South Asian female and Chinese-Canadian caregivers, for example, Spitzer and her colleagues (2003) demonstrate how caregiving defined the participants' roles as women and as members of their ethnocultural communities. Although most of these women were also engaged in paid labour, they were unable to renegotiate cultural expectations about their involvement in caregiving work. Unable to share care work with kin or domestic labourers as they would in their home country, these women felt physically and emotionally burdened and financially constrained when they used the comparatively more expensive alternatives to family caregiving in Canada. This is an example of a situation that results in caregivers perceiving their emotional health, physical health, social life and financial status as negatively affected by caring for a friend or relative, which has been described as "caregiver burden" in the literature (Zarit et al., 1986). There is, nonetheless, a subjective element to how caregiver burden might be experienced. Chappell and Penning (2009) cite the example of a daughter who takes her older mother out for a walk, and regards it as 'caregiving', whereas the mother might consider it merely as a routine 'visit' by a dutiful offspring. Specifically, the authors differentiate between the objective and subjective aspects of caregiving burden. The former refers to the "demands associated with the needs of the person receiving the care, the time it takes and the actual tasks that must be performed", whereas the latter refers to the "emotional reactions of the care provider, including such feelings as anxiety, lowered morale, and depression" (p. 104). These are

important aspects to consider, especially when caregiver burden may be compounded by the tension between challenges of settlement in the host country on the one hand, and culturally prescribed values and beliefs on the other.

Although the care provided by family caregivers is often described as informal, Beesley (2006) argues that such care is formal in everything but the receipt of pay. Family members are also increasingly involved in informal care with the introduction of neo-liberal policies, which have increasingly shifted the burden of care on to family and friends (Aronson, 2006; Armstrong, 2004; Williams et al., 2001). There is a need to explore how these broader factors and policies affect South Asian caregivers in their everyday care work in the context of acculturation. It is also important to understand how ‘caregiving’ itself is defined within the South Asian diasporic community, given its link to the Hindu concepts of *dharma*, *seva*, and *karma*. According to Statistics Canada (2008), ‘care’ or more specifically, ‘eldercare’ has been defined in the 2007 General Social Survey as, “unpaid assistance provided to a person 65 years of age or older because of a long-term health condition or physical limitation”. As was previously mentioned, some of the tasks categorized as care work include meal preparation, house-cleaning, laundry, sewing, and assistance with personal care such as bathing, teeth-brushing and so on. Given the element of spirituality attached to the cultural ideal of filial piety among South Asians, there is a need to examine how the notion of ‘care’ and ‘carework’ is conceptualized within this community.

The impact of informal care provision on South Asian caregivers also needs to be explored in relation to several other complex socio-structural factors. In her *Barriers to Access to Care for Ethnic Minority Seniors* (BACEMS) study, Koehn (2009), for

example, found that immigrant families "torn between changing values and the economic realities that accompany immigration cannot always provide optimum care for their elders" (p. 585). In particular, she found that older immigrants wanted to avoid making demands on their children and did not want to be a burden on them. In a similar vein, Keefe and Fancey (2002) lament how the caregiving literature has focused more on the care provided to older adults than on the support older adults provide to their families. This is a particularly salient aspect to explore, as it may have important implications with regard to multigenerational living and reciprocity in intergenerational relationships. For example, elaborating on the complexities of intergenerational relationships, Igarashi and colleagues (2013) in a study incorporating a life course perspective, used focus groups to explore the experiences of midlife adults who were simultaneously providing support to dependent children and aging parents. This group is often referred to as the 'sandwich generation' in the literature (Chappell and Penning, 2009; Byrd, Grant-Vallone, and Hammill, 2002). The authors report that the provision of care to aging parents was viewed as both a joy and a burden; the transition of their parents to greater dependence provided participants with greater insight into the intersections of aging, independence and family responsibility. It would be worthwhile then, to conduct a similar exploration of the views of South Asian immigrants towards informal caregiving, and how they locate their experiences along this continuum of joy to burden.

Caregiver burden can be compounded by the nature of care that is provided to aging parents. Zhan (2004) conducted interviews with four family caregivers of Chinese American older adults with Alzheimer's disease (AD) and found that burden was linked to several cultural and structural barriers, including a lack of knowledge about AD,

stigmatization of mental illness, and difficulty with English. Similarly, Smith and Kobayashi (2002) discuss the case of a Japanese Canadian *nisei* (second-generation)-headed family where the father was diagnosed with dementia but whose symptoms were initially thought of as caused by depression brought on by retirement and filial disengagement. This study provides valuable insight into the relationship between filial obligation and the stigma of mental illness, as well as the shame and awareness that may accompany some but not all disorders that might affect aging parents. As Chappell and Penning (2009) point out, "while physical illness can bring with it many caregiving tasks required to help the sick person, mental illness is quite different in character because the person providing care has to relate to different cognitive abilities" (p.103).

Issues of access to care may also compound caregiver burden. For example, Blair (2012) interviewed 20 South Asian volunteers for the Community Ambassador Program for Seniors (CAPS) based in Fremont, California. CAPS trains volunteers from diverse ethnic communities to undertake information and referral services for older adults. The author outlines barriers, such as the limited availability of linguistic services faced by older immigrants in accessing health care and other basic services; the immigrant status of older adults; and loss of role and status in the family as potential obstacles to accessing health and social care. Building upon the notion of the 'geriatric triad' (Adelman, Greene and Charon, 1987), the author highlights how 'polygonal relationships' (which includes older adults and their caregivers, community health workers, and service providers) can improve immigrant older adults' accessibility to social programs. While such a collaborative model would be an effective way to meet the needs of immigrant older adults and their families, it may, however, be difficult to implement in situations where

the caregivers themselves have recently-immigrated, and may not be aware of the available support services on offer.

The above-cited literature highlights the importance of taking into account the difficulties and structural contingencies that immigrants may encounter when caring for aging relatives. The challenges faced by South Asian immigrant caregivers in Canada have not been well explored in the literature. This gap exists despite the important implications that these issues have for the well-being of adult immigrant caregivers and for determining the kind of services needed to support them. Additionally, the challenges of co-residence and provision of care to older relatives may be further exacerbated for those immigrants who have only recently-immigrated to Canada, particularly in the context of acculturating to Canadian society. Immigrant South Asian women, in particular, may encounter unique challenges in reconciling acculturative processes with culturally prescribed 'rules of conduct' around familial relationships and care work. Despite the rapid growth in the immigrant South Asian population in Canada, there is a surprising dearth of research on the needs of this population sub-group in general, let alone on the unique acculturative and caregiving experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrant women who co-reside with their older relatives. Based upon the literature reviewed, therefore, the following research question emerged: **How do recently-landed South Asian immigrant women negotiate providing care to older relatives at home within a culture-specific framework of filial obligation and duty on the one hand and in the context of the dynamic processes of acculturation to Canadian society on the other?**

The review of the literature also gave rise to several sub-questions; the following chapter provides an overview of the purpose statement and lists the sub-questions guiding this study.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

*Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.*

C. Wright Mills (*The Sociological Imagination*)

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I expand upon my approach to the research problem. I outline the purpose of this study and the research questions directing my inquiry. Next, I discuss my theoretical framework. Finally, I provide an overview of the methods, including ethical considerations, sampling and recruitment, research instruments, methods of data analysis, and issues of validity.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

A key consideration in my decision to study the acculturative processes and caregiving experiences of South Asian immigrants relates to the rise in intergenerational South Asian households over the past several decades in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2007). Despite the comprehensive nature of the acculturation and caregiving research to date, there exists a gap in the literature on the 'balancing acts', negotiations and related strategies adopted by recently-arrived South Asian immigrant women, who, while attempting to acculturate to a North American context, also take on the responsibilities for the care of older parents and/or parents-in-law at home. Given the recent surge in the South Asian immigrant population in Canada and the rise of multigenerational households, the purpose of this study, therefore, was to address the gap in the existing

literature with regard to the lived experiences of South Asian immigrant women as they: (1) attempt to situate themselves and forge new alliances within Canada; and (2) seek to bolster and sustain existing familial ties as they operate within a culture-specific framework of filial obligation and duty.

My study was guided by the primary research question: **How do recently-landed South Asian immigrant women negotiate providing care to older relatives at home within a culture-specific framework of filial obligation and duty on the one hand and in the context of the dynamic processes of acculturation to Canadian society on the other?** The study also sought to explore several sub-questions: (1) How do recently-landed South Asian immigrant caregivers of older relatives negotiate the complex and dynamic realms of individualist and collectivist cultural values? (2) How do recently-arrived South Asian caregivers reconcile the provisioning of care in traditionally-oriented households with their need for privacy and personal space? (3) How do perceptions of the self and identity and understandings of filial obligation and love for one's parents evolve as caregivers navigate between the two cultures in their everyday lives? (4) How do recently-landed South Asian women negotiate access to support services for their older relatives and deal with the structural constraints they may encounter in the process? And (5) How is caregiving conceptualized within the South Asian community, and who is expected to provide care to aging parents?

### **The “Theoretical Toolbox”**

Employing an integrated intersectionality and life course perspective, my research provides insights into how recently-landed immigrant South Asian women perceive their

social world and negotiate the processes of migration and acculturation. A life course perspective allowed me to trace the unique continuities as well as the vicissitudes that shape the lives of immigrant South Asian women over time. It was particularly useful in establishing linkages between the various stages in my participants' life trajectories, such as their early life in the country of origin and mid-to later life experiences in Canada. Further, the theoretical framework of intersectionality allows us to effectively capture how individual experiences intersect with multiple social categories including immigrant status, health, age, language, education, religious beliefs, and geographic location. Presented below is a detailed discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of my research.

### **A Life Course Perspective**

The process of tracing the life trajectories of my participants was informed by the life course perspective (LCP), which accounts for the dynamic interaction of lived experience and socio-historical context and the intermingling of subjective and shared meanings that have shaped participants' lives over developmental and historical time (Cohler and Hostetler, 2003). Simply put, the life course perspective explores the continuity and change of human lives brought about by interpersonal, structural, and historical forces (Elder and Johnson, 2001). Some basic LCP concepts include: 'cohort', or a group of persons who were born during the same time period and who, "experience particular social changes within a given culture in the same sequence and at the same age" (Hutchison, 2010, p. 11); 'transition', or a change in role or status; 'trajectory', or a long-term pattern of continuity and change, which includes several transitions; 'life event', a major incident or occurrence, which may be sudden and abrupt and may have

long-term ramifications; and ‘turning point’, a life event or transition that results in significantly altering one’s life course trajectory.

Jasso (2003) suggests that given the major changes associated with migration, immigration itself is an event that qualifies as a ‘turning point’; in my study, for example, immigration was a turning point in the lives of my participants that altered their socio-cultural environment, familial relationships and perceptions of the self, beliefs and expectations. Similarly, the arrival of the participants’ older relatives within a few years of their own migration to Canada was another “point of reckoning” (Evans et al., 2009) that involved recognition of the complexities of co-residence and caregiving and significant adaptation to their changed social circumstances. The life course perspective is thus useful in understanding the participants’ embeddedness in multifaceted and dynamic intergenerational and conjugal relationships. Indeed, as Chappell and Penning (2009) effectively note: "We are all embedded within social environments; we live our lives interacting with others in multiple and often overlapping contexts" (p. 111).

Elder and Johnson (2001, as cited in Hutchison, 2010) also identify five inter-related themes to the LCP: ‘the interplay of human lives and historical time’, which implies that individual and family development ought to be understood in historical context; ‘timing of lives’, which underscores the importance of biological age, psychological age, social age, and spiritual age, and the particular roles and behaviours associated with each; ‘linked lives and social ties with others’, which indicates that human lives are interdependent; ‘human agency and personal control’, which implies that individuals make choices based on the available opportunities and constraints within their social and historical circumstances; and ‘heterogeneity or variability’, which indicates

that there are significant variations in the life course pathways of individuals based on their diverse social and historical circumstances, cohort variations, social class, gender, culture and individual agency. These five domains served as an effective means to contextualize the acculturative and caregiving experiences of my participants, and have been used as part of an organizational framework to structure and present my findings in Chapter 4.

### **Intersectionality**

As a “metaphor for the entanglement and interaction of multiple and complex identity categories” (Hulko, 2011, p. 236), the intersectional approach enabled me to understand the simultaneous intersections between aspects of social difference and identity, as related to ethnicity, gender, social class, geography, age, migration status, and nationality (Dhamoon and Hanskivsky, 2011). The intersectional perspective suggests that identities and roles are continuously co-constructed in interaction with diverse socio-historical contexts and significant others (Heyse, 2011). This approach proved useful in acquiring deeper insights into the transnational spaces inhabited by the women in my study, and into the processes of identity construction and meaning-making that they engaged in as they made sense of their lives as immigrants, mothers, daughters-in-law, partners, students, employees, and most importantly, as women of colour in an unfamiliar land. In addition, the intersectional approach effectively reflected the ways in which my participants renegotiated their sense of place and identity relative to evolving social contexts, changing realities, environmental exigencies, and ‘Westernized’ views of gender and culture. Listening to their stories, I realized that the identities of these women

were fluid and relational (West and Zimmerman, 1987); the ‘self’ was socially constructed and re-constructed to meet the needs of the situations they encountered, building upon past memories and “hopes and fears for the future” (Brunner, 2003, p. 182, as cited in Heyse, 2011, p. 201).

Several scholars have used an integrated life course and intersectionality framework in their research. Tyson Brown (2013; 2012), for example, has effectively employed this approach in his study of cumulative disadvantage and race and gender disparities across the life course in the US. Similarly, Heyse (2011), in her study on how migration transforms experiences of the self in Russian and Ukrainian women living in Belgium, uses a retrospective life course perspective to analyze how personal goals, aspirations and experiences of the self are renegotiated in the process of migration, and in interaction with the social environment. In Canada, Clark and Hunt (2011) have examined how gender, life course events and circumstances, and the special health needs of young adolescent girls residing in rural areas intersect to produce conditions of marginalization and isolation. Similarly, Kobayashi and Prus (2011) have used this approach to examine the ‘healthy immigrant effect’ (HIE) in mid-to-later life Canadian immigrants. Indeed, as Heyse (2011) points out, important life course events and changes in a person’s social environment, for example, the changes caused by migration, can transform the content and distribution of power dimensions and bring certain intersections more to the forefront (p. 202). My research adds to this emergent and important literature by employing an integrated intersectionality and life course perspective to explore the unique acculturative and caregiving experiences of recently

immigrated South Asian women within an evolving social context, and the creation of transnational identities in the process of migration.

In the preceding section, I outlined the theoretical framework that guides this study. Next, I provide a detailed discussion of the methods employed in conducting this research.

