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**Young Immigrant Lives: A Study of the Migration and Settlement
Experiences of Immigrant and Refugee Youth in Windsor, Ontario**

By

Erwin Dimitri Selimos

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology
in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2017

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

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ABSTRACT

Immigrant and refugee youth make up an important proportion of Canada's population, yet research focuses predominantly on the concerns of immigrant and refugee adults. Canadian and international scholarship that does attend to questions of youth and migration often depicts young immigrants and refugees in ways that overemphasize their vulnerabilities and neglect their active participation in the migration and settlement process. Furthermore, researchers, service providers and policymakers remain interested in understanding the social concerns and experiences of immigrant and refugee youth and point to the need to explore the experiences of immigrant and refugee youth living in mid-sized and smaller Canadian cities.

This dissertation research addresses these gaps in knowledge by exploring young immigrants' and refugees' experiences of migration and settlement in Windsor, Ontario, a mid-sized immigrant-receiving city in Canada. Based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with immigrant and refugee youth, as well as adults who work closely with them daily, the study investigates young immigrants' and refugees' active participation in various social realms, including, but not limited to, family, peer groups, school, and community life, and pinpoints the institutional and contextual features that shaped their migration, settlement, belonging, and social inclusion experiences.

The study reveals a complex picture of youth migration, settlement, and social inclusion in Windsor, Ontario. Immigrant and refugee youth are active social actors who in relation to their unique migration experiences and biographies attempt to craft a life for themselves and their family. However, they fashion this new life within the contexts of complex institutionally structured supports and constraints. In their migration and settlement processes, immigrant and refugee youth confront opportunities, constraints, inclusions, exclusions, openings, and barriers

in complex and often unpredictable ways. The result is the production of a sense of social ambivalence: a recognition among many young immigrants and refugees of their uncertain status in a society that helps them and hinders them, accepts them and rejects them.

DEDICATIONS

To my mother, Astrid Selimos, and my father, Apostolos Yeoryiou Selimos: You have made everything in my life possible.

To my wife, Monique Selimos: You are the greatest gift in my life. Your presence enriches my existence.

To my son: May you find the world as astonishing as I do.

To all those who participated in this research study: Thank you for sharing your stories, thoughts, and insights.

To Canada: Canadian society has made many things possible in my life. Let us continue to strive to make Canada a peaceful, humane, and decent society for all its residents.

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Special acknowledgement must go to Cassandra Richardson, Natalia Uros, and Roger Fogal. Without their selflessness and assistance, my dissertation project would never have been completed. Thank you to Janet Balyeat, Janice Balyeat, Eric Hansen, and David Hoyle for their wonderful editing help. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Monique Selimos for her patience and support throughout the writing of this dissertation. I would especially like to thank her for her ability to help me “re-gain perspective” and her skill in converting terribly wordy sentences into something that resembles a clear thought.

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Walking home I saw you
You didn't see me
I passed right in front of your eyes
You could have smelled
my Strawberry, scented hair

I saw the stick
You did too.
But, you didn't see me

I was watching you
 not
 watching
 me

I tripped, fell
The gravel came up too fast
I saw the streams of blood running
down my leg,
in the newly formed gravel crevices
before I felt the searing pain

But, you didn't see me
I could have died and you would not have seen me

Because I was different from you

You would not have seen me.¹

¹ Eden Schwartz, Age 12, *Invisible, Difference*. Taken from [A Book of Poems, Expressions from Our Youth](#). Published by COSTI Immigrant Services and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/poetry_book.pdf

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Aims of the study

I am sitting in small classroom in an uncomfortable plastic chair. It is about 3:30 PM and school is out. I am facing the door and watching students run to their lockers, yell across the hall, and chat with their friends. I like the energy and the noise. The scene makes me reflect on my own high school, my own experiences as a teenager, and my former career as a high school teacher. In time, a young man with medium-length hair walks into the room and flashes a big smile. He is boisterous, open, and kind. We introduce ourselves, shake hands, and sit down, facing each other from across a small wooden table. I thank him for meeting with me and begin to explain the purpose of the interview. But I can tell he is not at all concerned with consent forms or study objectives. “Yeah, yeah, yeah. I understand!” he says, waving his hands in the air. He wants to tell me his story, he is eager to speak, and cares little about the formalities of the interview occasion.

I flip on the digital audio recorder:

Me: I just turned it on. This is recording. It picks up voice very nicely so just talk normally.

S: Nice. I hope you won't have trouble with my accent. I have been a year and a half in Canada. I was born in Iraq, in the north of Iraq.

Nearly each interview began like the excerpt presented above. After a short introduction and explanation of the purpose of my interview, we would begin a process in which immigrant and refugee youth reflected on their lives and made assessments of themselves and the world

around them. Through these conversations, they drew threads and connections between their lives before coming to Canada, their current lives, and their future hopes. Often what was shared with me during these conversations were personal stories of leaving and arriving that exploded with the full register of human emotions: loss, opportunity, pain, pleasure, guilt, loyalty, fear, apprehension, courage, insecurity, hate, love, confusion, anger, frustration, loneliness, hope, and gratitude. As I listened to their stories, I soon realized that these emotional registers—feelings that could be detected sometimes only subtly through their body movements, facial expressions, and slight shifts in intonation—were key to understanding the social worlds of these young people. Moving from one place to another—sometimes to places socially and culturally much different—produces changes in one’s social relationships and positions, and therefore to one’s relationship to oneself.

This dissertation focuses on these reflections and their significance to questions of youth migration, settlement, belonging, and social inclusion. The study explores the experience of migration and settlement youth living in Windsor, Ontario, a mid-sized immigrant-receiving city in Canada. It does not focus on specific immigrant groups; rather, a key objective is to capture the “horizons of meanings” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) of what it means to be young, to settle, and to come of age in this city at this particular time in history. The study examines the complex and multidimensional factors that shape how immigrant and refugee youth “come to exist”—that is, build and live their lives—in a new country and the consequences this has on their identities, social inclusion, and belonging. The following research questions guide the study: 1) How do immigrant youth, living in Windsor, Ontario, experience migration and settlement? 2) What consequences do these experiences have on their overall sense of belonging and social inclusion to Windsor, and more generally, Canada?

To answer these broad questions, the study adopts an exploratory qualitative research approach, based primarily on in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted between January 2014 and February 2015 with immigrant and refugee youth living in Windsor, Ontario. It is my hope that the insights presented in this dissertation study will be useful to academics, policy-makers, practitioners, and fellow citizens interested in the social lives and well-being of immigrant and refugee youth in Windsor, Ontario, and again, more broadly, Canada.

Defining key terms

The United Nations (n.d.) defines *youth* as any person between the ages of 15 and 24. In this study, however, I adopt James and James' (2012) status definition of youth as “a young person who is too old to be regarded socially as just a child—usually but not necessarily a teenager—but who is not yet legally an adult” (p. 140). In chapter two, I subject the notion of youth to a more detailed sociological exploration. Following Fleras (2015), I use the term *emigrant* to refer to a person who leaves a country to reside in another and *immigrant* to refer to persons born in one country but who have come to settle permanently in another (pp. 39-40). A *refugee* refers to a legal designation of a person who has been forced to leave their country of origin to escape war, persecution, and/or natural disaster (p. 40). Throughout the study, when appropriate, I attempt to identify participants who arrived as refugees in order to highlight their unique migration experiences. *Immigrant youth* refers to those persons who came to live permanently in Canada, but were born in another country. In Chapter Two, I subject the category of immigrant to a more sustained sociological analysis. Finally, I adapt the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants' definition of *settlement*, as outlined in Murphy (2010, p. 11), as the long-term, dynamic process through which immigrants attempt to achieve full participation in various domains of social life in the society of permanent residence.

Rationale for the study

Immigrant and refugee youth make up an important proportion of Canada's population, with nearly 35% of all recent immigrants being children or youth (Statistics Canada, n.d.). Despite this, Anisef & Murphy Kilbride (2003) remark in their detailed study of immigrant and refugee youth that relatively speaking, research has focused predominantly on the concerns of immigrant adults. Researchers, service providers, and policymakers, therefore remain interested in understanding the social concerns and experiences of immigrant and refugee youth (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003; Ngo & Schleifer, 2005; Pathways to Prosperity, "Pan-Canadian Research Themes," n.d.).

This does not mean, however, that Canadian scholarship has neglected immigrant and refugee children and youth. Drawing on fields of study such as sociology, psychology, political science, education, and social work, a large body of scholarship focuses on various aspects of immigrant and refugee youth migration and settlement experiences. Topics include, but are not limited to, such things as the challenges of language acquisition (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003); services and resource needs (Francis & Yan, 2016; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Walsh, Este, Krieg, & Giurgiu, 2011); acculturation processes (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Poteet & Simmon, 2015; Walsh, Este, Krieg, & Giurgiu, 2011); peer group relations (de Finney, 2010; Teja & Schonert-Reichl, 2013); experiences of discrimination (Shahsiah 2006, Tomic, 2012); changing family dynamics and intergenerational relationships (Merali & Violata, 2002; Tyyska, 2008); schooling and education (Hebert, Sun, & Kwoch, 2004; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Stermac, Elgie, Clarke, & Dunlap, 2012; Sweet, Anisef, & Walters, 2010; Taylor & Krahn, 2013); transitions to adulthood (Mondain & Lardoux, 2012); labour market participation (Lauer, Wilkinson, Yan, Sin & Tsang, 2011; Taylor & Krahn, 2013; Wilkinson, Yan, Tsang, Sin, &

Lauer, 2011); and mental health, especially of refugee youth (Gurunge & Butt, 2015; Yohani & Larsen, 2009).