### **Why Qualitative Research Methods?**

According to Morrow and Smith (2000), the purpose of qualitative research is to understand and explain participant meaning. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as a process based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. For Fischer (1994), doing qualitative research is both an art and a science. It is an art because it involves aesthetic and intuitive decisions about rendition – what needs to be told, how it is to be told and how much to tell – and it is a science because it involves decisions about accuracy, disclosure, authenticity, logic, transferability, and coherence. Employing qualitative data collection and analysis methods provided me with the flexibility necessary to move back and forth between the interview transcripts and analysis of the data, and allowed me to situate the life stories of my participants within a broader socio-cultural context.

Qualitative research has been found to be particularly useful in the study of ethnocultural groups. Morrow, Rakhsha and Castaneda (2001, pp. 582-583), for instance, provide several reasons as to why qualitative research methods are appropriate for ethnocultural research: (1) the context forms an important component in qualitative research; (2) it captures the unique meanings participants may attach to their lived

experiences; (3) at the same time, it deals with the researcher's own self-reflection and self-awareness; and (4) its methods provide an opportunity for previously unheard 'voices' to be heard by bringing them to the forefront. For the purpose of my research, qualitative research methods were employed to acquire deeper insight into the everyday interactions and lived experiences of acculturation and caregiving among a relatively under-researched group in the literature, recently-landed adult South Asian immigrants who provide informal care to their older relatives in Canada.

## **Data Collection**

### **Ethics**

Prior to conducting the study, ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at the University of Victoria. The protocol follows the guidelines set by the Tri-Council Policy statement (TCPS, 2013) on the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects. Details such as the characteristics of the target population, steps in the recruitment process, data collection methods, location of participation and possible inconveniences, and risks, benefit or harm to participants were provided to the HREB. Participants met criteria for minimal risk research requirements: they were all 19 years of age or older and capable of voluntary informed consent. I informed the Board that the potential benefits from the study outweigh any emotional or psychological harm to the participants.

Before the scheduled date of the interview, I sent my participants the informed consent form, which contained details about the research project (see Appendix C), asking them to thoroughly review the document; all eight participants signed and returned the form prior to the commencement of the interview. Before the start of the interview, I

ensured that participants were fully aware of the nature of my research and that they gave permission for me to digitally record the interview. I guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality by (1) using pseudonyms for all participants; and (2) by ensuring that all relevant data would be stored in a secure location at all times, steps, which Baez (2002) refers to as 'the convention of confidentiality'. I was also cognizant of the fact that a study related to an easily identifiable group – in this case, a visible minority group, South Asian immigrants – often carries with it the risk of 'deductive disclosure' (Kaiser, 2009). In other words, deductive disclosure occurs when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research reports (Sieber, 1992); henceforth, I have taken all possible measures to ensure that potential identity-revealing information, such as a description or name of the neighbourhood the participant resides in, is not present in this thesis.

In addition, I was prepared for the possibility that certain 'ethically important moments' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) may arise during the interviews. In other words, I was aware that during my interaction with the participants in this study, "difficult, often subtle, and usually unpredictable situations" (p. 262) might occur in the practice of doing research. While only a few such situations arose in the course of the eight interviews conducted, I was reflexive, reciprocal and acutely attuned to the needs and comfort of the participants throughout the study, offering them a chance to halt/end the interview if they so desired without any adverse consequences. I was also prepared to offer them access to the services of a counsellor, or to speak to a relative or friend, should the need arise.

With regard to the venue for the interviews, some participants conveyed a sense of discomfort in narrating their caregiving and acculturation experiences in front of a family member. I addressed this concern by offering them the option to conduct the interview at

a location where they were most comfortable. Of the eight interviews conducted, four took place at the participant's home, one took place at the local community centre, and three were held in coffee shops close to the participants' home.

### **Recruitment**

As has been discussed in the preceding chapters, a higher proportion of family/friend caregivers over the age of 45 in Canada are women (56.5%) rather than men (43.5%). Female caregivers spend significantly more time than men providing care – the equivalent of 1.5 work days per week on average for women compared to one full day per week for men (Fast et al., 2010). My recruitment strategy, therefore, was to undertake purposive sampling to select a minimum of eight adult female participants who immigrated to Canada from South Asia within the past ten years as 'Economic' or 'Family-class' immigrants, were Permanent Residents, and who provided informal caregiving to their older relatives at home. Refugees and temporary foreign workers were excluded in order to maintain relative sample homogeneity. Given my ability to comprehend and converse in the four main South Asian dialects, namely Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali, the selection criteria was not limited to participants who could speak English. Nevertheless, all recruited participants were sufficiently fluent in English.

With regard to the recruitment site, Grover (1978) has noted that not only does the Hindu temple satisfy the important function of fulfilling the religious needs of the immigrant Indian community, it also acts as a site for socialization and the reproduction of the "rich cultural heritage" (p.14) of South Asia. I obtained the contact information of members of the planning committee of the local Hindu temple from its website. These individuals are all volunteers who are primarily involved in organizing cultural and social

events within the community and are not a part of the religious order of priests and the clergy. I sent out emails to 11 such individuals, informing them about the purpose and nature of this study (see Appendix A). I also attached the letter of invitation (see Appendix B) containing details about the study, and appended my contact information to the emails I sent out, requesting members to either forward it to recently-landed South Asian immigrants via email, or to inform them by word-of-mouth. These members, therefore, acted as ‘broadcasters’ who facilitated my access to the population of interest. A total of 15 potential participants contacted me – 13 via telephone, and two via email. Seven individuals were deemed ineligible, as they did not meet the selection criteria (for further details on the recruitment procedure, see Appendix F).

One participant, Seema [pseudonym], was selected despite the fact that she did not currently co-reside with her older relatives; her husband’s parents, who had lived with her for four years had recently returned to India permanently. My rationale for interviewing her was based on two important considerations: (1) When she contacted me, Seema appeared very keen on sharing her experiences with me; and (2) I believed that Seema’s lived experiences of co-residence with older relatives would provide unique insights into the socio-cultural and structural factors that may result in a breakdown of the sponsorship relationship.

Although the recruitment criterion was not limited to university-educated women, all the participants who contacted me were highly educated professional women from South Asia. The fact that these women approached me voluntarily indicates that this research may have served as a welcome avenue to the participants by allowing them the

opportunity to 'voice' the unique challenges that they faced in the context of resettlement, as well as in the provision of care to their older relatives.

Finally, the choice of the Hindu temple as a site for recruitment implied that all my participants would identify as Hindu; this ensured sample homogeneity, and allowed me the latitude to compare and contrast the narratives of my participants within a specific ethnocultural context.

### **Qualitative Interviews**

Eight semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted between September and December 2013 at locations chosen by the participants. The interviews, which lasted approximately two hours each, were conducted primarily in English. Kang (2012) has pointed out that unique challenges regarding interpretation and communication may arise in interview situations where the two languages being used are typologically different (for instance, Korean and English). In this regard, my ability to converse in and understand several South Asian dialects helped me in establishing rapport with my participants, as I was able to comprehend meanings of words and phrases stated in the vernacular. For example, some participants used the word *desi* (local/Brown) to describe diasporic South Asians, and *gore log* (White people) to describe mainstream (mainly Caucasian) Canadians – terms I am familiar with given my identity as an immigrant East Indian woman.

Burgess (1984) defines qualitative research interviews as "conversations with a purpose" (p. 1984). The aim of the interview is to capture in the participants' own words, their thoughts, perceptions, emotions and experiences – a two-way process where researcher and participant engage in a dialogue to explore the topic at hand (Taylor,

2005). The interviews were informed by a feminist perspective in order to address the limitation of traditional interviewing as a one-way process, wherein the interviewer elicits information from the respondent but fails to provide any information in return (ibid.). A feminist perspective posits that the interview process should be a 'conversation about life-experiences', in an atmosphere of mutual respect and collaboration. To this end, the researcher uses an interview guide rather than a formal interview script. In developing the interview guide, I was cognizant of McCracken's (1998) cautioning that such a guide only equips us with "a rough itinerary with which to negotiate the interview. It does not specify what will happen at every stage of the journey...and the ground that it will eventually cover" (p. 37). I also adopted a 'conversational' tone for the interviews, which greatly facilitated the establishment of rapport with participants and was instrumental in acquiring their trust, as they shared their stories with me. After the completion of the interview, almost all participants remarked that they really enjoyed our "talk", and for some, it was "like a therapy".

### *Interview questions*

Patton (2002) suggests that good qualitative interview questions should be open-ended, sensitive, clear and neutral. Taylor (2005) recommends moving from the general to particular kinds of questions by beginning with background information inquiries, which the participant finds easier to answer and which assist in establishing rapport, and then proceed to the more complex or sensitive questions as the interview relationship develops.

In this study, the preliminary questions were primarily biographical in nature, for example, 'Can you describe your childhood in [South Asian country of origin]?' 'Can

you tell me about your family/ your friends in [South Asian country of origin]?’ ‘Can you describe how you met your partner?’ ‘Can you tell me about your life as a student/working professional/homemaker in [South Asian country of origin]?’ Can you describe your life in Canada? ‘Can you tell me about your life as a student/working professional/homemaker in Canada?’ ‘Why did your parents/ older relatives move to Canada?’ The purpose of these questions was to draw out the life histories of my participants, in keeping with the life course perspective. The questions then moved on to the more specific, including, ‘What does the concept of 'care' mean to you?’ ‘Can you tell me about your experiences of looking after your older relatives in Canada?’ ‘Can you describe your caregiving activities?’ and ‘What are your concerns, if any, of living with your older relatives’ (see Appendix E for the complete interview guide).

In addition, I used probes such as, ‘Could you tell me some more about how you felt when you first arrived in Canada?’ during the interviews, in order to draw out further relevant and important information from the participants. I kept in mind the four types of probes described by Patton (2002): (1) detail-oriented probes which answer the 'who', 'where', 'what' and 'how' questions; (2) elaboration probes in the form of non-verbal cues such as an encouraging nod to keep the participant talking; (3) clarification probes, which try to dig deeper into what was said via a restatement of an answer; and (4) contrast probes which allow participants to compare and 'react' against a stated question. I was also engaged in emotional labour during the interviews by adjusting my body language, concealing negative emotions from participants, and remaining responsive and empathetic toward participants (Hoffman, 2007; Pini, 2005; Best, 2003; Rapley, 2001; Arendell, 1997). In addition, I took down observational notes on signs of emotional

unease/distress, etc. displayed by the participants and followed Riessman's (1987) advice "to listen with a minimum of interruptions and to take cues from those we study if we are going to help them recall and report experiences in their own voices" (p. 191).

Although my identity as a member of the South Asian community assisted me in establishing rapport with the participants during the interview process, I was also cognizant of my positionality as an 'insider'. As Gearing (2004) recommends, I ensured that personal thoughts/opinions did not influence my role as a researcher or impact my participants. Upon completion of the interview, I jotted-down field notes on the interview process in order to provide an audit trail for reflexivity during the data analysis phase.

### **Data Analysis**

The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim (including grammatical errors, mispronunciation, background sounds, elisions etc.). During this process, I followed the advice of Bird (2005) who suggests that transcription should be regarded as a key step in interpretive qualitative research, as it contributes an experiential context that adds to the richness and rigor of the research.

In analyzing the data, I followed Ritchie and Lewis' (2003) 'analytical hierarchy,' a process "through which qualitative 'findings' are built from the original raw data." (p. 217). This process involves three types of activities: data management and the development of descriptive accounts and explanatory accounts. The process is also iterative and involves movement up and down the hierarchy as the analysis progresses and the findings are refined.

In data management, the raw data were tagged and synthesized into emergent themes. I first identified initial themes and open codes. I then labeled and synthesized

data by categorizing key elements and dimensions. The next step involved the detection of patterns primarily through associative analysis and identification of clustering. Patterns were detected on the basis of recurring themes or themes with shared meaning. During this process, common themes across participants' narratives emerged, including, for example, the spiritual conceptualization of filial obligation through the notion of *dharma* and the moral duty of a married woman. I also made a note of data that did not seem to 'fit' into a particular pattern (by jotting down memos in the margins), such as perceptions of filial obligation among daughters in matrilineal family forms, as opposed to sons and daughters-in-law in patrilineal kinship arrangements. These data accounted for much of the heterogeneity inherent in the lived experiences of my participants.

I synthesized the analysis by creating a chart containing the codes, clusters, themes, and patterns, which allowed me to begin establishing connections between the themes, and facilitated the interpretation of the data significantly. I first developed a descriptive account where the data were organized into key dimensions of the phenomenon being studied; I then developed an explanatory account whereby patterns in the data were explained on the basis of interconnections across emergent themes. This process involved revisiting the transcripts to address the 'how' and 'why' questions emerging from the analysis. I also used the observational notes from the interviews to establish links between the words spoken by the participants and my own observations.

I also used a typology to help structure the presentation of my findings. Typologies, defined as the "specific forms of classification that help to describe and explain the segmentation of the social world or the way that phenomena can be characterized or differentiated" (Spencer, Ritchie, and O'Connor, 2003, p. 214), can be

emergent from the data, or conceptually derived from relevant literature. Here, I organized my findings in relation to the five dominant domains in life course research, which were used as an effective organizational framework by Elder (1998) in his meta-synthesis of the existing literature on the life course perspective. These domains, the interplay of human lives and historical time, the timing of lives, linked lives and social ties with others, human agency and personal control, and heterogeneity or variability, were corroborated as salient in my study and served to organize and structure my findings. These key findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Finally, in the explanatory account, emergent themes were considered in relation to the theoretical lenses of intersectionality, and the findings were contextualized within the broader literature on caregiving and acculturative processes among South Asian immigrants in Canada and the research questions guiding this study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the key findings, implications of this study, and suggestions for future research.

Overall, this iterative and hands-on process of data analysis was tedious, labour-intensive and time consuming, but it also provided me with a heightened degree of familiarity and intimacy with the data – a familiarity which would have been elusive perhaps, had I used a software program to analyze my data.

### **Authenticity and Coherence**

Mantzoukas (2004) has pointed out that the representation of the qualitative researcher in qualitative inquiries is inevitable. In an effort to enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings (Creswell and Miller, 2000), here I disclose relevant experiences as a recently-arrived Indian immigrant in Canada who provides intermittent

care to older parents at home. I then explain how these experiences have sensitized me to the circumstances of my study's participants and contributed to enhancing the data collection, data analysis and, ultimately, the quality of my findings.

Having grown up within a primarily 'collectivist' South Asian culture defined by an avid awareness of the notion of community, familial obligation, and a keen sense of duty towards one's parents (Sodhi, 2008), I have encountered several challenges while trying to adapt to the 'individualistic' fabric of the North American way of life, described as being marked by a preoccupation with the individual self (ibid.). I have also come to realize that acculturation is a complex, dynamic and fluid process characterized by an inevitable confluence of cultures. I have experienced the hybridization of collectivist and individualist cultural values on occasions when my Indian parents/parents-in-law have visited me in Canada. My individual lived experience involves on the one hand, an incessant struggle to placate the inner demons within myself, which relentlessly chide me for being an ungrateful daughter/ daughter-in-law for not 'caring' enough, and on the other, a constant negotiation and renegotiation of strategies and interpersonal relations in order to acculturate in a 'foreign' land. My experiences, therefore, equipped me with unique insights not available to a cultural 'outsider'.

To help build rapport, I disclosed to participants my own status as a recently-arrived immigrant and caregiver, although I did not provide specific details on the nature of these experiences. I also used colloquial terms that denoted shared cultural background and understanding, such as *desis* for diasporic South Asians, or *gore log* for 'mainstream' (primarily White) Canadians. This process created a climate of trust conducive to the production of in-depth and finely nuanced accounts of experience. This, in turn, allowed

me to include in the findings section “thick and rich descriptions” (Denzin, 1989) of the participants’ viewpoints, struggles and concerns with the processes of immigration, acculturation and caregiving.

Further, my experiences not only provided the basis for building rapport with my participants, but also served as a platform to enhance the interpretation of my participants’ life experiences. These two factors helped establish the validity and authenticity of my findings.

Another key aspect that I was aware of during the research process was related to the issue of coherence. Tracy (2010) lists the following criteria for achieving quality and meaningful coherence in qualitative research:

Meaningfully coherent studies (a) achieve their stated purpose; (b) accomplish what they espouse to be about; (c) use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms; and (d) attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research foci, methods, and findings (p. 848).

These criteria align with Holloway and Todres’ (2003) suggestion that the researcher needs to be context-sensible "as well as considerate of the inner consistency and coherence that is needed when engaged in qualitative research" (p. 345). I, therefore, ensured that the various sections in my study, namely the research questions, literature review, theoretical and methodological frameworks and conclusions were logically consistent and congruent.

In conclusion, this chapter provided an overview of my research methods, including the theoretical framework guiding this study, and the specific methods used for data collection and analysis. In the following chapter, I present the key findings of this study.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

*As for Savitri, to this day  
Her name is named, when couples wed,  
And to the bride the parents say,  
Be thou like her, in heart and head.*

(Toru Dutt, *Savitri*)

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the findings from the semi-structured interviews I conducted with eight recently immigrated South Asian women who co-reside with and provide informal care to their older relatives in Canada. While it would have been useful to begin this chapter with a descriptive profile of each participant, I have chosen to provide a more general overview of the sample characteristics in order to preserve the anonymity of the women who participated in my study. I have also used pseudonyms to disguise their identity. As mentioned previously, this was particularly salient in order to avoid ‘deductive disclosure’ by including information that would make my participants easily identifiable in research reports (Kaiser, 2009), particularly in the context of the strong social ties within the South Asian community in this city. In this chapter, I present the results from my interviews using the organizational framework of the life course perspective and situating my findings within five key domains: ‘the interplay of human lives and historical time’; ‘timing of lives’; ‘linked lives and social ties with others’; ‘human agency and personal control’; and ‘heterogeneity or variability in life experiences’ (Elder and Johnson, 2001).

## **The Participants**

The eight participants in my study were South Asian women who had immigrated to Canada under either the 'Economic Class' or under the family reunification program within the previous ten years. Six participants were originally from India, and two were from Sri Lanka. All participants were university-educated and between 32 and 45 years of age. Six participants held a Master's degree or higher, and two participants held a Bachelor's degree from an institution in their country of origin. All participants were raised in an urban setting, and belonged to financially stable, upper middle-class families. All participants were married, fluent in English, and had been engaged in paid employment in their home country prior to their wedding. All participants were presently engaged in paid employment in the receiving country, i.e., Canada. Five participants had at least one child, and three had no children. Five participants currently co-resided with their parents-in-law, two co-resided with their parents, and one participant had co-resided with her in-laws in the past. The older relatives of the participants were between 62 and 79 years of age. Finally, although this was not a recruitment criterion, all participants who expressed a desire to participate in this study were non-Sikh/non-Punjabi women; this is an important point to note, given the large Sikh/Punjabi population in the province of BC. Recent reports suggest that BC is the only province in Canada, and one of the few jurisdictions in the world, in which Sikhs can claim the status of being the second largest religious group (the largest being Christians) (Statistics Canada, 2011). Further, 4.5% of the population in BC speaks Punjabi, as compared to only .06% of those who speak

Hindi, the other common South Asian language, at home (ibid.)<sup>5</sup>. In the light of this demographic distribution, as I discuss in Chapter 5, this study provides important insight into the unique lived experiences of non-Sikh/non-Punjabi immigrant caregivers, and the support services they may require, both as new immigrants, as well as in the provision of care to their older relatives.

**The Interplay of Human Lives and Historical time: “*Us desis are like this only...*”**

The life course perspective recognizes that an individual’s life pathways are embedded both within socio-cultural as well as historical contexts, culminating in the production of ‘cohort effects’, i.e., the sharing of distinct formative experiences at the same point in the life course (Hutchison, 2010). Weerasinghe and Numer (2010), for example, found that the physical, emotional, and social health, and the leisure activities of immigrant South Asian widows in Canada were significantly influenced by childhood behaviours and their early lives in the country of origin. The findings from my research also indicate that cohort effects, namely through historical events, such as the economic liberalization of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh during the early 1990s, had a significant impact on the lives of these women. As Aarti, a 40- year old electronics engineer from India who lives with her parents-in-law reminisced:

It was like magic, really. All those foreign brands, Pepsi Cola, Levi’s jeans, Loreal lipsticks [laughs], they just hit us with so much force. *Abhi mujhe yaad hai* [I still remember] cable TV came and earlier it was only Doordarshan [the public broadcasting service in India], now we had our pick of all these American channels, you know, all those shows, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, *Dynasty*. I remember how we would talk about Ridge and Brooke [characters in an American

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<sup>5</sup> It must be noted here that many Punjabi-speaking persons frequent the local Hindu temple as well.

show] in school as if *humare rishtedaar hain* [as if they were our relatives]. Then McDonalds came, and oh my God! They also sold veggie burgers, can you imagine [laughs].

Similarly, Anshu, a 35- year old with a degree in human resources management from a premier institute in India had this to say about the rapid social changes:

Putting it simply, it was as if the world had changed – *hamari duniya khul gayi* [our world had opened up]. All these hotshot producers were filming abroad, you know, in foreign locations, Switzerland, England, even Canada. They filmed *Pukaar* here, right? Whistler *mein shayad* [in Whistler, perhaps]. The other thing I remember clearly [was] when we bought a microwave. I remember Sanjeev Kapoor [famous celebrity chef] would host this show on microwave cooking, or something like that. *Mummy ko to aata nahin tha* (my mother did not know how), so I was the expert [in] microwave cooking! [laughs].

Both women agreed that this exposure to ‘Western culture’ whetted their appetite for travel and adventure and was a significant factor in their decision to immigrate to Canada. For those women who spent their early lives in Sri Lanka, namely Sudha, a 32-year old university graduate, and Chandana, a 45-year old lawyer, however, the civil war in Sri Lanka and the massive violation of human rights influenced their decision to leave. As Chandana emphatically stated: “ I chose Canada because it has a good record of human rights. Mind you, we were never directly affected, but being a lawyer, I have no respect for those who violate human rights”.

Also, the similar geographical location – an urban, metropolitan city in South Asia – resulted in the creation of a cosmopolitan identity in these women, particularly with regard to education and career goals; all participants agreed that they were encouraged to cultivate personal ambition and drive during their adolescent years by their older relatives. “Study Science [hard sciences], don’t go for Arts they [the parents] always said. There is no scope [career-wise] in Arts”, said Joyita, a 35-year old software professional from India who lives with her parents-in-law. For Seema, a 39-year old

university graduate from India, academic success was “a driving force”. As a teenager, the death of her father who had always taken an active interest in her education, was a turning point in her life as she resolved to financially support her two siblings: “I was working since Grade 9, you know, but see, the good thing is I ended up getting a lot of scholarships”. This focus on fostering personal drive and aspiration, however, led to enormous parental and peer-pressure. As Joyita described:

It was too much, *ek saath idhar* tuition *lo*, *udhar* tuition *lo* [enrolling in multiple after-school academic programs]. Then there was the whole results thing. I remember there was one boy who would always beat me to the top [laughs]. My father was always more worried about him, more than me [laughs again]. But I made him [her father] proud. I got into IT [Information Technology]. Here, [in Canada] my children have no clue, absolutely no clue about that kind of competition, that pressure. In a way, *achcha hai* [it is good].

On a similar note, Seema described how her excellent academic performance at school earned her the respect of the community: “I was a university topper, and I remember people would tell their children, look you should become like her”. That this appreciation was vital to her sense of self and personhood was evident when Seema wistfully admitted, “I don’t tell that [talking about her academic performance in India] in Canada any more. Even my children, they don’t know. Maybe I’m ashamed. Wow! A university topper working at Subway! Us *desis* [‘Brown’ people] are like this only [laughs]”.

Given this inordinate focus on personal ambition and academic success, in an apparent paradox, six of these women quit their respective jobs once they got married. Looking to my participants for an answer, I received the unanimous reply – this was the *dharma* (moral duty) of a married woman. I discovered that my participants had been socialized to believe that as per the Hindu code of conduct, their primary duty was to

respect the wishes of their ‘new’ family. Their mothers or other female members of their family had instructed them to focus on ‘winning the hearts’ of their husband’s family, particularly during the crucial early days of their marriage. As Aarti described: “you know, in our culture, mothers whisper into their daughter’s ear at the *bidai* [Hindu bridal send-off ceremony] that *sasuraal mein theek se rehna, sabko kush rakhna* [behave yourself in your husband’s home and keep everyone happy]”. This shift in roles and behaviours across the life course according to socially constructed rules of conduct and deportment are identified and discussed in the following section.

**Timing of Lives: “*There is a time for everything. It has all been written down before your birth...*”**

Elder (1998) has suggested that individuals move through a sequence of age-graded events, settings, and social roles that is structured by social institutions; these societal forces define normative pathways that provide templates or ‘road maps’ for individual lives (Crockett, 2002). Age is an important variable employed by social scientists to bring order and predictability to the comprehension of human behaviour (Hutchison, 2010). The family cycle, with its focus on role sequences related to marriage, to childbearing, to early parenthood, to ‘launching and settling’ the child, to the ‘empty-nest’ syndrome, and to grandparenthood, is an example of how a societal institution, the family, defines paths or trajectories comprising sequential statuses and the transitions between them (Crockett, 2002). Further, as Crockett and Silbereisen (2000) have pointed out, there are considerable cross-cultural differences in institutional arrangements, thus creating culture-specific institutionalized pathways and life course templates. In Hinduism, the life course of the individual is divided into four distinct stages or *ashrams*:

in the first stage, *brahmacharya*, one is a celibate student; in the second stage, *grahastya*, one is bound by household duties; in the third stage, *vaanprasthya*, bonds to worldly affairs are loosened; and finally, in the fourth and final stage, *sannyasa*, one is free from material concerns, and seeks spiritual fulfillment (Sen, 1972, as cited in Choudhry, 2001). While this ideal scheme of life is not widely observed, it still has many followers in South Asia (Choudhry, 2001). The women in my study had all been socialized to a prescribed role encompassing the ‘dutiful wife’; ‘obedient daughter-in-law’; and ‘loving mother’ (ibid.). All participants had been married between the ages of 21 and 27, through traditionally arranged, endogamous alliances. The following excerpt from my interview with Smriti, a 36-year old mechanical engineer from a large, urban city in India, provides a detailed account of the “seeing the bride” ceremony that is customary in many Hindu households in the Indian subcontinent:

Interviewer: Can you describe how you met your husband?

Smriti: Sure. It was a typical arranged marriage. Amit [name changed], my husband had just immigrated to Canada, so um, there was this aunt, you know, in every family there is that *rishta banane wali* [matchmaker] relative [laughs], so she arranged this match. So there was this whole ‘girl seeing’ ceremony with samosas and chai [tea] [laughs].

Interviewer: Wow! Can you describe that ceremony?

Smriti: Ok, so my Mom had told me that there is this guy, very good match for you, but you can tell us if you don’t want to marry him. Just meet him once.

Interviewer: Ok, so you had this choice then?

Smriti: Choice? Yes, yes, in a way, yes. Like, I could have said no, and my parents would have said ok, but in my heart I knew that I’m not going to say no [laughs]. Somewhere there was this feeling, you know, my parents would know what is best for me *na*? Anyway, so my sister dressed me up in this beautiful sari, and I walked into the living room with the [tea] tray in my hand, very filmy [laughs]. Amit was sitting with his parents, so that is how we first met.

Interviewer: So did you talk to him then?

Smriti: Oh yes, but not in front of the elders, you know. My sister-in-law took us into another room, and we chatted for a bit. Then Amit told his parents that he, you know, agreed, and I said yes to my parents, *to phir sab set ho gaya* [and everything was arranged then].

Interviewer: So did you meet him after that?

Smriti: *Nahin* [no], my parents are very conservative about these things, and Amit went back to Canada anyway, but yes, we talked over the phone right up to the wedding.

Smriti's description of the 'bride seeing' ceremony resonated across the narratives of all my participants. The courtship period, if at all there was one, was brief, and quickly led to the wedding. Interestingly, although all my participants had spent some time living with their husband's family prior to immigration, many laughingly admitted that up until the move to Canada, their husbands were like "a stranger" to them. This demonstrates how familial ties may privilege conjugal bonds within South Asian families. These women embraced the culturally prescribed role of the dutiful daughter-in-law with enthusiasm by taking on the responsibility of domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, performing *poojas* [prayers], and often providing childcare to the young children in the household. As Joyita expressively described it: "First I was a student, a daughter, then I became a daughter-in-law and a wife. There is a time for everything. It has all been written down before your birth".

With regard to their immigration and settlement experiences, another sub-theme that emerged within the broader theme of 'the timing of lives', particularly from the narratives of those women who had been caught in complex re-credentialization processes in Canada and had been forced to go 'back to school', was their internal struggle to accept their new status as 'students'. These women felt that they had deviated from normative life course pathways by stepping back in time. As Chandana, the lawyer from Sri Lanka described it:

I was so depressed. I mean, look at me, there is a time and place for everything. I was a respectable lawyer in Sri Lanka. I am a mother of two. Now, I am taking courses in early childhood education because nobody will give me a job as a

lawyer. I had thought my student life was long over, you know. It is very, very hard to accept that. Quote me on that! [laughs].