In their review of Canadian scholarly literature on young immigrants, Dlamini, Wolfe, Anucha, and Yan (2009) argue that much of the literature adopts problem-based approaches that explore the challenges immigrant and refugee youth in the new ‘host’ countries and how these challenges are shaped by variables such as racialization, class, gender, pre-migration experience, and ethnic background. Largely policy-oriented, this body of literature contemplates how policies and practices can be enhanced to help facilitate the settlement and integration of immigrant and refugee youth. Some of the problems identified include the challenges and difficulties young immigrants face learning English (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003), the psychosocial anxieties that accompany moving to a new society (James, 1997), the stresses young immigrants face as they must negotiate changing family dynamics (Merali & Violata, 2002; Tyyska, 2008), experiences of peer victimization and bullying (McKenney, Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006), and barriers to labour market participation (Lauer, Wilkinson, Yan, Sin & Tsang, 2011; Taylor & Krahn, 2013; Wilkinson, Yan, Tsang, Sin, & Lauer, 2011). With respect to refugee youth, a growing body of academic attention focuses on their mental health, especially in relation to issues of past experiences of trauma and displacement (see Gurunge & Butt, 2015 for a review of the literature). Rossiter and Rossiter (2009), for example, adopt such a problem-based approach in their study of the risk and protective factors shaping immigrant and refugee youth’s participation in criminal behavior.

Given that school remains one of the central social arenas for young people in Western society, as well as a central institution assisting in the settlement of immigrant and refugee youth, it is perhaps not surprising that many studies explore the various dimensions of immigrant and

refugee youth experiences of schooling, their educational aspirations, and the complex factors influencing their educational outcomes (Garnett, Adamuti-Trache, & Ungerleider, 2008; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Smith, Schnider, & Ruck, 2005; Sweet, Anisef, & Walters, 2010; Wilkinson, Yan, Tsang, Sin, Lauer, 2012; Wilkinson, 2002). Many of these studies are quantitative in nature and compare immigrant and refugee youths' educational outcomes to their Canadian-born counterparts and/or to various immigrant and refugee groups (Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2009; Garnett, Adamuti-Trache, & Ungerleider, 2008; Hebert, Sun, & Kwoch, 2004; Ma, 2003). Scholars also employ qualitative approaches to document immigrant and refugee youths' experiences of educational aspirations, needs, and struggles (Anisef et al. 2003; Kanu, 2008; Ngo & Schliefer, 2005). Overall, these studies detail many of the factors that negatively impact their educational well-being—including lack of familiarity with schooling norms in Canada, lack of access to adequate English as a second language instruction, racism and discrimination, and limited participation in school activities (see Ngo & Schliefer, 2005)—in the effort to “improve schooling outcomes for ‘at-risk’ minority youth” (Poteet & Simmons, 2015, p. 1).

Problem-based approaches to young immigrant lives are important because they identify the systemic barriers and multidimensional factors that limit access to institutions, opportunities, and social resources. However, such approaches sometimes achieve these goals at the expense of examining the processes through which young immigrants ‘become’ Canadian (Dlamini, Wolfe, Anucha, & Yan, 2009, p. 410) or navigate their settlement (Denov & Bryan, 2014). In other words, there are tendencies in the Canadian immigrant youth studies literature to depict young immigrants and refugees somewhat passively as ‘objects of concern’, ‘at-risk’, or ‘in need of services’ in ways that neglect their active participation in their own lives.

Studies that explore the diasporic and transnational lives of young migrants (Amarasingan, 2008; Byers and Tastsoglou, 2008; Nayak, 2003) and personal narratives of youth migration (Malsbary, 2012; Tanyas, 2012), on the other hand, illustrate the processes through which young people forge complex identities, form complex inter-cultural friendships (de Finney 2010), negotiate changing familial relationships (Tyyska, 2008), and experience differential forms of inclusion and exclusion (Harris, 2013, Nayak, 2003, Back & Sinha, 2012). These studies recognize young immigrants' and refugees' vulnerabilities, but also highlight their active efforts to settle and claim belonging (see, for example, Denov & Bryan, 2014; Shahsiah, 2006; Frisina, 2010; Rathzel, 2010).

Moreover, scholars of childhood and youth are increasingly recognizing that many young people, including immigrant and refugee youth, live in social spaces where hyper-diversity is a normal feature of everyday life (Harris, 2009, pp. 192-193). Categories such as integration, mainstream, immigrant, insider, outsider, 'here', and 'there' are complicated by hyper-diversification: the complex differentiation of societies brought on by the increased pace of migration, the diversification of country of origin, the proliferation of migration channels and statuses, and the multiplication of variables that impact where, how and with whom people live, including gender, age, and labour market opportunities (Harris 2013, p. 18-19).

Colombo and Rebughini (2012) view difference (cultural, linguistic, racial, and religious) not only as a source of problems, but also a *resource* that young people strategically or tactically mobilize to gain advantage in particular situations (Colombo & Rebughini, 2012; Frisina, 2010). These scholars recognize that young people are differentially positioned in unequal fields of power and possess differing combinations of social, cultural, and economic capital that shape their life chances and that young immigrants often do face the pressures of negotiating cultural

differences between home and host countries. But they argue that in complex globalized multicultural societies characterized by “complex connectivity” (Colombo & Rebughini, 2012, p. 93), the “capacity to manage ambivalences, more than displaying a rigid coherence is increasingly a generational skill” (p. 158) that young people use to obtain the best they can from different contexts. In such a characterization, the ‘hyphenated person’, the ‘in-betweener’, or the migrant should not only be seen as a site of disadvantage or problem, but re-cast as a potentially important social position, advantageous in a globalizing, multicultural world (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001, p. 117).

This dissertation study aligns with those who advocate exploring young immigrants’ and refugees’ everyday practices, their “processes of ‘becoming’ Canadian” (Dlamini, Wolfe, Anucha, & Yan, 2009, p. 410), the relational and contextual aspects of identity, and the cultural complexity that mark their lives. In doing so, it rejects definitive conceptualizations of national identity, being an immigrant, integration, inclusion, or home (Chirkov, 2009; Dlamini, Wolfe, Anucha, & Yan, 2009; Fangen, 2010; Gerin-Lajoie, 2012; Rathzel, 2010; Shahsiah, 2006; Colombo & Rebughini, 2012), and supports theoretical approaches that attend to young people’s voices, experiences, and agentic capacities. In particular, it contributes to the scholarly literature on young immigrants and refugees living in Canada by adopting a subject-centered approach that highlights their creative capacities and active participation in their own migration and settlement processes. However, this agency is understood to unfold in relation to institutional constraints and socially-produced vulnerabilities that young immigrants must negotiate as they attempt to build a new life in Canada. Such a sociological approach foregrounds the complex and multidimensional factors that influence how young immigrants and refugees make meaning of their migration and actively build their lives in Canada. Identifying immigrant and refugee

youths' varied experiences and perspectives, their agency, as well as the contextual factors that shape these experiences, sheds light on the complexity of their lives and, therefore, problematizes overly generic policy approaches and service provisions designed to meet their needs.

But why focus on young immigrants and refugees living in the City of Windsor, Ontario? Over the last fifteen years, changes to immigrant settlement policies in Canada have redirected responsibility to provincial and municipal governments for the settlement of immigrant newcomers (George, Selimos & Ku, 2015). As George, Selimos, & Ku (2015) note, one feature of these regionalization policies is the desire to foster the long-term settlement and social inclusion of immigrants in smaller Canadian cities across the country (Frideres, 2006). The emphasis on smaller Canadian cities as immigrant destination sites begs the question of how immigrants residing in these smaller cities experience their settlement and inclusion (Andrew, Biles, Burstein, Esses, & Tolley, 2012; Derwing & Krahn, 2008; George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015; Guo, 2013, p. 96). There remains a continuing need to explore the settlement experiences of immigrant and refugee youth living in smaller Canadian cities, given that studies on immigrant and refugee youth in Canada tend to focus on large metropolitan areas, especially Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal (de Finney, 2010).

The region of Windsor and Essex County remains an important immigrant destination site in Ontario and has committed itself to building its capacity to welcome and support immigrants and refugees (George, Ku, Selimos, & Sriskandarajah, 2014; George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015; Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, 2013). In 2013, the region's effort to create a welcoming community led to a large-scale, mixed-method research project entitled "Enhancing the Welcoming Capacity of Windsor Essex." The study explored the

region's capacity to settle newcomer immigrants, drew attention to the complexity of settlement and belonging experienced by newcomer immigrants living in Windsor Essex, and suggested new ways to enhance the region's welcoming capacity (George, Ku & Selimos, 2014; George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015). Although immigrant children and youth represent a significant proportion of Windsor's immigrant population, due to time and resource constraints, the study did not focus much attention on their experiences.

Thus, this study extends our understanding of immigrant and refugee youth migration, settlement, inclusion, and belonging processes in Canada by focusing particularly on Windsor, Ontario. The insights presented in this study should be of interest to local community stakeholders involved in ongoing efforts to enhance the settlement and social inclusion experiences of immigrant and refugee youth in the city. Furthermore, the insights generated by this study are also useful to practitioners and policymakers across Canada interested in better supporting young people, including immigrant and refugee youth, in their communities.

Social science as a mechanism to encourage reflexive analysis of society

Social scientists typically justify their work in two ways. In the first case, we suggest how a research project will advance theoretical knowledge about a subject. In the second case, we argue that insights generated by research will improve programming and interventions, identify gaps in services, or even be useful in designing new programs or interventions aimed at solving some social concern. I have outlined how this dissertation research study endeavours to do these sorts of things. But there are other ways to think about the importance of the social study of people and places, and a few words on this matter are in order, because they lay bare certain ethical considerations of both this dissertation research project and the social sciences more generally.

Flyvbjerg (2001) convincingly argues that the social sciences can and must play an important role in ongoing public discussion and deliberation in democratic societies. Instead of emulating the natural sciences and its preoccupation with theory-building, Flyvbjerg contends that the power of social science lies in its reflexive analysis of social organization, power, and values. In his *phronetic* social scientific approach, Flyvbjerg asserts that the ultimate goal of the social sciences aims not at theoretical clarification and refinement, but rather to encourage reflexive analysis of communities and society. Through detailed methodological rigor, the social sciences draw our attention, as C. Wright Mills might say, to how public issues shape and produce personal troubles (Mills, 2000, 1959). By presenting the consequences of social organization, social science leads to us to ask reflexive questions about our communities and society.