For Gayatri, a 34-year old with a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics from India, the experience of re-starting her career as a student was intimidating: "I just thought, my God, I am going to college at this stage in my life. Everyone will laugh. Actually, for many days, I did not tell my friends in India. I mean, it is a little ridiculous". Upon starting the nursing program she had enrolled in, however, Gayatri was impressed by the level of acceptance towards her. She made several friends, most of them immigrants like herself: "The one very nice thing about Canada I should say is there is no age for learning. In this way it is very different from India. There [in India], people would laugh at you".

Finally, the internalization of the normative family cycle and the timing of lives was also evident in the participants' decision to co-reside with their older relatives. "Look, my father-in-law has worked very, very hard to bring up my husband and his brother", said Joyita, "there was never any question about where they [her husband's parents] would live after retirement. If we lived in India, they would live with us, if we live in Canada, they will live with us. This is our time to repay their debt". Aarti echoed this sentiment when she stated that, "If you look at my mother-in-law, she has suffered all her life. My father-in-law always says, 'I did this', 'I did that', but what about my mother-in-law? Now is her time to take it easy, enjoy with grandchildren, you know".

## **Linked Lives and Social Ties with Others: “*We desis always stick together...*”**

According to the life course perspective, lives are interdependent, and social support, defined as the help given by others that benefits an individual or collectivity, is an important element of intertwined lives (Hutchison, 2010). Social ties may exist between, (1) family members, (2) across generations, and (3) within the larger community (ibid.). The findings from my research are contextualized within each of these three domains and presented below:

### **Links between family members**

As mentioned earlier, most women in my study indicated that they hardly “knew” their husbands pre-immigration, despite having lived together as a couple in their husband’s home. Anshu described how happy she was about moving to Canada:

We had been married for almost two years, and I still could not say that I understood my husband. Whenever we went out in India, you know, just to relax after he came back from work, my [then unmarried] sister-in-law would come with us. Every single time! Then he had this habit of discussing politics and cricket, and all that stuff with my father-in-law. It was like a ritual. Every evening, he would chat with my father-in-law, and I would wait like a fool. So, Canada was like a honeymoon for us. We were young, Canada was beautiful, *bahut achcha tha* [it was great].

Anshu also expressed how she “really fell in love” with her husband after moving to Canada: “The first few months, we talked and talked. I came to know what a talented and bright person he is”. Also, for most participants, although their partners had initiated the immigration process, they actively supported and encouraged them – immigration to Canada not only offered them an opportunity to “see the world”, it was also a chance to emotionally connect with their husbands. Several participants, however,

admitted that as the realities of re-settlement began to surface, they experienced severe stress, which put considerable strain on their marital life. As Chandana expressed it:

Well, the bubble had burst. My husband had lost his job. I was looking for work. Then I got pregnant. I told him [her husband] you'll have to take up anything now. But he is an IT guy, right, so he tells me, I am a computer engineer, I'm not going to work at McDonald's [laughs]. I said, we are going to have a baby, are you even in your senses? It was very, very difficult.

The stress of settlement was so acute given dwindling financial resources and lack of proper childcare that two participants had to send their infant sons back to their country of origin to live with their grandparents for a while. "It just broke my heart. I still remember when I was leaving him [her son] in India. I felt like a part of me was gone", shared Smriti, with tears in her eyes. Needless to say, this created a further rift in these women's relationships with their partners.

Another factor, which was a turning point in the marital life of my participants, was the sponsorship and eventual immigration of their older relatives. Smriti described how frustrated she would get when her husband spent hours talking over the phone with his parents in India prior to their immigration: "He was always so guilty. Oh, the power is cut, it must be so hot. Why did the maid not show up? Who is cooking then? Why are you coughing? My God! Worry, worry, worry". But once her in-laws moved to Canada and started to live with them, Smriti experienced a subtle shift in her relationship with her husband: "I have never seen him so relaxed. Now he even takes my side if there is any problem [laughs]". Almost all participants agreed that their marital relationship had changed for the better upon the arrival of their older relatives. As Aarti described it:

I sometimes think he [her husband] feels guilty about this, you know, me living with them [her in-laws], so he tries to compensate. The other day I was really angry about something my father-in-law had said, and I cannot shout at him [her father-in-law], right? So Vishal, [name changed], my husband came into the

bedroom and talked to me for an hour. He actually said sorry for his Dad's behaviour! One thing I will tell you honestly, sometimes *I* feel very sorry for Vishal.

### **Intergenerational relationships**

With regard to their relationship with their older relatives, most participants reported that they were “very close” to their mothers-in-law. Smriti, who works as a laboratory assistant, respects her mother-in-law for helping out with childcare and cooking: “She is like my best friend. I come home from work, and we both sit down with a cup of tea. I tell her each and every thing that happened that day, and she tells me about my father-in-law's latest *tamasha* [fuss] [laughs]”. Contrarily, their relationship with their fathers-in-law was less than satisfactory. Seema, whose in-laws returned to India permanently after having lived in Canada for four years, had this to say about her relationship with her father-in-law:

We just could not get along. I mean, I understand how much he has done for the family, but he is the type of person who, like, if he wants tea at 2am, then he has to have it [bangs table]. How can you survive in Canada like that? Then he would keep interfering in everything. My poor mother-in-law, she is the nicest person you can imagine. Like, I respect her maybe even more than I respect my own mother. I think the problem was that he [her father-in-law] had seen me in India, right, as this shy young bride. And here I am driving, and taking him to the doctor. I am a totally changed person. He just could not accept that.

For the two participants who lived with their parents, co-residence was not an issue – both Chandana and Sudha stated that it provided them with considerable peace of mind and satisfaction. Their only concern, however, was the physical burden of household chores that their mothers had to bear. As both these women were engaged in paid employment, they expressed feelings of guilt and self-reproach over the fact that they were not able to help out more often at home. As Sudha expressed it:

I just feel so guilty, but I am doing all the outside work, grocery shopping, doctor appointments. My husband has been relocated to Alberta, so I have to manage everything here. Plus I'm working at an electronics store, so the hours are very odd.

Several participants reported that the birth of their first child was a significant turning point in their lives, not only because of the transition to parenting and motherhood, but also due to the “new-found respect” they had for their older relatives. They particularly respected and adhered to the childcare advice that their older relatives had to impart, particularly with regard to the care of infants within a culture-specific context. As their children grew older, however, these women increasingly relied on formal and institutionalized sources for guidance on child-rearing practices, such as their family doctor, or a teacher at their child's school. Sometimes, this resulted in conflict at home. The following excerpt provides an example of a situation where Anshu, who lives with her husband's parents, chose to heed her family doctor's advice on the health and nutrition of her daughter:

Anshu: I remember my daughter had just started pre-school, and she was always underweight, right. Anyway, I was always at work and she [her daughter] wouldn't eat; she would drink only milk all day. My mother-in-law would say that let it be, *sab theek ho jaayega* [it will work out eventually], but then one day, she [her daughter] was playing, and she just collapsed. We took her to Emergency, and her iron level was dangerously low. My GP [General Practitioner] said it's only because her diet is really poor. That day I decided that ok, I know my mother-in-law is a *dadi* [paternal grandmother] and she will never do anything to harm my daughter, but I am living in Canada, and I have to do what they do here. Interviewer: So how did your mother-in-law feel about this?

Anshu: No, my mother-in-law understood, like she was really scared, but my father-in-law, he just won't accept this, right. He would keep saying, India *mein aise nahin hota hai* [it does not happen this way in India]. Finally I told him, Papa, this is Canada, not India [laughs].

Despite these disagreements, all participants admitted that living with their older relatives was beneficial, particularly with regard to the transmission and maintenance of

cultural values and traditions. Smriti, for example, stated that it was important that her children get socialized to Indian culture: “We celebrate Diwali and Holi and Navratri, in the proper way, you know. My mother-in-law is very traditional, so she makes sure that the family does everything in the proper Indian way”. Also, all participants felt that living with their older relatives was a ‘good deed’ that would eventually be rewarded. “See, in Hinduism,” explained Joyita, “there is this idea of *karma* [fate]. Whatever you do comes back to you in this life. So if I have kids, they will also take care of me”.

Interestingly, when I questioned my participants about their caregiving activities, I was usually met with confused looks; “What do you mean by care?” was the standard question they asked. When I explained this in purely quantitative terms, for example, the number of hours spent in activities such as cooking or cleaning for their older relatives, driving them to medical appointments, etc., they were unable to provide an approximate number. ‘Care’, for the most part, was conceptualized within a culture-specific notion of emotional attachment, *dharma*, and *karma*. As Sudha emphatically stated, “I don’t measure my care”. Most participants admitted, however, that they often felt “overwhelmed” by having to constantly juggle the diverse needs of their children on the one hand, and those of their older relatives on the other. Chandana’s father, for example, likes to listen to the radio all day, and since he is slightly hard of hearing, he turns up the volume in order to be able to listen in. The noise from the radio, however, proves distracting for her children especially when they are trying to study for tests. Similarly, Anshu described how she found it stressful and difficult to reorganize her schedule on days when she had to drive her in-laws to the local Hindu temple or to medical appointments, and also take her children to their after-school extra-curricular activities.

With regard to long-term and end-of-life care, when I probed further and asked my participants about the provision of instrumental care to their frail older relatives when the need arose, most emphatically stated that they would quit their jobs and stay at home to look after their older relatives. “This is what we do, you know, the family looks after each other, so yes, there is no confusion on that”, said Anshu. In what was a paradoxical theme then, many participants admitted that they felt “really scared” about the future. Most admitted that it would be easier if they received culturally appropriate support services at home. While the actual provision of care, such as assistance with activities of daily living (ADL), did not appear to be an issue, many participants agreed that they would welcome ‘support for the caregiver’. As Seema, whose in-laws returned to India, described it:

My father-in-law had a stroke, and we got an idea of what the future will be like. My mother-in-law and I were doing everything for him, like bathing and toileting. One nurse would come, but see, she was a *gori* (White) lady, so my father-in-law was very uncomfortable with her. My husband was also having a very tough time in his job, so he was not helping. Then when he got better, my father-in-law got incontinence, right, so he would have to wear diapers. Then I had to go back to my job, and my mother-in-law, she is like this totally devoted wife, but it was too much for her. She was happy doing this, but it was too much strain on her. Finally, we decided it is better for them to live in India, so now we have hired two male nurses who live with them. Anyway, we are paying half of what we would have paid here, right?

Although Seema’s in-laws have moved back to India, she admitted that she is often overcome with guilt, to the extent that she and her husband are contemplating relocating to India in order to provide better care to their parents.

### **Links with the wider world**

With regard to connections with other South Asians, all participants agreed that they had strong social and emotional ties with other members of the community. Most

actively participated in events organized by the local Hindu temple. This was perceived as vital, both for cultural maintenance as well as to provide an opportunity to their older relatives to socialize with their peers. The community also served as an important source of social support. When Seema's father-in-law suffered a stroke, for example, her South Asian friend stepped in to take care of her children. Additionally, both Seema and her friend took turns in cooking and delivering home cooked food to her father-in-law who would not eat the food served at the hospital for religious reasons. A strong sense of community persisted in these women as an internalized value from their early lives in South Asia. In certain Sri Lankan communities, as Chandana informed me, this collectivistic spirit is so strong that an individual is legally mandated to sell his or her house only upon obtaining the signed consent of the neighbours. Similarly, when Gayatri and her husband decided to move to Canada, "every single member of our extended family came to the airport to see us off".

For the women in my study, the larger South Asian community also served as an important informal source of information, both with regard to the challenges associated with re-settlement, as well as the support services available for older adults. A family friend who had immigrated to Canada 30 years ago, for example, provided Anshu with details about the volunteer services available for older adults in the municipality she lived in. As she described it: "I would never have known that these services existed. Really, we *desis* always stick together [laughs]". Sudha, who had also turned to other South Asian immigrants with questions about settlement and caregiving, expressed regret at this lack of accessibility to relevant information: "I don't see where the problem is, I mean, at the very least, just drop-off brochures at the temple – best way to reach the largest group of

people. Like, I had no idea there is a daycare for Alzheimer's patients – one of my friends told me”.

All the women I interviewed kept in touch with their friends and family back in South Asia, connecting with them via social media, or long conversations over the telephone. For some participants, the perceived ‘successful’ life of their contemporaries in the home country was a source of envy. In the words of Anshu:

You will not believe what a great life they have! They [her friends] are all in top positions in their job, they are earning money like crazy, they live in these lovely houses, you know, complete with cook, and maid [laughs], and chauffeur-driven cars [laughs again]. You know how it is. And I feel like, great, I have become a maid in Canada. Sometimes, I just feel so jealous [laughs]. They always tell me, oh you are living in North America, wow, but I feel, ha! What do you know!

With regard to their interactions with non-South Asian or ‘mainstream’ Canadians, language, or more specifically, their ‘Indian accent’ was considered a major barrier to making intimate friends outside the South Asian community. As Joyita eloquently explained:

See, I went to an English-medium school in India. I speak English very fluently. But the problem is my accent. It's very, how should I put it, hard, you know? I just think I get very self-conscious. Like in the Hollywood movies, they show this Indian guy with a very thick accent, and that is funny, you know. So I cannot change that, but it makes me very conscious, I don't know, I become a little shy.

Also, most women felt that they often received “strange” looks from mainstream Canadians when they revealed that their older relatives co-resided with them. This cultural difference in attitudes towards older relatives was considered as a major barrier to making close friends outside the community. The following excerpt effectively highlights this conundrum:

Chandana: Let me give you one example. So my neighbour down the street, her son John [name changed] and my son are the same age. They went to the same preschool, the same elementary school. We would organize regular play dates for

them, they did ‘trick or treating’ together every year. Then when Mummy Papa [her parents] moved here, all of a sudden she [neighbour] stopped sending John over. Then slowly, she stopped dropping in. Now we barely say hello when we accidentally meet. I mean, I know exactly what happened [laughs].

Interviewer; So how did that make you feel?

Chandana: Naturally, I was upset. I think more than that, I was confused. Then I realized that she stopped meeting because of my parents. But I told Barun [her partner; name changed], you know what, it is not in their culture, and Canadians are really very beautiful, very nice people, but if you cannot respect my parents, I cannot respect you. As simple as that.

### **Human Agency and Personal Control: “*This is my house...*”**

The life course perspective recognizes that individuals participate in the construction of their life courses through the exercise of human agency, or the use of personal power to achieve their goals (Hutchison, 2010). While the women I interviewed were constrained to a large extent by culturally prescribed norms and values, as well as their historical circumstances, they nevertheless exercised their personal agency in directing the course of their lives. When her husband’s parents arrived in Canada, for example, Anshu unequivocally laid down certain ‘ground rules’: “This is *my* house, and if I didn’t tell them [her in-laws] the rules on Day 1, I felt like I would lose all control”. She, therefore, set up a self-sufficient room for her in-laws on the lower level of her house separate from the other bedrooms on the upper level, thus ensuring that her in-laws were comfortable, while at the same time, maintaining her own need for privacy and personal space. Similarly, during the initial days of their arrival in Canada, Aarti’s in-laws would often accompany her family on restaurant visits. Presented below is her description of the issues that emerged during such outings, and how she resolved them:

This whole eating out thing became very painful. We had a family ritual, right, that once a month, we will go to a nice Canadian restaurant, and just relax. My in-laws, when they moved here, also used to come with us. But there were so many problems. They are completely vegetarian, so we always ordered veggie stuff. But

that was also a problem. They would say that ok, this is veggie, but they must have used this oil to fry beef, so we cannot eat this. So, when this happened 4-5 times, the children were getting very frustrated, so I said, you know what, you stay at home because I will not disappoint the children for that. Now we go out, just the four of us, and my in-laws, they stay at home.

Similarly, Gayatri discovered that long distance calls and the subsequent telephone charges had skyrocketed ever since her husband's parents moved to Canada. This presented a unique conundrum – on the one hand, she did not want to sound disrespectful by asking her in-laws to stop making calls to their friends and relatives in India, and on the other, she did not relish the idea of paying exorbitant telephone bills. She was eventually able to resolve the issue by purchasing an electronic device for her father-in-law: “I have set up Skype on it. In India these days, everyone has Skype. So, both of them [her in-laws] happily talk to their relatives back home”. This demonstrates how technology may play a crucial role in maintaining connections with the country of origin for diasporic communities.

With regard to the exercise of agency outside the home, while they did not have many close friends beyond the South Asian community, these women used popular culture as a negotiating mechanism to forge connections outside their community, particularly at the workplace: “I think we had a lot of exposure to the West in India”, said Aarti, “we watched all these TV shows, you know, like *Friends* and all. I watch them here also, so that it becomes easy to have a conversation with *gore log* [mainstream Canadians]”. Many women also used South Asian food as a means to connect with non-South Asians. Most women stated that they were “surprised” by the popularity of South Asian cuisine in Canada, having grown up believing that North Americans could not digest spicy food. Gayatri, who often shared her Indian lunch with her colleagues at

work, said, “I had heard that they [mainstream Canadians] don’t like the smell of Indian food, but that is so wrong – my colleagues, they just love it!” Similarly, Aarti, who is an active member of the local Hindu temple, conducts periodic demonstrations of Indian cooking and dancing at her younger son’s elementary school: “The children love it, the teachers love it. I think it is a great way to sell our culture, you know”.

### **Heterogeneity and Variability: “*We are not Punjabis, please...*”**

The final domain of the life course perspective acknowledges that there may be significant variations in the life course pathways and lived experiences of individuals. It also recognizes that there is considerable heterogeneity even within seemingly homogenous groups (Hutchison, 2010). In my study, for example, all participants asserted their non-Sikh/Punjabi identities. Most participants felt that the Punjabi community in Canada had integrated successfully into the mainstream culture primarily due to their long history of immigration, dietary habits that closely aligned with those of mainstream Canadians, financial acumen, and political representation. The women I interviewed felt that they were often “clumped-together” with the Punjabi community, both at the level of everyday interactions, as well as at the broader, structural level of official programs and policies. Gayatri voiced these concerns thus:

I cannot tell you how frustrating it is. The Punjabis are at the top everywhere. First of all, so many Punjabis don’t consider themselves Indian, and I am not arguing against that. They have faced a lot, you know after Indira Gandhi was assassinated, but still, I mean our life is so different. We are 100 percent vegetarian. We speak Marathi [a Central Indian language] at home. Really, we are very, very simple people, not at all loud. But just by looking at me, people think I am Punjabi. When we first moved, I would go to some of these cultural events, you know. And first they were all very nice, very friendly. But as soon as they realized that I don’t speak a word, like a single word of Punjabi, they backed off. I just feel that we have no voice here because, you know, we don’t have the numbers. But one thing I want to say is we are not Punjabis, please [laughs].

Similarly, Joyita talked about how older Punjabi adults often utilized cultural symbols such as clothing as identifying markers, and did not mingle with non-Punjabi peers such as her parents-in-law: “You meet these really nice Punjabi ladies in the malls, and my mother-in-law used to try to talk to them, but my mother-in-law wears saris, right, and not salwars, so they would ignore her”.

This heterogeneity was also evident in the accounts of the two participants from Sri Lanka, Sudha and Chandana, who co-resided with their parents. Chandana, who was a lawyer in Sri Lanka, informed me that many communities in her home country, as well as some provinces in southern India, followed a matrilineal family structure, as opposed to the patrilineal arrangement of families in North India; it is, therefore, the duty of the daughter (and not the son) to provide care to her parents instead of her in-laws in their old age. The Tamils of Jaffna, for example, follow a particular property law called *Thesawalamai* under which parents enter into a legally binding contract with their daughter at the time of bequeathing their estate to her – the property belongs to the daughter and not the son, and the daughter promises to “never turn her parents out” of their home as long as they are alive. In this way, Chandana explained, Tamil parents ensure that they are looked after in their old age. Among the Hindus belonging to other parts of India, on the other hand, it is normative for a woman to abandon her parents’ household and wholeheartedly embrace her husband’s family as her own after her wedding (Choudhry, 2001). As Seema described it: “In our culture, you know, the father gives the *kanyadaan* [gift of the virgin] at the wedding. After that, the girl is a daughter-in-law, a wife, a mother, a sister-in-law, but never a daughter”.

To sum up, in this chapter, findings from qualitative interviews with eight recently-immigrated South Asian women who provide informal care to their older relatives were presented. The organizational framework of the life course perspective was used to situate the findings within five key domains: ‘the interplay of human lives and historical time’; ‘the timing of lives’; ‘linked lives and social ties with others’; ‘human agency and personal control’; and ‘heterogeneity or variability in life experiences’. In the following chapter, I discuss these results, and locate them within the broader literature by employing the theoretical lens of an integrated intersectionality and life course perspective.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

*They had stepped into a time machine named immigration, and when they fell from its ferocious spinning, it was into the alien habits of a world they had imagined imperfectly.*

Chitra Banerjee Divakurni (*The Names of Stars in Bengali*)

### **Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the key findings from the qualitative interviews with eight recently-landed immigrant women who co-reside with, and provide informal care to their older relatives, and discusses how the emergent themes can be used to answer the primary research question guiding this study: **How do recently-landed South Asian immigrant women negotiate providing care to older relatives at home within a culture-specific framework of filial obligation and duty on the one hand and in the context of the dynamic processes of acculturation to Canadian society on the other?** The findings from this study indicate that while the influence of cultural values was often moderated by the acculturation context, and occasionally involved more questioning or even disapproval of certain aspects of their South Asian culture, these women, were for the most part, deeply-rooted in traditional values.

Employing an integrated intersectionality and life course perspective, and situating my findings within the broader literature, I discuss how, for my participants, the challenges of settlement as recent immigrants were exacerbated by the complex and dynamic interplay of multigenerational living, their early-to mid-life socialization in the country of origin, and adherence to culturally-prescriptive, gendered ‘rules of conduct’. In particular, I discuss: (1) how the Hindu philosophical framework of *dharma* (moral

duty) and *karma* (fate) acted as a ‘buffering’ and coping mechanism for my participants both in the context of caregiving, as well as in negotiating the fluid and dynamic processes of acculturation, and (2) how the (re)construction of place and identity, and the creation of a ‘transnational self’ both facilitated as well as constrained their acculturative and caregiving experiences. I then discuss the complex subtleties of multigenerational living in South Asian immigrant households. Next, I briefly discuss the heterogeneity of the South Asian population and the unequivocal proclamation of their non-Sikh/non-Punjabi identity on the part of my participants. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for policy and practice, the limitations of this study, and possible directions for future research.

### **Hinduism as a Way of Life: *Dharma*, *Karma*, and the Migrant Hindu Woman**

Previous research has suggested that early-life experiences in the country of origin are often overlooked as an important marker in the simultaneous reproduction of inequities in the immigrant experience (Heyse, 2011; Weerasinghe and Numer, 2010). For the women in my study, their sense of self and identity, both as immigrants and as the informal caregivers of their older relatives, was couched in the religious and moral values they had been socialized into during their early lives in South Asia. Despite their ‘western’ education, and the exposure to ‘modern’ values of egalitarianism and notions of free will, these women displayed a deep appreciation for South Asian cultural values, particularly the Hindu philosophical concepts of *dharma* and *karma*, the sacramental aspect of marriage, respect for older adults, and their social duty towards the family and community.

*Dharma*, or moral duty, was an all-encompassing theme, inextricably woven into the narratives of my participants; according to them, it was their *dharma* to ‘obey’ their parents and marry a life partner chosen by the elders of the family; it was their *dharma* to quit paid employment and ‘look after’ the needs of their husband’s family in their country of origin; and it was their *dharma* to peacefully co-reside with, and provide care to their older relatives in the host country, i.e., Canada. Although migration had resulted in a new openness in communication, respect for each other’s space, and a more egalitarian view of marriage as far as spousal relations were concerned, the contribution of these women towards the maintenance of their families, and their labour, both outside as well as inside the home, went largely without recognition or recompense. As Somjee (1989) effectively encapsulates, “The Hindu woman has a very definite self-respect, but it stems from her identification of ‘self’ with ‘family’” (p. 34).

The findings from my research are corroborated by Uboroi (2006) who identified in her study the surprisingly robust institution of ‘arranged marriage’ in urban India, a practice that has persisted despite the expectation that the custom of arranged marriage would decline as India modernized and an ‘individualistic’ ethos took root. The author discovered that traditionally arranged marriages continued to account for an estimated 90 per cent of marriages in India, and are equally prevalent in both rural, as well as urban communities. She points out that the pervasiveness of marriage advertisements in Indian newspapers is testimony to the fact that arranged marriage as an institution continues to thrive in urban and contemporary India. The following excerpt from one such advertisement in a leading Indian newspaper amply demonstrates the so-called ‘winning’ qualities of the modern Indian bride:

Very highly placed Hindi speaking Kayastha parents are seeking a very beautiful and sweet-natured bride for their high achiever 27 year old son...[We] are seeking a girl who is similar and who can adapt to a cosmopolitan life in the upper echelons of society without relinquishing rock solid Indian values and traditions. The ideal girl will be from a very well educated, refined, gentle and loving upper or upper middle class family with strong family values and will be able to receive and give love and respect with grace over a lifetime (Uberoi, 2006, p. 182).

On a similar note, Langauni (2005) has pointed out that among the patrilineal communities of South Asia, it is the *dharma* of Hindu parents to see their daughter happily married off and after the wedding ceremony, “like a snake casting of its skin” (p. 90), the Hindu bride is expected to bury her past, and start her life with a new identity that is ascribed to her by her husband’s family. It is her moral duty, therefore, to sustain and nourish her ‘new family’ by effortlessly adapting to her fresh role as wife and daughter-in-law, and failure to do so invites social disapproval and dishonour. This internalization of cultural values acted as a coping mechanism for the participants in my study. As Anshu described it: “We have been told almost since the day we were born, to adapt, adapt, adapt. Perhaps this is why we are able to face hardships in life”. To illustrate this with an example, upon immigration, the women in my study discovered that they had to re-enter the workforce in order to financially support their families, resulting in significant ‘role-conflict’ and distress – on the one hand, they were duty-bound to provide care to the members of their family inside the home, and on the other, they had to face the challenges of a fast-paced and competitive world outside the home. While their re-entry into the labour force brought about feelings of empowerment, having to work at low-paying jobs despite their high professional credentials in order to acquire the so-called ‘Canadian work experience’ resulted in a situation fraught with uncertainty and feelings of powerlessness. The findings from this study indicate that given this perceived

disruption in their normative life course trajectory, the definition of *dharma* (moral duty) was expanded to incorporate the provision of financial security to the family; education and paid employment, despite being incommensurate with their academic and professional credentials, was regarded as a means to further the economic development and advancement of the family, and not as a route to establish their personal autonomy and independence. This is reflected in Thapan's (2007) study on the articulation of gender identity among educationally advantaged adolescent women in urban India. As a young high school student who aspired to be a neuroscientist told the author: "In my opinion the family should come before one's career. Therefore, before dedicating one's self to the career it would be wiser to think about the family first" (p. 38).

It comes as no surprise, then, as Salaff and Greve (2004) have also pointed out in their study on Chinese immigrant mothers in the USA, that on occasions when the health care needs of their relatives required attention, it was usually the women who took time-off from work, often compromising and sacrificing their own career trajectories to fulfill the demands of care provision at home. Comparing these findings with Spitzer et al.'s (2003) research on the caregiving experiences of immigrant South Asian and Chinese-Canadian women and their inability to negotiate cultural expectations about their involvement in caregiving work, this study highlights the fact that spirituality and internalized moral values may, in fact, be perceived as a buffer against the challenges of caregiving among immigrant women.

So pervasive is this internalized concept of moral duty, that for my participants, it was difficult to outline their caregiving practices quantitatively. 'Care' was inextricably intertwined with spirituality and religious beliefs, and tending to the physical, material,

and emotional needs of their older relatives was perceived as an act of reciprocity, or a ‘(re)payment of debt’ to aging parents, and the duty of all ‘devoted’ offspring. In the broader literature on caregiving among immigrant families, Acharya and Northcott (2007) have also pointed out that upholding the values of filial piety and obligation, espoused within the Hindu concept of *dharma*, is often perceived as an indicator of a person’s respect for their culture of origin. To this end, the findings from this study indicate that unlike Chappell and Penning’s (2009) differentiation between the objective (concrete aspects of caregiving) and subjective (emotional reactions of the care provider) burdens of caregiving, the lines between the two may be blurred in the cultural conceptualization of caregiving within immigrant South Asian families. Thus, for my participants, the provision of care, including assistance with activities of daily living, such as bathing and toileting as well as providing emotional support, did not appear to be an issue; they were willing to sacrifice their careers and “stay at home to look after” their older relatives should the need arise, as it was culturally expected of them.