Back (2007) articulates a slightly different, but related, ethical and democratic impulse of social science research: the responsibility to listen to the stories of others. According to Back, listening is “a fundamental medium for human connection” (p. 4). However, the increasing complexity, differentiation, stratification, and bureaucratization of society has produced levels of social distance that have damaged our “capacity to hear” (p. 5). Back argues that a central task of sociology is to bridge these social distances and encourage understanding by paying serious attention to the life stories and life conditions of other people, especially the voices and stories of those “otherwise passed over or ignored” (p. 1).

In adult-dominated societies, the voices of young people are often “passed over or ignored.” The thoughts, opinions, and stories of young people in general are often unheard, discounted or de-valued. Perhaps this has something to do with deeply ingrained assumptions about young peoples’ incompetence and immaturity (Lesko, 1996) and socially and culturally

sustained “anti-youth racism” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 99). Adult concerns and worries over young people become doubly magnified when attention is turned to immigrant and refugee youth. In public debates, immigrant and refugee youth often become reduced to objects of adults’ sympathetic concerns, as in statements like ‘those poor refugees—look how hard their lives are’. In other cases, immigrant and refugee youth become the object of adult fear and hatred, as in commonly heard statements like ‘Why are they clinging to their old ways?’ or ‘Why are they not integrating?’ But very rarely are immigrant and refugee children and youth afforded the opportunity to speak and be heard seriously by adult ears.

I therefore take up the considerations put forth by both Flyvbjerg (2001) and Back (2007) as important justifications to the study of immigrant and refugee youth. In this light, I have two ‘hopes’ for the readers of this study. First, I hope that those who read this study can come away knowing a little bit more about the lives of immigrant and refugee youth. Second, I hope that the adult readers of this dissertation will take the stories presented herein as entry points to asking reflexive questions about how our society—and perhaps locally, Windsor—is organized, and, more importantly, how as adults we can establish productive connections between ourselves and the younger generations.

Overview of the study

Chapters Two and Three outline the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research study. Chapter Two constructs the major analytical framework that informs my study of the migration and settlement experiences of immigrant and refugee youth living in Windsor, Ontario. Through an analysis of the concepts of ‘immigrant’ and ‘youth’, I offer a sociological approach to understanding young immigrant lives that takes seriously their statuses as both immigrants and youth. I contend that the immigrant condition intersects with the youth

experience to create both vulnerabilities and possibilities that young immigrants and refugees must negotiate as they attempt to build a new life in Canada. While the analytical approach developed in this chapter pays specific attention to the aspirations and agency of young immigrants and refugees, structural, institutional, and relational arrangements are understood to significantly shape their experiences of migration, settlement, social inclusion, and belonging. Chapter Three details this study's research design and maps out the setting of the research—Windsor, Ontario.

Chapters Four through Seven report on the main empirical findings of the research study. Each empirical chapter is designed to pull out an important component of youth migration and settlement processes. It does so by focusing on various realms of young immigrant lives, including the meanings young immigrants and refugees give to their migration to Canada (Chapter Four), as well as their experiences of schooling and education (Chapter Five), peer relations (Chapter Six), and community life (Chapter Seven).

Chapter Four explores how immigrant and refugee youth make sense of their migration and the consequences these meanings have on how they imagine their future selves. The focus of the chapter is on what MacGhee, Health, and Trevana (2012) call the “subjective, autobiographical dimensions which link individuals to their lives across temporalities and borders” (p. 713). The analysis provided in this chapter is based on the understanding that migration marks an important event in one's life trajectory and that a key task of any immigrant is to negotiate the experiences of continuity and change. I argue that this task takes on particular contours for young immigrants and refugees who are simultaneously negotiating their youth and transitions to adulthood (Crivello, 2012). Therefore, the chapter asks *how* immigrant and refugee youth make sense of their migration and what consequences these autobiographical

interpretations have on how they imagine their future selves. The chapter demonstrates that immigrant and refugee youth draw important transnational (spatial) and intergenerational connections in ways that shape their life plans, aspirations, and transitions to adulthood.

As Brewers and McCabe (2014) note, schools play a particularly important role in the settlement processes and experiences of immigrant and refugee youth. Education represents a key factor in immigrant and refugee youth overall well-being (Devine, 2011; Rossiter, Hatami, Ripley, & Rossiter, 2015, p. 749) and the central pathway to achieving their personal and familial aspirations. Chapter Five considers how schools shape the settlement processes of young immigrants and refugees living in Windsor, Ontario. To do so, the chapter outlines how specific schools in the city have taken on the primary responsibility for the settlement and social inclusion of immigrant and refugee youth and the types of supports they provide. With an understanding of these institutional features, the chapter then examines young peoples' perspectives and experiences of education and schooling. Analysis reveals that the practices and social organization of schooling in Windsor produces paradoxical effects: schools function simultaneously as sites of inclusion and support, as well as sites of exclusion and hindrance. The result, I argue, is the production of a sense of ambivalence about their social inclusion and belonging to community life.

Several scholars note that making friends represents a key concern and central aspect of young immigrants' and refugees' migration and settlement experience (Devine, 2011; Hebert, Lee, Sun & Bert, 2008; Teja & Schonert-Reichl, 2013). Young immigrants and refugees must negotiate peer relations in their new 'home' country. Chapter Six asks: what meanings do immigrant and refugee youth give to friendship? How do they make friends? With whom do they become friends? Why these people and not others? What consequences, if any, does this have on

their sense of belonging in Canada? The chapter demonstrates that negotiating peer relations is a complex process. Immigrant and refugee youth's personal migration histories provide a backdrop against which they make sense of and find meaning in their 'settlement', which influences the type of friends they wish to make in Canada. Of course, many other factors shape the types of possible friendships, including personality, language abilities, daily organization of education, the 'open-ness' of pre-existing friendship groups among their peers, racism, and xenophobia.

Harris and Wyn (2009) note that place continues to retain both material and symbolic significance in young people's lives. Their lives, identities, and available opportunities are considerably influenced by resources offered by their local environments (Harris and Wyn, 2009, p. 328). Taking this insight seriously, the final empirical chapter—Chapter Seven—moves the analysis outside the realms of school and peer group relations to consider how immigrant and refugee youth participate in various aspects of city life, focusing primarily on their experiences of neighbourhood life, the labour market, and everyday encounters in the public arena. This chapter also demonstrates immigrant and refugee youth's varied and differential engagements in city life, marked by their concentration in largely immigrant-specific spaces, uneven and limited neighborhood connections, differential access to employment opportunities, and differential treatment in public space. The result is a complex picture of immigrant and refugee youth's sense of social participation in the city, which is expressed by an ambivalent stance toward the place Windsor will play in their future lives.

Taken together, the empirical chapters reveal a complex picture of youth migration, settlement, and inclusion. Immigrant and refugee youth are active agents in their migration and settlement. They demonstrate high aspirations that are deeply connected to the conditions of their migration and their intergenerational relationships. Windsor's social and institutional

characteristics support young immigrants' and refugees' inclusion and assist them in pursuing their aspirations. However, immigrant and refugee youth also confront complex and differential experiences of exclusion and blocked opportunities, relative to their status as newcomers, as well as their age, race/ethnicity, gender, social class backgrounds, current economic status, and religious affiliations. Furthermore, their participation in community life is limited to immigrant-specific spaces in schools, settlement agencies, neighborhoods, and the labour market.

The study also demonstrates that immigrant and refugee youth face many of the same general problems as Canadian-born or long-term resident youth. They are concerned about their transition to post-secondary education, rising tuition costs, future career plans, and the city's capacity to support their future goals and aspirations. They share with low-income youth the multifaceted challenges associated with poverty. Immigrant and refugee youth who are Muslim and/or are visible minorities share with their Canadian and long-term counterparts the problems of Islamophobia, racism, and discrimination. For immigrant and refugee youth in this study, the result is a contradictory and ambivalent sense of belonging and social inclusion within Canadian society.

Chapter Eight concludes the dissertation by first providing a detailed presentation of the study's main findings in relation to existing scholarship on youth migration and settlement. It then specifies the theoretical and practical contributions of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Young Immigrant Lives—An Outline of an Analytical Approach

Theories and concepts are tools that direct and guide researchers in our sense-making processes, especially when we are confronted by the array of potential insights offered by the complexities of the social phenomena we study (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). I agree with Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 228) who insist on a pragmatic approach to using theories and concepts in social science research. As tools, concepts must be put “in motion” and made to “work” (p. 228), much like how a craftsman may use a hammer or saw in constructing an artifact. Bourdieu and Wacquant, in other words, encourage us to develop a reflexive attitude toward concepts; to exercise care when choosing the tools to make sense of the social world. Concepts have histories and unspoken assumptions that shape, produce, and construct the object of study (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As tools that assist us in producing knowledge about a particular subject, concepts have important implications in that they produce certain reality-effects and legitimize certain ways of understanding the world.

Drawing on the sociology of childhood and the work of the migration scholar Abdelmalek Sayad (2004), this chapter develops a sociological approach to understanding young immigrant lives that take seriously their statuses as both young people and immigrants. In particular, I contend that the immigrant condition intersects with the youth experience to create both vulnerabilities and possibilities that young immigrants and refugees must negotiate, often collectively, as they attempt to build a new life in Canada. I argue that to make sense of the complexities of young immigrant lives and their settlement experiences, we need to clarify, broadly speaking, the particular social concerns produced by being young, as well as those

produced by being new. As young people, immigrant and refugee youth occupy the social realm of youth and, therefore, face many of the same general conditions and challenges of other young people in post-industrial societies. However, as newcomer immigrants, themselves diverse in terms of race, gender, and class, among others, they also face the problems associated with their newness. While the analytical approach developed in this chapter pays specific attention to the aspirations and agency of young immigrants and refugees, structural, institutional, and relational arrangements are understood to shape their experiences of migration, settlement, social inclusion, and belonging.