Past research has also consistently suggested that among ethnocultural groups, this desire to ‘look after one’s own’ is based primarily on the cultural and religious norms surrounding filial obligation (Magaña and Ghosh, 2014; Lawrence et al., 2011; Mukadam et al. 2011; Mackenzie, 2006; Katbamna et al., 2004; Iliffe and Manthorpe, 2004). So ubiquitous are these cultural values, that in India, adult children are legally mandated to provide support and care to their aging parents under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007 (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2009). Despite the desire to conform to the culturally-prescribed ideal of the dutiful daughter/daughter-in-law, however, a singular lack of awareness of available supportive

services, reliance on informal sources such as the larger South Asian community for information, financial insecurity, and the challenges of settlement often precluded these women from providing optimum care to their older relatives, a finding that corresponds with Koehn's (2009) study on the barriers to access to care for ethnocultural minority older adults in Vancouver, British Columbia. The example of Seema, whose parents-in-law permanently returned to India when providing in-home care to her father-in-law became an insurmountable challenge due to financial and physical constraints, highlights the fact that while filial obligation, love for one's parents, and the culture-specific concept of *dharma* or moral duty may be cherished ideals for South Asian immigrant women, structural constraints, such as lack of culturally-appropriate support services, their visible minority status, complex re-credentialization processes, and low socio-economic status, may act as barriers in the provision of care to their older relatives. This underscores Funk and Kobayashi's (2009) argument that filial care work needs to be understood contextually as involving family and relationship dynamics, as well as broader, macro-level factors at the social, political, economic, and cultural levels.

Concomitant to the concept of *dharma* or moral duty is the Hindu notion of *karma*, or fate, which posits that the events of our lives are determined by our past actions (Hirayana, 1949). For the women in my study, the deterministic belief that the events of their lives were 'destined' and shaped by their antecedent actions, provided a vital coping mechanism in their migratory journey. As Chandana, who encountered unique challenges while attempting to settle in Canada philosophically stated: "I have seen so many hardships in life. Perhaps it is because I committed some sin in the past. *Bhagwan* (God) knows my capacity to bear pain, so He keeps giving me more". Laungani (2005) has

pointed out that this fatalistic outlook towards life engenders within the psyche, “a spirit of passive, if not resigned, acceptance of misfortunes, ranging from sudden deaths within the family, to glaring inequalities of caste and status, disease and illness, poverty and destitution, exploitation and prejudice” (p. 96). Similarly, some scholars (Sharma, 2000; Sinari, 1984; O’Flaherty, 1976) have asserted that the Hindu psyche itself is built around the highly deterministic notion of *karma*. This seems to imply that the Western concept of agency or ‘free will’ is not inherent in the doctrine of *karma*. The findings from my research, however, indicate that while current hardships were often put down to fate, the women in my study hoped to salvage their future by performing ‘good deeds’ in the present. For example, those participants who had children considered the provision of care to older adults as an effective moral means to secure the care and support of their own children in their old age. Despite this fatalistic approach towards life, the doctrine of *karma* allowed the women in my study to cope with the vicissitudes in their life trajectories with remarkable stoicism and composure, while at the same time, allowing them a degree of agency in the choices they made, both as immigrants and as the caregivers of their older relatives.

### **The ‘Transnational Self’: The (Re) Construction of Place and Identity**

The findings from this study indicate that participants possessed a sense of belonging and attachment that extended beyond Canadian borders, resulting in the creation of a unique transnational identity. Indeed, as Wong and Satzewich (2006) suggest, transnational practices, such as intimate social, political, and economic ties with the country of origin, are an enduring aspect of the lives of immigrants. In a testimony to persistent transnational ties, a recent report suggests that Canadians, mostly foreign-born,

remit close to \$24 billion overseas in one fiscal year (Macleans, 2013). The participants in my study made a conscious effort to stay connected with their extended family and network of friends through modern communication technologies such as Skype and social media interfaces such as Facebook. Long telephone conversations with close friends and family members living in the country of origin, in particular, were considered an important avenue of social support during times of distress. This feeling of ‘connectedness’, social solidarity, and strong bonds of kinship and community are a hallmark of collectivistic cultures (Sodhi, 2008; Triandis, 1994). Additionally, the interviews with the women in my study were consistently peppered with narratives of ‘home’, and a collectivist voice of ‘we’, ‘our’, and ‘us’, a finding that has also been noted by Willis (2012), in her comparative study on the caregiving practices of South Asian and White British women. With regard to the participants in this study, these strong feelings of nostalgia and emotional connectedness to one’s ‘roots’ could be attributed to their status as recently-landed, first generation immigrants.

Recent research (Wu, Schimmele, and Hu, 2012), however, suggests that among visible minority groups, while the sense of belonging, i.e., the degree to which immigrants feel that they belong, are welcomed, and included in Canadian society, is higher for South Asians, paradoxically, this ethnocultural group also reports high levels of feelings of discomfort (immigrants’ perception of being excluded or marginalized). The findings from my research indicate that while immigrant South Asian women may employ cultural artefacts and practices as negotiating mechanisms (not merely as a means to stay connected to their roots, but also as an important way to ‘fit-in’ with mainstream Canadian culture), the challenges of settlement and multigenerational living may act as a

barrier to their efforts. Indeed, as Sudha, when describing her constant struggle to fulfill the caregiving needs of her parents on the one hand, and the hectic demands of a low-paying customer service job on the other, stated: “This constant [going] back and forth, I feel like I don’t belong anywhere. Back home, [in Sri Lanka], I was teaching in a college. This [Canada] is still not home”. For Sudha and the other participants in the study, it was, therefore, borrowing terminology from social geography, within the socially constructed notions of time and space or ‘transnational circuits’, that they found a sense of self and identity.

Another key factor that facilitated the creation of a transnational identity in my participants was their education and exposure to consumer goods and artefacts of material culture from the West – the hallmark of a globalized world. As Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2006) have pointed out, India’s contemporary middle class constitutes a ‘transnational class’ who are bound with the ‘developed’ world through close cultural and economic transactions. Thapan (2007) suggests that education processes and media culture play an important role in the production of a global culture. A new global media, she states, “provides the symbols, myths, resources, ideas and images for the construction of both a common culture and individual identities” (p. 31). Coming from financially stable backgrounds, for the women in my study, the decision to immigrate to Canada was not based primarily upon economic concerns, but rather, was inspired by a desire to experience first-hand, “the beautiful weather”, the “picturesque beauty of Canada”, and the “joys of Western living”. Another key reason offered in their choice of Canada over for example, the USA as the receiving country, was the assumption that Canada had far ‘friendlier’ policies with regard to the sponsorship of older relatives, and their subsequent

care and support, in comparison to other immigrant-receiving countries. Both of these factors are particularly salient and solicit careful consideration: as these women encountered the harsh realities of settlement and changing sponsorship policies, and experienced marginalization, discrimination, and downward mobility, they often found themselves questioning their decision to leave behind their comfortable lives in their country of origin. Learning through their transnational circuits about the “successful” life course pathways of their peers in South Asia, particularly with regard to the pursuit of Western lifestyles and extended networks of social support, often led to feelings of regret and ambivalence among participants.

Past research (Sharma, 1995) has indicated that highly educated professional women from South Asia revel in the heavily industrialized market economy of Canada, often enjoying the comforts of labour-saving devices such as household gadgets like the microwave, dishwasher, etc. For the women in my study, however, these material comforts held no particular charm. The life course perspective, specifically with its emphasis on the interplay of human lives, can be used as an interpretative tool to explain this apparent contradiction: the liberalization of several economies in South Asia during the early-to-mid 1990’s led to the rise of conspicuous consumption with the creation of a high-salaried, professional middle-class. Indeed, Varma (1998, as cited in Chaudhuri and Majumdar, 2006) has argued that in India, the state, which had previously advocated an ethic of austerity, sanctions consumerism today, since the consumptive patterns of the middle class are regarded as a reliable index of progress. Employing the lens of intersectionality, then, for the contemporary urban, middle-class women in my study, financial insecurity, marginalization and perceived discrimination, disruption in their

normative life course trajectories, under-employment, lack of access to relevant information, the physical and economic burden of care provision to older relatives, and the complexities of multigenerational living, simultaneously came together to produce conditions of multiple jeopardy.

Another key finding of this study, which can be attributed to transnationalism, is related to English as a second language. While the prevalence of language barriers has been well documented in the literature on visible minority immigrants (Manthorpe et al.; 2009; Diwan, 2008; Katbamna et al., 2004), for the participants in my study, English language fluency was not an issue. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that among the urban middle-class in many countries in South Asia, English continues to regulate access to specialized professional training and is linked to economic benefits and the maintenance of cultural privilege (Roy, 1993, as cited in Chaudhuri and Majumdar, 2006). What is significant, however, is that participants reported feeling excluded and marginalized due to their “heavily accented English”, as they had often witnessed it being caricatured in popular Western culture. This finding adds another dimension to the lived experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrants. Further research needs to be undertaken to explore the significance of this finding, and its possible role in the reproduction of inequalities in the settlement experiences of highly skilled immigrants to Canada who speak English as a second language. In one Canadian study, for example, Banerjee (2008) has pointed out that education may increase perceptions of discrimination among highly educated new immigrants, perhaps because they may have high expectations for equitable treatment in the workplace.

The above discussion highlighted how the culture-specific values of *dharma* (moral duty) and *karma* (fate) may operate as coping mechanisms in the context of caregiving as well as in processes of settlement, and the ways in which the creation of a ‘transnational self’ could facilitate as well as inhibit the acculturative and caregiving experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrant women. Next, I outline the intricacies of multigenerational living by framing my argument within the context of the transnational identities of my participants and the religious and moral values they had internalized during their early-to-mid-life stages in their countries of origin.

### **The Complex Dynamics of Multigenerational Living**

One of the sub-questions guiding this research was related to the Western notion of privacy: ‘Given the rise in multigenerational households, how do recently-arrived South-Asian caregivers reconcile provisioning care in traditionally-oriented households with their need for privacy and personal space?’ The findings from this study indicate that perceptions around privacy and personal space differed based upon socio-economic, cultural, and individual factors. For a few participants, their *dharma* dictated that they ensure the comfort and well being of their older relatives to the utmost. For example, Anshu’s family sold their home and bought a considerably more expensive house in a South Asian neighbourhood when her parents-in-law moved to Canada, since (1) the old house had too many stairs which her arthritic mother-in-law would not be able to negotiate, and (2) her father-in-law would be able to socialize with other older adults of his age. An unfortunate consequence of this, however, was that Anshu had to take up an evening job in order to offset the increased monthly mortgage payments, which had placed her family under significant economic hardship.

On the contrary, the notion of privacy and personal space was not an issue for those women who co-resided with their parents, to the extent that the close physical proximity of their parents fostered a sense of safety and security based upon a lifelong relationship of faith and trust. For a few others who valued their privacy, efforts were made to comfortably ‘settle’ their older relatives in a separate section of the house. For Seema, who had been brought up in a two-bedroom apartment in an upscale neighborhood in India, the sharing of space was hardly an issue: “Privacy is all about putting up walls. I don’t believe in it”. These accounts indicate that the dynamics of multigenerational living, particularly with regard to decisions around privacy and personal space in diasporic South Asian households, may be subjectively experienced and negotiated.

The findings from this study also indicate that co-residence with older relatives was regarded as beneficial for the transmission and maintenance of cultural values. Past research (Dasgupta, 2007; Spitzer et al., 2003) has suggested that within immigrant families, women typically shoulder the responsibility of inculcating and fostering traditional values in their offspring. The women I interviewed revealed that being unable to successfully juggle the demands of the workplace and their caregiving duties, they passed on this additional responsibility of cultural transmission to their older relatives. Additionally, their older relatives, usually their mothers/mothers-in-law, provided essential support at home, particularly with regard to childcare, cooking, and cleaning. Leung and MacDonald (2007) have highlighted this aspect of the benefits of multigenerational living in their study on immigrant Chinese women in Toronto. “Caregiving and care receiving experiences”, state the authors, “can involve a high level of reciprocity, particularly if the elderly parents are able and healthy” (p.19). Indeed, as

Keefe and Fancey (2002) have pointed out, the caregiving literature tends to focus more on the care provided to older adults than on the support older adults provide to their families. In fact, contrary to Koehn's (2009) study on the intricate and delicate complexities of the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship within immigrant families, the findings from this study indicate that there was a strong element of reciprocity, protectiveness and affection attached to this relationship – while the mothers-in-law assisted with domestic chores, the daughters-in-law provided essential emotional support to them, at times even standing up for their mothers-in-law in domestic arguments. This feeling of solidarity could be attributed to their exposure to Westernized ideals of feminism and emancipation of women. Further research should be undertaken to explore the implications of this interesting finding.

While their relationship with their mothers-in-law was by and large harmonious for the women in my study, it was their precarious relationship with their fathers-in-law that warrants attention. While the internalized values of *dharma*, *karma*, and respect for elders precluded them from getting involved in open arguments with their older male relatives, deep feelings of resentment at outright displays of patriarchy simmered within my participants. As Blair (2012) has also pointed out, these demonstrations of patriarchy could be attributed to the fact that from the perspective of the fathers-in-law, migration to Canada may have resulted in a loss of role and status within the family, particularly in the context of having to depend on their daughters-in-law for their essential needs. To consider Seema's example once again, the complexities of intergenerational relationships, along with broader structural factors such as lack of culturally congruent care, therefore, may result in a breakdown of the sponsorship relationship.

The above discussion suggests that while their internalized traditional and religious values may act as a coping mechanism for urban, highly educated recently-immigrated South Asian women, their 'globalized' and transnational identities may produce a certain ambivalence and uncertainty with regard to their identities and sense of self. In fact, these findings indicate that like second-generation South Asians who find themselves frequently oscillating between elements of traditional thinking as well as aspects of modernity (Sodhi, 2008; Segal, 1998), highly educated first-generation South Asian women from urban middle-class backgrounds may also experience similar feelings of ambivalence and confusion.

### **A Heterogeneous South Asian Population**

A discussion on the diasporic South Asian population would be incomplete without an acknowledgement of its heterogeneity. Indeed, past research has consistently pointed out the need to recognize the diversity inherent within the South Asian diasporic population. Shakir (1995), for example, has reminded us: "'South Asianness', is a political expression that should be used not to homogenize the diversity and heterogeneity of South Asians but rather to construct an identity that should be meaningful within the Canadian context" (p. 6). This sentiment is echoed by Koehn and her colleagues (2013) who state that the Canadian identity and the lived experiences of ethnic immigrant populations is varied and largely dependent on a host of factors: the country of origin (there are significant cultural, political and economic differences between India and Sri Lanka, for example), time since migration, whether they are Canadian-born or immigrated later in life, the immigration category they arrived under (for instance, under the Family Class or as Federal Skilled Workers), and so on.