The sociology of childhood as point of departure

I take as my theoretical point of departure the sociology of childhood, a body of empirical and theoretical work that re-conceptualizes young people's place in social organization and the societal structure and "stresses the unique contributions [they] make to their own development and socialization" (Corsaro, 2014, p. 5). With its emphasis on the socially constructed nature of age-relations, young people's agentic and creative capacities, and the centrality of children's collective activities to the construction and reconstruction of the social order, I suggest that the sociology of childhood provides a unique theoretical orientation to understand young people's active participation in their migration and settlement processes.

The 'new' sociology of childhood emerged primarily during 1980s and 1990s in response to the general observation that children were largely absent within the field of sociology (Qvortrup, 1997). Scholars explain the absence of children from sociology by pointing to the dominance of psychology over child studies dating to the late-19th century and the increasing 'psychologization' of child studies with the rise of popular psychological theories and specialties such as psychoanalysis, cognitive theories, and behaviorism through the 20th century (Burman,

2008). When children are discussed in mainstream sociology, they are typically depicted as objects of socialization (Corsaro, 2005, p. 231-232). Through the concept of socialization, children are viewed as existing outside of society and are eventually incorporated into it through the internalization of social roles. In this standard reading, the significance of young lives is framed in relation to their eventual adulthood (Corsaro, 2014, 7-18). Rarely are children granted full subjectivity as ontological beings in their own right (Kennedy, 2002) or understood to be social actors and crucial components of the social order (Qvortrup, 2005).

The ‘new’ sociology of childhood breaks with this tradition and has some of its theoretical roots in the publication of Aries’ (1962) Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life. In this historical analysis, Aries posits that ‘childhood’ as a life stage did not always exist; rather, modern childhood was primarily a social construction, ‘discovered’ and then ideologically entrenched during the late modern period (15th to late-19th century). Although Aries’ work continues to produce debate among historians and sociologists of childhood, the significance of his work was that it introduced social constructionism to childhood studies. As Cradock (2016) notes, analytically this meant that childhood and, conversely, adulthood could be seen as relational categories and could be explored as variable socio-historical constructs. By “relativizing childhood” (James, Jenks, & Prout, 2005, p. 4), Aries’ work helped some scholars wrestle childhood studies from socialization theory and developmental psychology (James, Jenks & Prout, 2005, p. 26-27).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a European Union-funded project, led by the Danish sociologist Jens Qvortrup, entitled “Childhood as a social phenomenon” made important contributions to the social study of childhood (see Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta, & Wintersberger, 1994). They argued that although childhood is a temporary life stage through which children

developed, it is also a permanent structural category constituting the social order of a society. By conceiving childhood as a structural form, Qvortrup and his colleagues moved our thinking beyond “individualized, adult-oriented, and time-bound perspectives” (Corsaro, 2014, p. 30) to consider “how childhood develops or changes—and not . . . how the single child develops as he or she grows up” (Qvortrup, 1993, p. 120). The structural perspective provides a theoretical approach that enables sociologists to focus on children as a societal group and social category. Viewing childhood as a structural form, one can consider broadly how societal forces affect childhood, how economic, social, and political power are structured around age-relations, and how children’s living conditions compare across countries and societies (Corsaro, 2014, pp. 33-40).

The theoretical shift toward understanding childhood as a social construction and structural form coincided with a more general shift in sociology toward social theories sensitized to issues of human agency. The shift toward agency in social theory opened a space to take seriously the notion that children are also competent social actors and creative authors of their lives (Moran-Ellis, 2010). This assertion represents one of the most significant theoretical positions of the ‘new’ sociology of childhood: young people are recognized as practicing social agents and key contributors to the production and reproduction of social institutions. Corsaro’s (2014) notion of interpretive reproduction, developed to replace traditional socialization theory, illustrates clearly the ideas that children a) are active agents, b) produce among themselves unique peer cultures that are semi-independent of adult social worlds, and c) contribute to societal production and reproduction (pp. 17-27):

The term ‘interpretive’ captures innovative and creative aspects of children’s participation in society. . . [C]hildren create and participate in their own unique peer

cultures by creatively taking or appropriating information from the adult world to address their own peer concerns. The term ‘reproduction’ captures the idea that children do not simply internalize society and culture, but are actively contributing to cultural production and change. The term also implies that children are, by their very participation in society, constrained by the existing social structures and by societal reproduction. (p. 18)

The move toward attending to children’s agency in the social sciences was accompanied by a movement outside of academia to view children as rights-holders, illustrated most clearly by the ratification in 1989 of the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The Convention identifies a set of universal rights that exist beyond familial and parental rights. These rights—broadly grouped as rights to protection, rights to provisions (i.e., health and education), and rights to participation—apply universally to children by virtue of being children, and places a burden on adults and states to realize these rights. Although the treaty specifies children’s right to family and guidance, children are largely considered independent and active, capable of holding opinions and making their own choices (Cradock, 2016; see United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Methodologically, these theoretical principles have had important implications for the social study of young people. Most importantly, they call for taking seriously the views and perspectives of young people in social research in which the justification for studying young people is not simply their eventual adulthood (see Qvortrup, 2009). To some, this has meant paying attention, often through ethnographically-oriented research, to the views, experiences, and practices of children themselves. These studies consider how young people actively experience and shape their environments (Corsaro, 2003; Corsaro, 2005; James & Prout, 1997, p. 8). To others, this has meant developing authentic children’s statistics that do not ‘hide’ children

within analyses of family or school (Qvortrup, 1997). Furthermore, it has meant increased emphasis on the use of participatory research strategies aimed at equalizing power relations in the research process (Heath & Walker, 2012).

On one level, the central insight of the ‘new’ sociology of childhood is that we can learn a lot about society by attending to the views and perspectives of young people. Although this is not an entirely new argument (Lancy, 2008), the focus on children in sociological analysis remains the exception rather than the rule (Hirschfeld, 2002). This theoretical agenda underscores the importance of exploring how various institutions shape children’s experiences. But, more importantly, it points researchers in the direction of considering how children, as active agents, both cope with and simultaneously shape these institutions (Huber & Spyrou, 2012, pp. 291-292).

Understanding young immigrant lives

One of the most significant contemporary problems for children and young people is their status within an increasingly globalized world. Given the complexity of contemporary global migration flows, academics, intergovernmental agencies, and civil society organizations are expressing increasingly concerned with ‘children on the move’ (UNICEF, n.d., ‘Children on the move’). Public discourse increasingly turns to questions of unaccompanied child migrants, the impacts of migration on young people, the integration of immigrant and refugee youth into host societies, trafficked children and youth, the problems and pressures associated with young people separated from their parents, and international adoptions, among others (International Organization of Migration, 2013, pp. 1-4).

However, drawing on her study of young Turkish migrants in the UK, Tanyas (2012, p. 693) argues that scholarly literature on young people and international migration tends to neglect

their experiences, perspectives, and agency. Scholarship that does attend to young lives and international migration, she argues, gives acculturation processes a disproportionate amount of attention and typically employ quantitative research methods that largely neglect young people's agency, creative capacities, and active participation in migration processes (Tanyas, 2012, pp. 693-694). Similarly, Bhabha (2014) writes that even though a significant amount of the world's migrants consists of those under the age of twenty, "children do not feature in this large-scale picture, except occasionally as appendages to adults" (p. 2). As I discussed in the opening chapter of this dissertation, there is also a tendency in Canadian immigration studies to approach young immigrants through a problem-based lens that frames them as 'at-risk' or 'in need of services' in ways that neglect their active participation in their lives, migration, and settlement processes. There is, thus, considerable interest in examining the intersections between childhood, youth, and migration in what Castles and Miller (2009) call the "Age of Migration," and the active role children play in the migration and settlement process (McGovern & Devine, 2016, p. 37-39).

So, what does it mean to be a young immigrant? What problems and pressures do they face? What conceptual tools can we use to sensitize ourselves to the complexity of their lives? I argue that an adequate analysis of young immigrant lives must take into consideration how the immigrant condition intersects with the youth experience to create both vulnerabilities and possibilities that young immigrants and refugees must negotiate as they attempt to settle in Canada. In other words, I contend that young immigrants' dual social positioning as both 'youth' and 'immigrant' produce particular experiential problems and pressures. Therefore, to best understand the experiences of immigrant youth we need to clarify, broadly speaking, the social concerns produced by being young, as well as those produced by being an immigrant. To make

this argument, I draw on the sociology of childhood and youth and Abdelmayek Sayad's theorizations of the immigrant condition to offer a detailed analysis of the concept of 'youth' and 'immigrant.'

Being 'youth': The ambivalent status of a socially constructed category

James and James (2012) remark that in the process of delimiting the field of childhood studies it has been necessary for scholars to "emphasize the distinction between childhood and adulthood, to explore the boundaries between them, and at the same time avoid the fragmentation that might result from a more nuanced analysis of the social space of childhood" (p. 141).

However, in doing so, childhood studies risks overly homogenizing the social categories of childhood and adulthood. It is important to recognize the differentiated experiences between infancy, early years, tweens, and youth, as well as those among young adults, new parents, and elderly. As the authors note:

The difficulty for childhood studies is that if too great an emphasis is placed on such distinctions, we will fall into the trap of reinforcing those perspectives derived from developmental psychology that serve to undermine or deny children's agency and rights and therefore the unique contribution of childhood studies. (p. 141)

Historically, the transition between childhood and adulthood has been relatively short, but in late modernity emphasis on education and the prolonged economic and social dependency of children has led to the social and temporal expansion of youth as a life stage and social category (pp. 140-141). The youth period, therefore, has come to be viewed as rather distinct from childhood (p. 141).

But as Bourdieu (1993) notes, "'Youth' is just a word" (p. 94); sociological and historical insights suggest that "the divisions between the ages are arbitrary" (p. 94), variable, and

historically and socially specific. Across all societies, ideological representations of ‘young’ and ‘old’ grant certain things to the young in society and other things to the old (p. 94). To be a child, to be a youth, or to be an adult is largely defined by “the roles the person is expected, allowed, or forced to play, by virtue of an ascribed age-status in a given society” (Cotes & Allahar, 2006, p. 21). Thus, definitions of what constitutes childhood, youth, and adulthood must be understood as socially constructed conceptual categories (Qvortrup, 2005). Childhood, youth, and adulthood are relational categories part of a “whole system of relations” (Kennedy, 2002, p. 155). As such, the concept of ‘youth’ ultimately brings us to questions of what we mean when we say childhood and adulthood.

As Coles (1995) notes, dominant cultural imaginaries, especially in modern Western societies, circulated in laws, state welfare and education policies, parenting books, and developmental psychological research construct childhood as a life stage of dependency. The family is assumed to be the institution which provides children with economic and social support. In cases where this is not possible, children are taken care of through foster care systems, adoption programs, and state-run institutions. Laws aim to protect children from various forms of exploitation and specific government agencies exist to protect children from potential abuse (pp. 4-5). On the other hand, adults for the most part are treated as fully developed (physically, emotionally, and socially), independent, rational, and responsible human beings. They are largely expected to provide for their own material well-being and contribute through various forms of taxation and other behavioral expectations, such as voting, to society.

These dominant framings of childhood and adulthood, so “adamantly upheld and institutionalized in Western binary consciousness” (Kennedy, 2002, p. 155), are also present in mainstream sociological approaches to generational relations. When children are discussed in

mainstream sociology, they are typically depicted as objects of socialization (Corsaro, 2005, pp. 231-232). As discussed earlier, normative sociological treatments of children and childhood in sociology explore how children move from incomplete, dependent, and primarily biological ‘organisms’ to socialized and autonomous adult individuals. In this standard reading, the significance of children’s lives and childhood is framed in relation to the child’s eventual adulthood, which can also be read as their successful incorporation in society. Children are viewed as ‘becomings,’ and are rarely granted full subjectivity as ontological beings in their own right—that is, as ‘beings’ (Kennedy, 2002).

Youth as a socially constructed conceptual category sits somewhere between the notions of childhood dependency and adulthood independence. Coles (1995, p. 3) is, therefore, correct to call youth a nebulous concept. The concept emerged historically in both the discipline of sociology and public imagination over the last 200 years and it relates to various interrelated historical changes: young people’s displacement from rural communities to cities that undermined traditional forms of social control; the rise of legislation, such as labour laws, that constructed children and youth as specific administrative categories; the rise of industrial capitalism and the accompanying extension of formal schooling; and, the expansion and legitimization of scientific disciplines such as psychology, and in particular developmental psychology (Bradford, 2012, p. 23). James and James (2012) note that in its social construction in Western societies, the concept of youth is linked to chronological age, physical development (the onset of puberty), and social development. In this sense, youth “describes the period of transition between childhood and adulthood that is often associated with social experimentation, emergence from the family, and the development of the social self and of social identity” (James & James, 2012, p. 140).

Youth is viewed, constructed, and largely structured as a life period of semi-independence. This socio-historical construction produces a sense of ambivalence: are youth children or are they adults? Cote and Allahar (2006) argue that this sense of ambivalence can be seen in the various and often contradictory ways young people are framed in laws and educational and social policies. Many countries have separate youth justice systems and an array of youth policies designed to deal with the educational, economic, health and social care needs associated with youth. In some cases, young people are considered in need of protection and guidance, while in other cases, they are considered to be capable of making their own decisions about the direction of their lives (see Furlong, 2013, pp. 2-3).

Probably the most common stance among scholars, then, is to view youth as a “socially organized phase in the life course” (du Bois-Reymond & Lopez Blasco, 2003, p. 21), a period of transitions through which young people attempt to achieve adult status (Coles, 1995). Coles (1995) identifies the following characteristics of this ‘transitional’ life phase: the movement from fulltime education and training to fulltime employment; the transition from family of origin to family of destination; and, the transition from residence with parent/surrogate to an independent residence. However, the coordinates of this period of life are dependent on social structures and vary in relation to history, economy, and educational and social policies (Heinz, 2009, as quoted in Furlong, 2013, p. 6). Recent social and economic changes accompanied by the advent of late capitalism require young people to spend longer time in education and training, enter full-time employment much later, and perhaps remain dependent on familial support for much longer (Cote & Allahar, 2006; Furlong, 2013; Leccardi & Risplini, 2006). It is also now common for young people to hold simultaneously contradictory age-based status positions (i.e., working while simultaneously studying). Thus, in post-industrial societies, sociologists point to the

prolongation of the youth life-stage, the blurring of distinctions between childhood and adulthood (Frones, 1994), and the non-linear nature of youth to adult transitions (du Bois-Reymond & Lopez Blasco, 2003). Under these conditions, the identification of a clear youth stage in the life course may be very difficult to determine, pointing to the complexity of associating chronological age with a social category such as youth. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child suggests a child to be anyone 18 years or younger while for statistical purposes the United Nations defines youth as those persons between that age of 15 and 24 (United Nations, n.d.). These definitions represent one example of many that illustrate the ambivalent relationship between childhood, youth, and adulthood.

In addition to being conceived as a socially structured life stage through which people move, a generational-structural perspective like that advocated by Qvortrup (1997) and Alanen (2014), allows us to consider childhood, youth, and adulthood as permanent structural categories in society that are historically and socially variable. Conceptualizing childhood, youth, and adulthood as relational positions within a generational social order (Alanen, 2014) moves our thinking beyond adult-oriented and individualistic perspectives to consider how age-relations and power differentials between age cohorts constitute a key feature of the social structure. The generational-structural perspective enables us to see how economic, social, and political power is structured around age-relations. Compared to adults, the youth class lack material and symbolic social power across various societal domains. Young people are often marginalized from formal political institutions and decision-making processes. Furthermore, as Cotes (2015) and Cotes and Allahar (2006) demonstrate, the profound economic disenfranchisement and labour exploitation of the youth class constitutes a key feature of late capitalist economies. These generationally-ascribed inequalities are justified by ideological assumptions about young peoples'

incompetence, immaturity, irrationality, and incompleteness (Lesko, 1996). Through these ideological framings, young peoples' social significance as a group lies in their 'becoming' fully-formed adults. Such discourses, combined with a general condition of dependency, undercut young peoples' rights *as beings of the present* to political, economic, and social resources. This logic suggests it is analytically accurate to consider youth as a minority group in society (James, Jenks, & Prout, 2005).

Another key feature of the 'youth class' is that much of their lives are organized by adults and lived out in adult-administered institutions, especially schools, where young people are targets of adult socialization processes. Within this context, young people develop peer cultures in opposition to the largely adult-run world (Harris, 2013). Thus, if youth can be considered a social class, then youth can also be thought of as a social realm (Frones, 2005) or social world (James & James, 2012). As James and James (2012) note, thinking in terms of a unique and partly independent social realm among young people acknowledges young people's unique life arenas, their perspectives and creative capacities, as well as the fact that they "live much of their lives in the company of adults and, indeed, within a world largely defined for them by adults" (p. 119). Taking this the notion seriously, Harris (2013) demonstrates in her study of young people in multicultural Australia how they fashion unique peer cultures, subjectivities, solidarities, and forms of social exclusion often in contrast to adult interventions.

Similar to how it would be inadequate to discuss adulthood as an undifferentiated social category, 'youth' is not a homogenous social category either. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that while youth may be viewed as a structural category or social group, young people experience the "conditions of their existence" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 95) differently, depending on the intersection of various categories including, but not limited to, location, class, gender, race,

ethnicity, and citizenship status. In this way, it is important to think about ‘multiple youths’ or youth life arenas. We can talk about working class youth, female or male youth, immigrant youth, visible minority youth, super-rich youth, minority youth—an endless list of potential ways to identify the heterogeneity that characterizes young people.

In sum, as a life stage, youth is discursively and socially structured primarily as a forward-looking time, a period of movement away from childhood and toward adulthood. In their everyday lives youth are constantly reminded that they are in the process of ‘becoming’ adults. This discursive and social construction of youth, thus, creates an experience among young people that tends to be future-oriented in which young people must work in the present to build a future existence as an adult: “the individual is expected to prepare and gradually learn the economic skills and capacities associated with adulthood” (James & James, 2012, p. 140). However, as members of the youth class, young peoples’ everyday lives are also characterized by their relative lack of social power across various societal domains. Within a world largely defined and organized for them by adults, young people also participate in and belong to unique peer cultures that address their own interests, questions, and concerns (Corsaro, 2014).

Being ‘immigrant’: Abdelmalek Sayad and the question of ‘continuing to exist’

In his essay entitled “The Weight of Words,” the eminent French sociologist of migration Abdelmalek Sayad (2004) argues that our understanding of the social concerns of immigrants is often obscured by the very conceptual tools social scientists use to understand immigration. Writing in the context of his life-long study of Algerian migration to France, Sayad argues integration—the dominant lens through which laymen, policymakers, and academics alike make sense of the lives and social concerns of immigrants—is a “loaded notion” (2004, p. 221). Rooted in earlier ideas of cultural assimilation, integration unwittingly projects the concerns and

anxieties of the receiving country onto the construction of social science problems of immigration itself. The concerns, worries, and problems of the receiving country become the lenses through which social scientists seek to understand and make sense of immigrant experiences. In this way, the study of migration is conceived through an “imposed problematic” (Saada, 2000, p. 30) in which immigrants and immigration are framed either explicitly or implicitly as social problems. Sayad (2004) writes that

The entire discourse is in reality nothing more than the discourse of a (national) society that is forced to deal with the immigrants it needs, with whom it has to reckon and who, if it is not careful, might disturb public order. (p. 121)

This critique is echoed by Li (2003), a Canadian sociologist of migration, whose concern that the use of integration in Canadian immigration research and policy is taken-for-granted and not subjected to sustained theoretical clarification or debate. According to Li, Canada’s official policy position is that integration is a two-way process that requires effort and change on behalf of both Canadian society and newcomer immigrants. However, Li notes that although integration discourse may appear fair to both newcomers and native-born Canadians, it upholds conformity and compliance in that it requires newcomer immigrants to attain the behavioral standards and living patterns of majority Canadians. To illustrate this point, Li demonstrates that studies examining immigrant social and economic integration tend to compare the extent to which immigrants match or outperform Native-born Canadians across various social and economic indicators. In adopting such a methodological approach, these researchers “accept and internalize the norms and expectations of those already well-entrenched in Canada as though they constitute natural and scientific standards of integration” (p. 3). Li contends that such an approach adopts

conformity to national standards as the “objective and obvious benchmark of desirable integration” (p. 3).