Similarly, Patel (2006) has highlighted the fact that broad labels, such as “South Asian”, “East Indian”, or “Indo-Canadian” mask the reality of the diverse ethno-cultural, socio-economic, and other differences both within and between the countries of South Asia as well as the people who live within their borders. Likewise, for the women in my study, it was essential to be recognized as non-Sikh/non-Punjabi, as they were frustrated by a general tendency to amalgamate their distinct ethnocultural identity with that of the dominant Sikh/Punjabi groups, both at the micro-level of everyday interactions, as well as at the broader, macro-level of public policies. As Gayatri expressed: “It is easier for the Punjabis in Canada. Everyone *knows* them!”

These findings suggest that marginalization, perceptions of discrimination and processes of ‘othering’ may occur, not only *between* diverse cultural groups, but also *within* ethnocultural groups. Similarly, as this study has reported, there are considerable differences between the predominant patrilineal family forms of South Asia, and the matrilineal family arrangements prevalent in many communities of Southern India and among the Tamils of Sri Lanka, where daughters may be legally mandated to provide care to their aging parents. This finding adds yet another layer of complexity to the diverse lived experiences of immigrant South Asians, and further research needs to be undertaken to understand the unique settlement and caregiving challenges of this group of immigrants.

In sum, the findings from this research suggest that acculturation to Canadian society is a fluid and dynamic process of relentless negotiation for recently-immigrated South Asian women who co-reside with, and provide informal care to their older relatives, and, therefore, needs to be understood contextually as involving a complex

interplay of biographical, historical, cultural, structural, and individual factors. In the following section, I discuss the implications of these findings, particularly with regard to the development of policies to address the needs of this vulnerable immigrant group.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

As an immigrant-receiving country, Canada needs university-educated and highly skilled immigrants to contribute to the growth of its economy. In fact, Canada's 'point-system' of immigration favours highly qualified applicants. Recent research, however, suggests that although Canada has done a fairly good job of attracting university-educated immigrants in the past, over the previous several years, the economic outcomes of educated new immigrants with regard to the relative wage gap and other challenges of settlement, have fared poorly in comparison to a similar immigrant-receiving country, the USA (Statistics Canada, 2011). These findings are reflected in my research, which indicates that complex processes of re-credentialization, under-employment, discrimination, downward mobility, and financial insecurity may discourage university-educated individuals from non-European countries from immigrating to Canada. These challenges are further exacerbated for immigrant South Asian women who must simultaneously juggle the demands of settlement with the challenges of providing care to their older relatives at home. Although their older (mainly female) relatives may provide some support at home, such as assistance with childcare and domestic chores, previous research has indicated that multigenerational living is reciprocal and beneficial only when older relatives are healthy and able (Leung and McDonald, 2007).

The findings from this study suggest that these women may employ spirituality, religious beliefs, and the culture-specific notions of *dharma* and *karma* as coping

mechanisms to offset the unique challenges they encounter. However, there is also a strong possibility that the stoicism and resilience of these women may render their needs invisible in the broader domain of policy and practice. For example, some of the tasks categorized as 'eldercare' on the 2007 General Social Survey (GSS) include meal preparation, house-cleaning, laundry, sewing, assistance with personal care such as bathing, teeth-bushing, and so on (Statistics Canada, 2008). This quantification of care work may result in an under-representation of the unique needs of immigrant South Asian caregivers, who may conceptualize the provision of care to their older relatives in more 'fluid' and less-structured terms, thus leaving them financially disadvantaged and deprived from accessing essential support services. In addition, most participants indicated that given the lack of culturally congruent support services in Canada, they would quit the paid workforce to provide care to their older relatives should the need arise.

This attitude is problematic on three levels: (1) it would result in a significant loss to the Canadian economy; (2) it would hinder the advancement and economic development of their families, further perpetuating the cycle of disadvantage; and (3) loss of income may not even be an option for those women who are severely socio-economically disadvantaged in the first place, possibly leading to a breakdown of the sponsorship relationship. It is of vital importance, then, to recognize that while the traditional values around filial obligation may guide the caregiving decisions of immigrant South Asian women, it is often not cultural factors, but rather, more pragmatic, structural issues such as lack of relevant information and support services, that may create conditions of 'multiple jeopardy' and disadvantage among recently-landed

South Asian caregivers. This finding underscores the need to develop channels of information dissemination that are specifically tailored to the needs of this vulnerable group. For example, the local Hindu temple could act as a site for education seminars, particularly with regard to the availability and utilization of services, and training skills in role management, resource planning, and time management (Gupta and Pillai, 2002). Similarly, as one participant in this study creatively suggested, the local recreation/community centre, by holding periodic “South Asian seniors’ socials”, could serve as a cost-effective avenue for (1) the informal dissemination of information, and (2) meeting the socialization needs of South Asian older adults.

In order to fully appreciate the unique challenges that recently immigrated South Asian caregivers encounter, this study makes an important contribution by contextualizing their migratory and caregiving experiences based upon biographical, historical, structural and cultural factors. For example, modernization and urbanization have led to the rise of the nuclear family in South Asia, culminating in an erosion of extensive social support networks of the past (Allendorf, 2013). These factors increase the likelihood that South Asian parents will co-reside with their children, requiring an increase in the sponsorship of older parents under the Family Class category. Further, with longer life expectancies, these older adults are likely to cohabit with or continue to be dependent on their children for extended periods of time, thereby increasing the burden of physical, emotional and economic hardship on the younger generation (Gulati and Rajan, 1999). As Gee and Mitchell (2003) have predicted, multigenerational living in Canada will continue to rise, thereby providing increased opportunities for daily contact and socialization among family members (Mitchell, 2007).

Moreover, the rise of an affluent middle-class in South Asia, and the easy availability of the material artefacts of Western culture may render the prospect of immigration less exciting for highly skilled professionals. Indeed, as Schwartz et al. (2010) have pointed out, for voluntary migrants (those immigrants who leave the country of origin by choice in search of employment, marriage, or to re-unite with previously-immigrated relatives), migration occurs because of the confluence of two factors: (1) when the “push” (the desire to leave the country of origin) factor is stronger than the “pull” (the desire to stay there) factor, and (2) when the receiving country is in need of the type and class of labour that migrants have to offer. Given the industrialization and urbanization in South Asia, the increase in disposable incomes, and the general improvement in living conditions, it is likely that migration may no longer be an appealing option for highly educated South Asians. To put it simply, these are cultural and socio-economic shifts that Canadian policymakers may have to accept, given the fact that Canada needs highly qualified, professional immigrants. Sponsorship and immigration policies, therefore, need to acknowledge the changing socio-economic realities of the ‘developing’ world. Further, if economic and social outcomes are poorer in Canada as compared to other major immigrant-receiving countries such as the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand, this could adversely affect the willingness of highly skilled workers to move to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011).

### **Limitations of the Study**

In interpreting the findings from this study, the following limitations must be taken into consideration. First, this research was limited to a purposive sample of eight recently-immigrated South Asian women who co-reside with and provide informal care

to their older relatives at home in Canada. The participants in this study were not randomly recruited, and, therefore, cannot be representative of the South Asian immigrant population in Canada. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have pointed out, this ‘trade-off’ affords the researcher the advantages of acquiring deep and detailed understanding of social processes (Cuadrez and Uttal, 1999). The in-depth nature of the interviews I conducted with my participants, therefore, offer in-depth insights into the experiences of a group of recently-landed South Asian female caregivers.

Second, in hindsight, I also recognize that it would have been worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study of the lived experiences of my participants, for example, a comparative exploration of their lives as new immigrants and later, after they were ‘well-settled’ in Canada. The time constraints – expectation of a two-year completion time for the MA program – associated with this thesis, however, necessitated that the research be limited to a cross-sectional study.

Third, concomitant with the previous limitation, this research would have benefited from interviews with both members of the ‘dyads’, that is, with the care providers and care recipients, to better understand the unique challenges of multigenerational living. Future research should look into the dynamics of intergenerational relations that have been highlighted in this study, for example, the evolving mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships in diasporic South Asian communities.

Finally, the sample was not limited to participants with children in order to increase the sample size. Past research has suggested that for those adults who were simultaneously providing support to dependent children and aging parents, the provision of care was viewed as both a joy and a burden due to the element of reciprocity attached

to co-residence (Igarashi et al., 2007). While this study includes some participants with children, it would be worthwhile to explore in-depth, the lived experiences of the so-called ‘sandwich generation’ in order to acquire deeper insight into the unique challenges that ‘middle-generation’ South Asian immigrants may face in the process of care provision.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study employed an integrated intersectionality and life course theoretical perspective to explore the lived experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrant caregivers. The findings from this research indicate that in order to acquire deeper insight into the challenges of acculturation and care provision, migratory and caregiving experiences must be understood as being shaped by diverse individual, biographical, historical, structural and cultural factors. Such an integrated theoretical perspective would be imminently useful in health and social care research. For example, it could be effectively used to understand the unique challenges faced by women who immigrate later in life, such as the mothers/mother-in-law in this study. An integrated life course and intersectionality perspective could be used to explore the extent to which their present experiences of ‘settling-down’ in an unfamiliar country, access to support services, and their familial relationships are shaped by their early-to-mid-life trajectories in their countries of origin. A similar approach could be employed to explore the lived experiences of older immigrant men, and the degree to which their internalized perceptions on the culturally prevalent patrilocal structure of the family may impact their receptivity and/or resistance to the provision of care as ‘dependent immigrants’.

Another important finding of this study relates to the use of English as a second language. While English-language fluency was not an issue for the participants in this study, they nevertheless felt hesitant and self-conscious in their interactions with ‘mainstream’ Canadians due to the “heavily accented” English that they spoke. Future research could explore the significance of this finding, particularly with regard to its role in perceptions of discrimination and marginalization among university-educated immigrants who speak English as a second language. More precisely, it would be worthwhile to conduct a comparative study of highly skilled European and non-European immigrants in order to determine if ethnicity and visible minority status interact with linguistic ability to produce conditions of marginalization, particularly in the workplace.

## **Conclusions**

Each year, several thousand individuals from all over the world immigrate to Canada in anticipation of a better life. The multicultural mosaic that defines Canadian society encompasses a plurality of people and groups from diverse ethnocultural origins. South Asian immigrants, in particular, represent the fastest growing ethnocultural population in Canada. Despite this demographic trend, there is a paucity of literature on the unique lived experiences of this immigrant group. The purpose of this thesis was to explore the lived experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrant women who co-reside with and provide informal care to their older relatives at home. In order to better understand the unique challenges that these women may face, both in the process of settlement and acculturating to Canadian society, as well as in the provision of care to their older relatives, I conducted in-depth, qualitative interviews with eight adult South Asian immigrant women between September and December 2013. All women had

immigrated to Canada within the previous 10 years, and were university-educated, highly skilled professionals. Building on the findings from this important study and employing an integrated life course and intersectionality framework, I explored the feminization of care work in immigrant families, and the complexities inherent in intergenerational relationships within the diasporic South Asian community. I highlighted the fact that in order to fully appreciate the complexities of settlement and care provision, it is important to contextualize migratory and caregiving experiences based on biographical, historical, structural and cultural factors.

The findings from this study indicate that the culture-specific values of filial obligation, *dharma* (moral duty) and *karma* (fate) may operate as coping mechanisms in the context of caregiving as well as in processes of settlement. At the same time, the creation of a ‘transnational self’ could facilitate as well as constrain the acculturative and caregiving experiences of recently-landed South Asian immigrant women. I then discussed how this use of culture-specific values as coping mechanisms might render these women invisible in the broader arenas of policy and practice. In particular, I discussed the ways in which structural barriers and the multiple intersections among various axes of inequality are represented in the subjective lived experiences of these immigrant women who provide care to their older relatives at home. These key findings point to the need for the construction of timely and relevant policies in the health and social care domains. Such policies should pay attention to the unique acculturative and caregiving needs of this vulnerable group if they are to support highly skilled immigrants, such as the women and their families in this study, in creating a sense of “home” in Canada. The contribution of this group of immigrants as taxpayers and thereby, towards

creating a strong and vibrant Canadian economy cannot be discounted. Indeed, as a recent international study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states, in most countries, far from being a ‘burden’ on the system, migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions, than they receive in individual benefits (Financial Post, 2014).

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## Appendix A: Script (Email)

Dear {name of email recipient},

I am a Master's student at the University of Victoria who, in partial fulfillment of her Master's degree in Sociology, is conducting a study on South Asian immigrant women who co-reside with their older relatives, such as parents, grandparents etc. I am writing this to request you, as a member of [name of organization] to refer my project to members of the broader South Asian community for possible participation in a 60- 90 minute, informal interview. The interviews will be digitally recorded. The title of my project is- '**Negotiating Tricky Territories: Filial obligation, caregiving experiences and processes of acculturation in recently landed South Asian immigrant women**'. This project has received approval from the Human Research and Ethics Board at the University of Victoria. South Asian women who meet the following selection criteria may be eligible:

- They were born and raised in South Asia (including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Iran, Maldives)
- They immigrated to Canada as adults (over the age of 19) approximately within the past ten years under either the 'Economic Class' or 'Family Class' immigrant category
- Are either citizens or permanent residents of Canada
- They co- reside with their older relatives (parents, grandparents, etc.)

The following individuals are **not** eligible:

- Men
- Persons under the age of 19
- Those who are temporary residents
- Those who arrived in Canada as Refugees

My research will examine the specific challenges, strategies and coping mechanisms employed by recently- landed South Asian immigrant women as they settle down in an unfamiliar land and at the same time, take care of their older relatives at home. The interview will provide an opportunity to the participants to talk about their experiences both as new immigrants in Canada, and as informal caregivers to older relatives. The results from this study will add to the current knowledge surrounding the lived experiences of immigrant South Asian women and provide a better understanding of their everyday lives. The results from this study may have important implications with regard to the kind of support services that are needed for the well being of this population group.

Attached to this email is a letter of invitation to participate in this study, which you can share with community members by word of mouth or electronically. Interested individuals can contact me directly via email or telephone, the details of which are provided in the attached letter. Please note that by assisting in the recruitment for this study you are not involved in this research project beyond helping the researcher in broadcasting information about this study to the South Asian community. Please be assured that since the identity of participants will not be disclosed, any relationship you have with them will not be affected in any way.

I would also like your permission to post flyers about this study in designated areas of your organization, such as bulletin boards etc. This will facilitate recruitment and inform the broader South Asian community about the details of this study.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me via email ([mushirak@uvic.ca](mailto:mushirak@uvic.ca)) or telephone (250-686-3974) if you need further information on this study, and I will gladly try to answer your questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mushira Khan

(Department of Sociology, University of Victoria)

## Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Hello,

I am a Master's student at the University of Victoria (Sociology) who, as part of her MA thesis, is conducting a study on the lives of South Asian immigrant women who were born and raised in South Asia, immigrated to Canada as adults (within the past 15 years) and who live with their older relatives in the same household. The title for this project is- '**Negotiating Tricky Territories: Filial obligation, caregiving experiences and processes of acculturation in recently landed South Asian immigrant women**'. In order to participate in this study, you need to be an adult (over the age of 19) South Asian immigrant woman who is a Permanent Resident or citizen of Canada, have immigrated to Canada within the last ten years as an Economic Immigrant or under the Family Class, and live with your older relatives in the same household. This project has received ethics approval from the Human Research and Ethics Board at the University of Victoria.