To turn the study of migration into a proper object of sociology, Sayad (2004) argues for considering “the migratory process in its entirety” (p. 222). The sociology of migration must start “not from the concerns and cleavages of the receiving society” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2000, p. 174) but from the individual migrants, their relationship to the sending communities, their embeddedness historical and social relationships, and the structure and contradiction of these societies. A combined approach to emigration and immigration decenters the dominant perspective of immigrants and immigration and does not frame immigrant lives solely in terms of host societies and the “statistical, social and moral norms of that society” (Saada, 2000, p. 31). By turning the study of immigration into an object of sociology, Sayad (2004) can assert that an immigrant is first and foremost a social and legal status produced by what he calls “state thought” (p. 278). Immigrant is a status produced by the laws and bureaucratic procedures of a nation-state and is ascribed to the newcomer upon arrival (p. 281). As such, the immigrant, both legally and socially, is placed in the position of having to prove to established citizens, represented by the state, their right to remain. Failure to ‘prove’ the legitimacy of their presence can lead to expulsion through legal procedures such as deportation or imprisonment.

To be sure, Sayad recognized the social and economic heterogeneity characterizing immigrants: immigrants will experience the condition of suspicion differently depending on the prevailing attitudes and the extent to which one’s social, cultural, and physical features relate to that of the imagined ‘national’ of the nation-state. But through this line of thinking, Sayad can specify a general condition of what it means to be an immigrant. He writes:

Being conscious of the suspicion that weighs upon him and which he cannot escape because he is confronted with it throughout his immigrant life and in every domain of his existence, it is up to him to allay it constantly, to foresee it and to ward it off by repeatedly demonstrating his good faith and his good will. (p. 286)

Given this general condition, Sayad argues that immigrants must spend much of their everyday energies allaying suspicion and proving their right 'as guests' to remain. Efforts to reassure others and therefore oneself becomes

the constant preoccupation of any foreigner or anyone who has the feeling of being foreigner, where he is living, of any foreigner to the country and the society in which he lives, often continuously, but who does not experience them as his country and society. (pp. 288-289)

At times, the immigrant may accept resignedly, under protest, or sometimes provocatively "the dominant definition of [their] identity" (p. 286). At other times, an immigrant may devote a lot of effort to resemble in appearance and action what they believe the 'national' looks like and behaves like. Reassuring others becomes the precondition of the immigrant's own security in the new country or society.

To Sayad, then, what is at stake for the emigrant-immigrant is not the issue of 'integration' or 'settlement' per se, as this is a position often articulated from the standpoint of the receiving society. Rather, the emigrant-immigrant is faced with the question of "continuing to exist" (p. 288). In their new society of residence, immigrants search for new forms of both material and symbolic existence. At the level of material existence, the immigrant searches for those things which produce a viable life: safety and stability, a new house, a good job or livelihood, access to education and opportunities for self and family, and close and caring

relationships with friends and loved ones. They also search for recognition, acceptance, and respect, seeking to avoid the opposite: misrecognition and rejection. They long to be embraced in their new place of residence: “the touch and the handshake remain a hope and aspiration” (Skrbis, 2008, p. 238).

Aspirations and agency; Embeddedness; Negotiating belonging and confronting exclusion:

A set of sensitizing concepts

As the preceding discussion illustrates, to be a young immigrant means occupying social status positions that structure particular experiences and produce particular social concerns. As newcomers, themselves diverse in terms of race, gender, and class, they face the problems associated with their newness. In their new host society, immigrant youth must contend with the general condition of being an immigrant. They must grapple with the suspicions of the host society—the ongoing questions of their right to belong—and actively build those things associated with a viable life: safety and stability, a home, education, access to jobs and careers, and close and caring relationships with friends and family. Immigrant and refugee youth also search for recognition, acceptance, respect, and belonging. However, as young people, immigrant youth occupy the social realm of youth and, therefore, face similar general conditions and challenges of other young people in post-industrial societies. As young people, their lives are often structured to be future-oriented and, thus, young people are encouraged to continually build their future existence as adults. Simultaneously, they confront the problems and pressures of their everyday lives as part of the youth class. That is, we must take seriously young immigrants status as both beings and becomings (see Uprichard, 2008; Qvortrup, 2009). Therefore, an adequate understanding of the migration and settlement experiences of young immigrants and

refugees requires considering simultaneously the vulnerabilities and possibilities produced by the immigrant condition and the youth condition.

In the everyday lives of young immigrants and refugees, these concerns and preoccupations are not distinct; rather, they are interpenetrating and indivisible, forming the basis of their existential condition. For the sake of social analysis, however, it is necessary to develop a set of sensitizing concepts that will enable us to hold in productive tension the experiential effects of being young and immigrant. I suggest that the following sensitizing concepts provide useful analytical anchors to enable us to observe how the young experience and immigrant condition intersect to produce both vulnerabilities and possibilities for young immigrants. These sensitizing concepts are as follows: Aspirations and agency; Embeddedness; Searching for belonging and confronting exclusions.

Aspirations and agency

In their new host society, young immigrants search for new forms of both material and symbolic existence—they aspire to new and better lives for themselves and their families. The specific contours of their aspirations and future dreams are undoubtedly shaped by their unique migration experiences and their relationship to and the expectations of significant others in their lives, including their parents and peers (Flum, 1998; Lindgren, 2010). These socially-produced aspirations and goals guide how young immigrants and refugees make sense of their migration, invest meaning into their lives in their new country of residence, and orient their social actions (Flum, 1998). The process of achieving these aspirations is by its very nature labor intensive, requiring tremendous effort, including such things as learning a new language, negotiating changing family relations, and making friends. It is important, then, to pay attention to young

“migrant agency” (Bloch, Sigona, & Zetter, 2012, p. 39) and how young people socially navigate (Denov & Bryan, 2014) their resettlement experience in their efforts to pursue their aspirations.

Embeddedness

Although this study takes young people’s agency seriously, the study moves beyond simplistic notions of individual effort and voluntarism. Rather, it conceptualizes young immigrant lives as embedded in a complex web of social and institutional relationships that influence and shape their migration and settlement processes. Corsaro’s (2014, pp. 18-27) notion of interpretive reproduction provides a useful sensitizing concept to make sense of young immigrants’ embeddedness in various social and cultural relationships. Interpretive reproduction replaces individualistic and unilinear notions of socialization with collective and nonlinear processes. Corsaro represents this processes through his “Orb Web Model” (p. 24-25) in which young people are depicted as being embedded in a range of social fields, including family, economic, cultural, educational, political, occupational, community, and religious. These fields represent “the diverse locations in which institutional interaction or behaviors occur” (p. 24-25) and exist as “stable but changing structures on which children will weave their webs” (p. 25). In these fields, “children begin to produce and participate in a series of peer cultures” (p. 25) by appropriating information from the adult world, but reconfiguring that information collectively with other young people.

Children pass through the peer cultures of preschool, preadolescent, adolescent, and adult. Their experiences of participating in these peer cultures are “embedded in the web of experiences children weave with others throughout their life” (p. 26). As Corsaro writes,

Children’s experiences are not left behind with maturity or individual development;

rather, they remain part of their life histories as active members of a given culture. Thus, individual development is embedded in the collective production of a series of peer cultures that in turn contribute to reproduction and change in the wider adult society or culture. (p. 26)

Interpretive reproduction encourages us to consider how young immigrants are embedded in various fields and asks us to consider young immigrants' spatial relationships to home and host country, their temporal relationships to their past lives and imagined futures, and interpersonal relationships to family, teachers, social workers, settlement workers, and strangers. Their embeddedness in these complex spatial, temporal, and personal relationships exert influences over their migration and settlement process as they become adults and Canadians. Furthermore, as members of the youth class, young immigrants' embeddedness in unique peer cultures (Corsaro, 2014; see also Harris, 2013), understood to be somewhat independent of adult relations, represent an important area of analysis when examining immigrant youth settlement processes, as it is through peer relations that young immigrants collectively negotiate their experiences of migration and settlement (Devine, 2011; Hebert, Lee, Sun & Bert, 2008; Teja & Schonert-Reichl, 2013).

The local remains especially important when examining the lives of young people especially, given that they are often restricted to narrow spheres of activity across schools, neighbourhoods, and family life (Evans, 2015; Harris & Wyn, 2010). Young people negotiate their migration and settlement within the politics and structures produced in the specific places where they find themselves (Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Local realities and social arrangements, including the specificities of community life, service provisions, and schooling arrangements, importantly shape the settlement experiences of

immigrants and refugees (George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015; Malsbary, 2012; Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2009).

At the macro-level, Stepick and Dutton Stepick (2009) note that the context of immigrants' and refugees' reception and settlement, including public attitudes and societal discourses, affect "the social figurations [immigrants] both respond to and construct themselves" (¶ 48). Nation-states are understood to be "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006) that symbolize collective identities in ways that are prefigured to systematically include some and marginalize others based on intersections of race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality, and citizenship status, among others (May, 2013; Pheonix, 2011, p. 314; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Such insights point to the necessity of paying attention to local realities—their institutional, social, and cultural arrangements—as well as how these local realities are nested in larger societal discourses and arrangements that shape immigrant and refugee youth's lives, aspirations, and opportunities (Malsbary, 2012).

In other words, youth migration and settlement are collective processes that unfold in relation to many other social actors. As they actively attempt to settle in their new society of residence, young immigrants' embeddedness in temporal, personal, social, and institutional relations produce important effects on young immigrants' migration and settlement processes.

Searching for belonging and confronting exclusions

When immigrant and refugee youth arrive in Canada, they begin a process of searching for their 'place' and their 'fit' in society. In other words, an important aspect of their settlement experience involves actively searching for belonging. To draw on Tillezcek (2014) again, young immigrants and refugees "seek to belong in and to social institutions and relationships" (p. 15), both in their present lives as young people embedded in peer cultures, as well in their imagined

futures as adults. Young immigrants and refugees seek to take part meaningfully in the social, cultural, and material practices of a society in ways congruent with their aspirations and expectations.

May and Muir (2015) define belonging as “a sense of ease with oneself and one’s surroundings” (¶ 2.1). Others suggest that belonging is best thought of as the emotional attachment to people, places, and things that produce a feeling of being at home (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is a feeling, in other words, that tells us about our connection to ourselves and the surrounding world of people, cultures, and places (May, 2013, p. 78). Psychologists argue that belonging constitutes a fundamental human urge that much human behavior is directed at satisfying (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Because we require this sense of connection to gain a sense of self, belonging is inherently relational, requiring a mode of openness and connection to the world, as well as the reciprocation of others (p. 78). In this sense, belonging can be thought of as a kind of relation that is “bound up with being able to act in a socially significant manner that is recognized by others” (May, 2013, p. 142).

In addition to the types of attachments formed with groups and places, a sense of belonging is also achieved through meaningful inclusion in the living traditions and activities of society. This includes the right and the opportunity to participate within the various spheres of social life, including but not limited to education, the labour market, public spaces, peer groups, and community life. A sense of belonging also emerges from our capacity, if we so wish, to take part in the living traditions of society or in what May (2011), drawing on the work of Yuval-Davis (2007), refers to as the “reflexive arguments of society” (May, 2011, p. 84).

Participation in the social activities and reflexive arguments of society, however, is not an automatic right. Many people often find themselves systematically excluded from access to

social resources and opportunities. The question of who can “claim belonging to a particular collectivity is always linked to issues of power and inequality” (May 2013, p. 104). Social exclusion is, therefore, an important variable of belonging. Therborn (2014) defines exclusion as a social process of “barring the advance or access of others” (p. 59). Lightman and Good Gringrich (2011) suggests social exclusion to be the “official procedures and everyday practices that (re)produce and justify economic, spatial, socio-political, and subjective divides” (p. 124). Processes of exclusion deny certain people access to social resources in ways that hinder their capabilities. Exclusion can be thought of heuristically as occurring across two interrelated yet analytically distinct dimensions. At the level of social participation, exclusion refers to the systematic denial of access to and participation in various social spheres such as education, the labour market, peer groups, the political system, or community life (Fangen, 2010). At the level of culture, social exclusion refers to being marked as different or ‘othered’ in ways that dishonor, dehumanize, and disrespect (Fangen, 2010).

In their attempts to achieve their aspirations and in their search for belonging, immigrant youth are confronted with institutionally structured exclusions and blocked opportunities across various spheres of participation, including education, the labour market, community life, and peer relations (Back & Sinha, 2012; Corsaro, 2014; Fangen, 2010; Fangen, Johansson, & Hammaren, 2012; Herz & Johansson, 2012). Exclusion is a complex, dynamic, and relational process. Immigrant youth experience varied and differential exclusions from various spheres of social life, according to their social positions in terms of age, citizenship status, migration history, race, class background, gender, and linguistic abilities (Fangen, 2010; Fangen, Hammaren, & Johansson, 2012; Harris, 2013; Zaami, 2015).

Exclusionary experiences and blocked opportunities rupture young immigrants' attachments to people and social institutions, shape their self-esteem and identity, and alter their hopes, aspirations, and life outcomes. Exclusions shape, in other words, how immigrant youth can come to belong. An important component of many young immigrants' settlement experiences involves negotiating exclusions in their attempt to claim belonging.

Summary

In this chapter, I constructed the major analytical approach to the study of immigrant and refugee youth living in Windsor, Ontario. I took as my theoretical point of departure the sociology of childhood, a body of empirical and theoretical work that re-conceptualizes young people's place in social organization and the societal structure. A key element of the sociology of childhood is the emphasis it places on young people's unique contributions to their own development and socialization (Corsaro, 2014, p. 5). I suggested that the sociology of childhood provides a unique theoretical orientation to understand young people's active participation in their migration and settlement processes.

In this chapter, I drew on the sociology of childhood and the work of the migration scholar Abdelmalek Sayad (2004) to offer a sociological approach to understanding young immigrant lives that takes seriously their statuses as both young people and immigrants. In particular, I contended that the immigrant condition intersects with the youth experience to create both vulnerabilities and possibilities that young immigrants and refugees must negotiate as they attempt to settle in Canada. That is, young immigrants' and refugees' dual social positioning as 'youth' and 'immigrant' intersect to produce particular problems and pressures that young immigrants must confront. These larger theoretical considerations pointed us toward several sensitizing concepts, which inform my analysis of the migration and settlement experience of

young immigrants and refugees throughout this study: Aspirations and agency; Embeddedness; and Search for belonging and confronting exclusions. These sensitizing concepts allow us to observe how the problems and pressures produced by the youth experience and immigrant condition, though analytically separate, are lived experienced holistically in everyday life. While the analytical approach developed in this chapter pays specific attention to the aspirations and agency of young immigrants and refugees, structural, institutional, and relational arrangements, as well as young immigrants' complex positioning within hierarchies of race, class, and gender, are understood to shape their experiences of migration, settlement, social inclusion, and belonging.

In the next chapter, I operationalize my study by discussing my methodological approach and research design. This chapter also maps out the setting of the research—Windsor, Ontario.

CHAPTER 3

Exploring Young Immigrant Lives—An Outline of a Research Design

In an honest and insightful paper entitled “Troubling Methods in Qualitative Inquiry and Beyond,” Tanggaard (2013) argues there is increasing emphasis on teaching and learning research methods. To account for this trend, Tanggaard argues that researchers use research methods as performative tools to establish expertise in a context of increasing “uncertainty of the value of ‘truth’ in knowledge construction” (p. 3). Research methods represent

an attempt of systematization, formalization and maybe a kind of semi-control of the whole research process which can be a relief for a discipline trying to legitimize itself as a science and still recognizing the value of qualitative work. (p. 2)

A potential consequence of these trends is that many qualitative researchers become convinced that empirical materials must be organized through categories like research design, data collection, and data analysis, and that they must follow rigid procedures, even if these concepts and procedures are not the best way to grasp the object of study. “The rules of research-guide books, are good to know” (p. 3). In a moment of honesty not often found in reporting about scientific research, Tanggaard admits that regularly defined, schematic plans and procedures outlined in social scientific methodology guides do not provide an adequate accounting of what happens when researchers conduct qualitative inquiries (p. 9). Research “plans are often re-written” (p. 9) and “many descriptions of research practices are of a retrospective kind, being post-rationalizations of what was actually done” (p. 9).

In response, Tanggaard advocates for “scientific craftsmanship” (p. 9) as an orientating approach to social inquiry, drawing on the work of C. Wright Mills (1959, 2000) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). The scientific craftsman is not a disembodied, objective, rational decision-maker who carries out pre-arranged research plans. The craftsman is a real person, in flesh and blood, who throughout the research process is constantly grappling with new ideas, making situated judgments as the research unfolds, and theoretically re-working ideas. The craftsman does so in light of often unplanned empirical insights, interactions with participants, colleagues, and strangers, and personal experiences. The research process is, thus, a lived experience, an open-ended learning process (Lave & Kvale, 1995), and a complex social activity (Hammond, 1964, p. 6).

The notion that knowledge produced in social science is a negotiated social product necessitates methodological explanations that attend to both the “context of justification” (Hammond, 1964, p. 3), as well as the important but often ignored aspect of social research, the “context of discovery” (p. 3). In fact, over the past 50 years or so, qualitative research has become increasingly reflexive about the research process. This has included paying attention to power relations between the researcher and the researched and the politics of representation (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Foley & Valenzuela, 2008; MacIntyre, 2008). Critiques of positivism assert that scientific knowledge is produced from a particular standpoint (DeVault, 1996; Skeggs, 2001), that the social position of the researcher has a critical effect on the production and analysis of data (Abu-Lughod, 2000; Allen, 2004; Denzin, 2001; Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000; Tanggaard, 2009), and that fieldwork entails the encounter of intersubjective orders (Faubion, 2001).

Taking up Tanggaard’s call for more “flesh and blood” (p. 9) and self-reflexive accounts of research reporting, this chapter discusses in detail the research design of this study. I explain how and why I made the decisions I did and the impact these had on what can be said about the lives of young immigrants living in Windsor, Ontario. Undoubtedly, my own statuses as an adult, second-generation, white male researcher influenced the types of insights and stories generated through the research process. I adopted various strategies to address these issues and identify them in the remaining sections of this chapter when outlining my data collection and data analysis procedures. However, before discussing my research design in more detail, I turn to a brief discussion of the setting of the research—Windsor, Ontario.

Setting

Windsor as a city of migration

Located in Southwestern Ontario on the border with Detroit, Michigan, the City of Windsor is part of a regional area that includes seven municipalities: Amherstburg, Essex, Kingsville, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Leamington, and Tecumseh. According to most recent census data, the region has a total population of 281,350 but most its residents live in the City of Windsor (n=210,891). As George and Ku (2012) note, the city is often characterized as a blue-collar auto-manufacturing, border city. The Ambassador Bridge, which connects the USA to Canada symbolizes the city’s long-standing history as a border town. As a result of the decline of the auto-sector over the last twenty years, Windsor has become characterized as an economically struggling city. Although unfortunate, this characterization is empirically verifiable, as the unemployment rate in recent years has hovered around 10%, making it one of Canada’s most unemployed municipalities.