I would really appreciate the opportunity to sit down and talk to you about your life experiences. I would like to talk to you about 1) your experiences of living with an older relative, and 2) your experiences as an immigrant in Canada. You can choose the time and place that suits you best for the interview. Please note that there might be some limits to privacy if the interview takes place at your residence and there are other members of the household present during that time. Please let me know if you have any concerns in this regard. The interview will take up approximately 60- 90 minutes of your time. Your name and other identifying details will not be disclosed in the study. I will give you a written consent form, which will provide you with other relevant information

about this study. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to talk about your experiences both as an immigrant woman in Canada, and as a care provider of your older relatives. Results from this study will add to the current knowledge surrounding the everyday, lived experiences of immigrant South Asians and provide a better understanding of their lives. The results from this study may have important implications with regard to determining the kind of support services that are needed in order to ensure the well being of this population group. This will be a great opportunity for you to tell your life- story and share your unique experiences as an immigrant in Canada.

Please note that the organizations assisting in the recruitment for this study are not involved in this research project beyond helping the researcher in broadcasting information about this study to the South Asian community. Whether you choose to participate or not, any services or relationships that you have with these organizations will not be affected in any way. Information on whether you participated or not in this study will not be shared with these organizations/individuals.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me via email ([mushirak@uvic.ca](mailto:mushirak@uvic.ca)) or telephone (250-686-3974) if you need further information on this study, and I will gladly try to answer your questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Mushira Khan  
(Department of Sociology, University of Victoria)

## Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

### [Department of Sociology, University of Victoria]

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*This project has received Ethics approval from the Human Research and Ethics Board at the University of Victoria*

**Project Title:** Negotiating Territories: Filial obligation, caregiving experiences and processes of acculturation in recently landed South Asian Immigrant Women.

**Researcher(s):** Mushira Khan, Master's Student, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria.  
Telephone: 250 686 3974.  
Email: mushirak@uvic.ca

**Supervisor:** Dr. Karen Kobayashi  
Telephone: 250-721-7572.  
Email: kmkobay@uvic.ca

#### **Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:**

This exploratory study seeks to understand the everyday, lived experiences of recently- landed South Asian immigrant women who co- reside with their older relatives. It will examine the ways in which these women navigate two different cultural worlds– the realms of caregiving and multigenerational living at home, and processes of settlement in a ‘foreign’ land outside the home.

The central research question guiding this study is: **How do recently- landed South Asian adult women negotiate providing care to older relatives at home within a culture-specific framework of filial obligation and duty on the one hand and in the context of the dynamic processes of acculturation to Canadian society on the other?**

#### **This Research is Important because:**

Very little is known about the lived experiences of recently- landed adult South Asian immigrant women in Canada who provide informal care to their older relatives at home. This study will provide a better understanding of the complexities of informal caregiving within immigrant South Asian families, as well as provide insight into the specific strategies, coping mechanisms and challenges that immigrant South Asian women encounter in the settlement process, which may have important implications in terms of the well-being of this group of immigrants and for determining the kind of services needed to support them.

#### **Participation:**

- You have been selected to participate based upon your identification as an adult South Asian immigrant woman who has moved to Canada within the past 10 years under either the Economic or Family class of immigration, and who is currently co- residing with her older relatives from South Asia.
- Participation in this project is entirely voluntary.

- The organizations assisting in the recruitment for this study are not involved in this research project beyond helping the researcher in broadcasting information about this study to the South Asian community and whether you choose to participate or not, any services or relationships that you have with these organizations will not be affected in any way. Information on whether you participated or not in this study will not be shared with these organizations.

#### **Procedures:**

- Semi- structured interview with open- ended questions.
- Duration: Approximately 60-90 minutes.
- Location: At a place of your choice.
- The interviews will be digitally recorded.
- The interviews will be conducted in English, but can be translated into Hindi/Urdu/Punjabi/Bengali by the researcher should you prefer.
- You have the right to ask any question/ raise any concern at any time before, during or after the interview.
- You will be asked questions about your experiences as an immigrant in Canada, your childhood in South Asia, your everyday life in Canada (for instance, your circle of friends, the nature of household chores, your experiences at the workplace, if applicable etc.), your experiences (for instance, the perceived advantages and disadvantages) of living with your older relatives, the nature of ‘carework’ that you engage in etc.
- You will be asked about times when you felt happy, and times when you felt a little sad and embarrassed.

#### **Benefits:**

- The findings from this study will provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of caregiving to older adults within South Asian immigrant families. It will provide a platform to participants to narrate their experiences as caregivers of older parents and as immigrant women in a 'foreign' land. This study may have important implications in terms of well being of this group of immigrant women and for determining the kind of services needed to support them.

#### **Risks:**

- There are no significant risks to you by participating in this research. You may experience some emotional discomfort, such as nostalgia or embarrassment when narrating your experiences as a caregiver of older parents or during the process of migration and settlement. You have the right to not answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and the researcher will move on to the next question. You will not be judged by your response. You do not need to provide any explanation should you want to pause terminate the interview or choose not to answer a particular question. The interview will be paused/ terminated if you feel that you do not want to continue.
- **Risk(s) will be addressed by:** Contacting a friend or relative should you feel the need.

#### **Researcher’s Relationship with Participants:** The researcher may have a relationship to you as Participant/ Co- participant.

- To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken :( 1) I will not offer any incentives/compensation in lieu of the interview. (2) You can stop the interview at any time and leave at any point without explanation or consequence.

**Withdrawal of Participation:**

- You may withdraw at any time, without explanation or consequence.
- If you do end the interview or withdraw from the project you can decide at that time if the researcher can use any of the information you have provided. If you do not want me to use the interview material I will destroy the interview notes and recordings.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:**

- To protect your identity to the greatest extent possible, a substitute name will be used for your real name on all the written or electronic materials and any details that might identify you in the final report will be changed. In the event that the interview takes place at your residence, there are some limits to confidentiality if there are other members of your household present in the house during the interview. Apart from this, confidentiality will be protected by storing all information/relevant data in a secured location, within lock and key or a password-protected file on the researcher's personal computer. The researcher will have sole access to the data. All data will be destroyed once the researcher has completed all requirements for the fulfillment of her Master's degree (approximately September 2014). Electronic files will be deleted from the researcher's computer; all paper copies of research related material (such as typed transcripts) will be destroyed using a paper shredder.

**Research Results will [may] be Used/Disseminated in the Following Ways:**

- Included in the researcher's Master of Arts thesis.
- For publication.
- For presentation at scholarly meetings.

**Questions or Concerns:**

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- Contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria, (250) 472-4545  
[ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)

**Consent**

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

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*Name of Participant*

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*Signature*

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*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

**Permission to Use Data**

*Please complete this section only in the event that you choose to withdraw from the study:*

I allow my collected data to be used for this study

I do not allow my collected data to be used for this study

---

*Name of Participant*

---

*Signature*

---

*Date*

## Appendix D: Recruitment Poster

Namaste! 

- Are you an immigrant woman from South Asia?
- Are you a Permanent Resident or Citizen of Canada?
- Did you immigrate under the Economic or Family Class immigration categories?
- Have you lived in Canada for less than 15 years?
- Do your older relatives (parents, parents-in-law, grandparents etc. over the age of 65) live with you in the same house?

If you answered 'yes' to these questions, you have an exciting opportunity to talk about your experiences as an immigrant in Canada!

My name is Mushira Khan, a Master's student at the University of Victoria (Sociology) who, as part of her MA thesis, is conducting a study on the lives of South Asian immigrant women who were born and raised in South Asia, immigrated to Canada as adults (within the past 15 years) and who live with their older relatives in the same household. The title for this project is- **' Negotiating Tricky Territories: Filial obligation, caregiving experiences and processes of acculturation in recently landed South Asian immigrant women'**.

I would like to talk to you about 1) your experiences of living with an older relative, and 2) your experiences as an immigrant in Canada. You can choose the time and place that suits you best for the interview. The interview will take up approximately 60- 90 minutes of your time and will be digitally recorded. Your name and other identifying details will not be disclosed in the study. I will give you a written consent form, which will provide you with other relevant information about this study. Results from this study will add to the current knowledge surrounding the everyday, lived experiences of immigrant South Asians and provide a better understanding of their lives. This will be a great opportunity for you to tell your life- story

and share your unique experiences as an immigrant in Canada. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me via email (**mushirak@uvic.ca**) or telephone (**250-686-3974**) if you need further information on this study, or wish to participate and I will gladly try to answer your questions.

## Appendix E: Tentative Interview Guide

### Suite # 1: Biographical information

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself, for instance, your country of origin, your age, the number of members in your immediate family, their ages, when did you immigrate to Canada, etc.?
- What immigrant category did you arrive under?
- Can you tell me about your life in [country of origin]?
- Can you tell me about your education in [country of origin]?
- Can you tell me a bit more about your childhood in [country of origin]?
- Can you describe to me some of the reasons why you moved to Canada?
- Can you tell me a bit about your family in Canada? For example, who lives with you in your home, how many people are there in your family etc?
- Can you tell me a bit about the languages you speak most often at home and outside?
- Can you tell me a bit about your residence in Canada, for instance, do you rent or own your house? How is it, if at all, different from your residence in [country of origin]. What is the neighborhood you live in Canada like? What aspect do you like about where you live and why? What aspect do you not like so much and why?
- Can you tell me about your place of work outside the home (if participant is engaged in paid employment) Introduce probes here.
- How would you describe your overall health? Do you have any concerns about your health?

### Suite # 2: On Culture

- What does culture mean to you and how would you define it?
- How would you define the culture of [country of origin]?
- What are some aspects, if any, that you like about the culture of [country of origin] (probe). Can you provide a particular example or anecdote?
- What are some aspects, if any, that you dislike about the culture of [country of origin] (probe). Can you provide a particular example or anecdote?
- How would you define Canadian culture?
- What are some aspects, if any, that you like about the culture of Canada? Can you provide a particular example or anecdote?
- What are some aspects, if any, that you dislike about the culture of Canada? Can you provide a particular example or anecdote?

- Can you tell me about some of the advantages or disadvantages of living in Canada?
- As a woman, what do you think are some of the advantages or disadvantages of living in Canada as compared to [country of origin]?
- Can you say a bit about the immigration experience as a whole?
- How do you think, if at all, your life has changed since you moved to Canada? (probe).
- Can you tell me a bit about what you like to do in your leisure time?
- Do you get the chance to interact, on a regular basis, with individuals outside your community/ ethnic group? How would you describe those interactions? Can you think of a specific incident /anecdote to describe these interactions?
- Can you tell me about your circle of friends in Canada? How would you describe your relationship with them? For example, are you very close, casual friendship, mere acquaintances, etc.?
- How often do you meet your friends? What are some of the activities you do together?
- Are these your personal circle of friends, or are they more like family friends?
- Do you have friends in [country of origin]? Are you in touch with them? How would you compare your relationship to your friends in Canada to those back in [country of origin]?
- Do you participate in community events? Can you describe them to me? Why do you think you take part in these events? What does it make you feel? (probe)
- How would you describe your relationship with other members of the South Asian community?

### Suite # 3: On Co- residence and Caregiving

- Can you tell me why your [older relative] moved to Canada?
- Can you tell me a bit more about the process of immigration, such as when did you apply for sponsorship, how long did it take, what were some of your concerns etc. (probe)
- Can you tell me a little bit about your [older relative], for instance their age, education, whether they have other children etc.?
- Can you describe their life in India, for instance the city/ town/ village they used to live in, the kind of residence they occupied, was there any household/ domestic help, did they engage in paid work outside the home, what were some of their hobbies etc.?
- Can you describe your household arrangement to me, for instance, which part of the residence do your older relatives live in, who takes care of the household chores, are there any dietary considerations etc.?
- How do your [older relatives] spend their time in Canada?

- How do you think, if at all, their lives have changed since they moved to Canada?
- What do they think about Canadian culture? (probe). Do you feel the same? Do you talk to your [older relatives] about Canadian culture?
- How would you describe their involvement, if there is any, with the local South Asian community? (probe)
- What, in your opinion, may be specific advantages/ disadvantages of moving to Canada for them?
- How do you define care and can you tell me why you provide care to your older relatives?
- Which aspect of caregiving, physical or emotional, is more important to you and why?
- Which aspect of caregiving, physical or emotional, do you enjoy the most and why?
- Which aspect of caregiving, physical or emotional, do you not enjoy so much and why?
- How would you describe the health of your older relatives?
- In your household, who is responsible for attending to the health- related needs of your [older relatives]?
- How familiar are you with the Canadian healthcare system?
- How would you describe your experience of accessing healthcare services (such as doctor visits, eye exams etc.) for your older relatives?
- How, if at all, do you think the nature of caregiving in Canada differs from your country of origin? Can you describe specific challenges that you may have had with regard to caring for your older relatives in Canada?
- Can you tell me about your day- to- day experiences of living with older relatives, for instance your daily routine, your interactions with them, etc.? Can you think of any specific anecdote that you would like to share with me?
- Can you describe to me some of the caregiving activities you engage in every day?
- What aspect of living with older relatives do you like the most? Why? (probe)
- What aspect of living with older relatives do you not like so much? Why? (probe).
- Can you describe the advantages/ disadvantages, if any, of living with older relatives for you?
- Do you have any concerns about living with older relatives?

- Do you receive any support/ help (emotional, physical or financial) from other members of your family (apart from your older relatives) in the task of caregiving?
- How has doing this work (caregiving) changed the way you think about yourself as a daughter/ daughter- in- law/ granddaughter?
- How has living with your older relatives impacted, if at all, your relationship with them? How do you think it might have changed from the time you lived in your country of origin? (probe)

#### Suite # 4: On Emotions and Everyday Interactions

- Can you tell me about an anecdote since you moved to Canada about something funny that happened?
- Can you tell me about an anecdote since you moved to Canada that you felt a little uncertain or confused?
- Can you tell me about an anecdote since you moved to Canada that you felt a little sad?
- Can you tell me about an anecdote since you moved to Canada that you felt a little embarrassed?
- Can you tell me about a situation since you moved to Canada that you found challenging?
- Can you tell me about a time since you moved to Canada that you felt very happy?
- What, if any, are your concerns about your future and why?

## Appendix F: Recruitment Chart