However, in addition to its industrial history and border city status, the region has a rich cultural and migration history. First inhabited by First Nations people, the areas eventually became a central site of French and English colonization of North America. The Underground Railroad figures importantly in local history, as Windsor was a reception site for African-American slaves. Throughout the 20th century, many immigrants arrived to work in the burgeoning manufacturing sector, deeply connected to the rise of Detroit industries. During this time, European immigrants, including British, French, Italians, Greeks and various Eastern Europeans, arrived in the region. The same period also saw the arrival of immigrants from the Middle East, most notably Lebanon. In line with national immigration trends, immigrants from non-European countries began to increasingly arrive in the region (George & Ku, 2012; George, Ku, Selimos, & Sriskandarajah, 2014; George, Selimos & Ku, 2015). Seasonal agricultural farm workers, particularly from Mexico and Jamaica, have also been coming to region under the parameter of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program to work in the region's greenhouse industries since the 1970s. Seasonal agricultural workers remain an important part of the fabric of life in the region, especially in the county (George & Ku, 2012; George, Selimos & Ku, 2015; also, see Basok, 2004).

The following passage describes Windsor's industrial heritage, trans-border nature, and ethno-cultural diversity:

The city's urban landscape is marked by industrial imperatives and inter-cultural diversity. The Ambassador Bridge, at 2300 m, carries trucks across the border daily and signifies the promise of trade, the imperatives of security and cross border travel, a central matrix for settlement past and present. Old Sandwichtowne, west of "the Bridge", marks early British settlement; francophone streets—long anglicized—house the shops of

“Little Italy”, downtown. This Italian imprint, residual but prominent, is just south of a strip— “Little Beirut” to some—where Middle Eastern bakeries and restaurants flourish. Arab immigrants (Muslim and Christian) thrive here and are supported through trans-border connections to Dearborn, Michigan, home to the largest Middle Eastern population in the USA. Beyond Windsor sits Leamington (an old manufacturing town), and farms and greenhouses dot the county. The agricultural industry is significant and draws heavily on immigrant labour and temporary foreign workers, particularly from Mexico and Jamaica. However, the characterization of Windsor as a postindustrial, struggling manufacturing centre over-rides its ethno-cultural diversity and the complex arrangements of labour—including foreign temporary labour—that marks the wider regional economy. (George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015, pp. 4-5)

In the City of Windsor, more than 40, 000 residents report being of either of British or French origin, and 28, 000 as either of Italian or German origin. Approximately, 35, 000 reported ‘Canadian’ as their ethnic origin—numbers that do not consider those who identify as having several ethnic origins. According to Canadian census data, Arabs represent the largest visible minority group in the city, followed by South Asians, Chinese, and African-Canadian respectively (Statistics Canada, 2011). The most frequently spoken language at home in Windsor is English, while the most common non-official languages include Arabic, Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese (n.o.s.), and Serbian. In terms of religious diversity, Canadian 2011 Census data illustrates that 44.5% of residents in Windsor are Catholics. The next three largest religious affiliations include Anglican (5.5%), United Church (4.8%), and Muslim (4.2%) (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Today, Windsor remains an important immigrant destination in Ontario, especially outside the Greater Toronto Area (Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, p. 14). The region's total immigrant population is 81,730, with 70% of all immigrants to the region residing in the City of Windsor. Recent immigrants are also more likely to settle in the city. Figure 1 describes the distribution of immigrants based on municipality of residence. Figure 2 outlines the number of immigrants arriving in Windsor Essex between 2006 and 2011 and their municipality of residence.

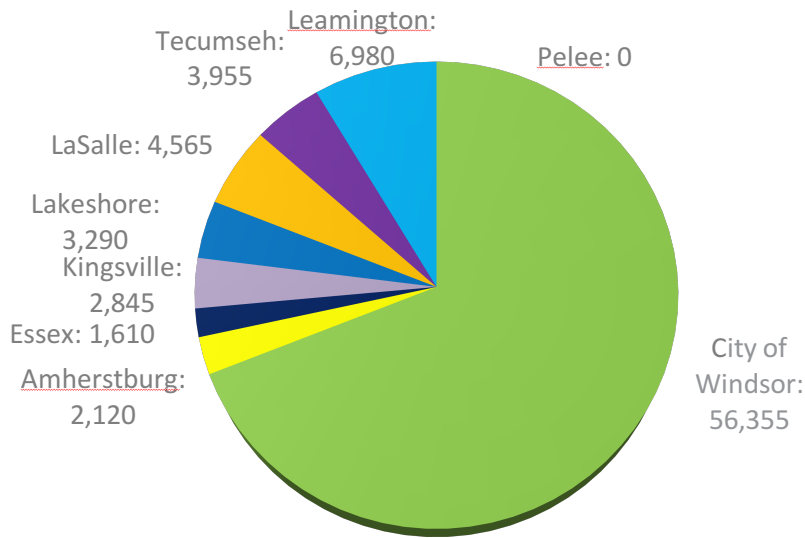


Figure 1. Distribution of immigrants in Windsor Essex based on municipality of residence. Adapted from George, Ku, Selimos, and Sriskandarajah (2014)

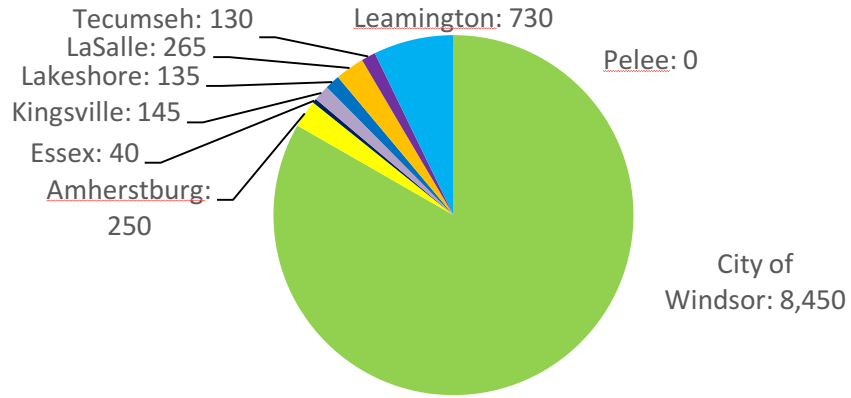


Figure 2. Number of immigrants arriving between 2006 and 2011 and their municipality of residence. Adapted from George, Ku, Selimos, and Sriskandarajah (2014)

Nearly half of Windsor’s immigrants arrived in the city after 1991. The United States, Italy, Iraq, United Kingdom, China, Lebanon, and India represent the major source countries of all immigrants to the City of Windsor. However, the major source countries of immigrants arriving to the region between 2006 and 2011 has shifted to include the United States, Iraq, China, India, Philippines, Pakistan, and Haiti. Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate these shifts in source countries.

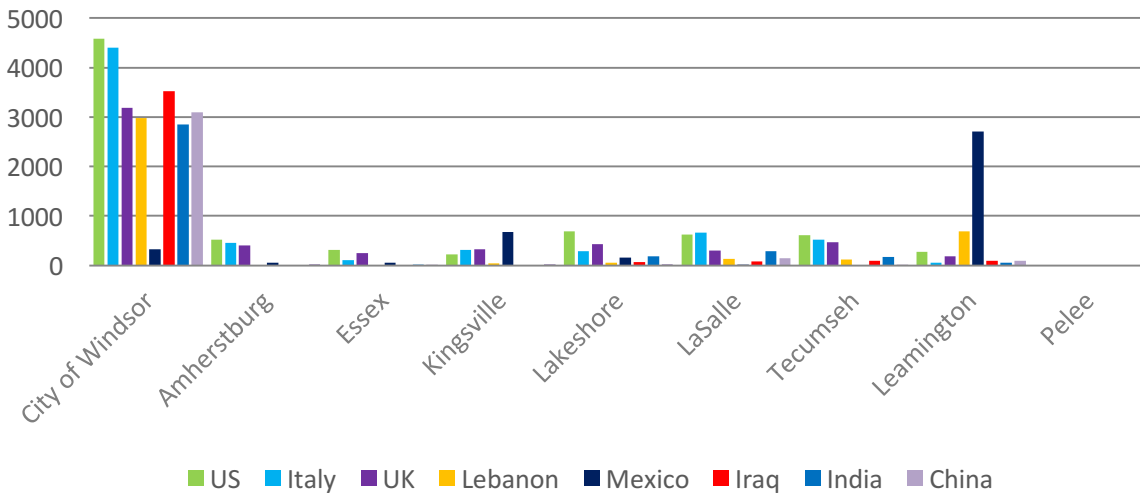


Figure 3. Major source countries of immigrants to Windsor Essex. Adapted from George, Ku, Selimos, and Sriskandarajah (2014)

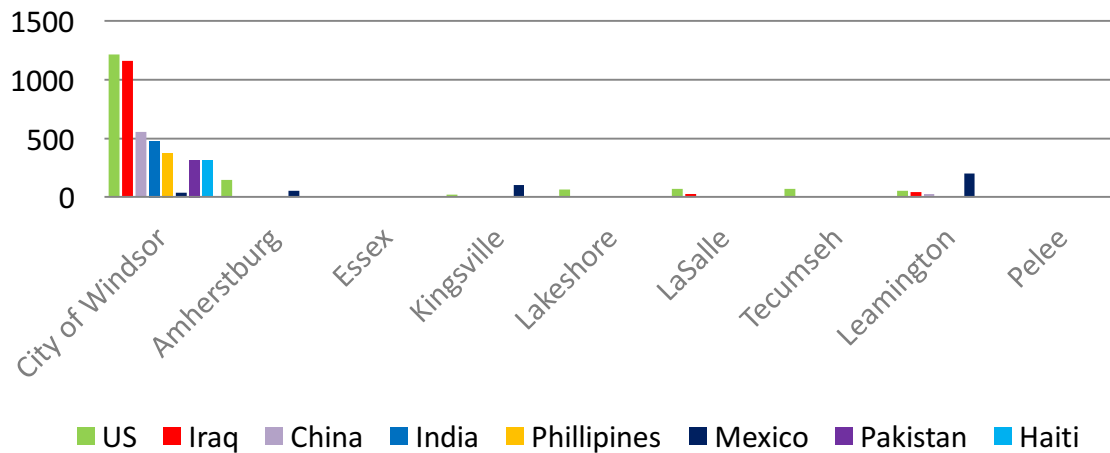


Figure 4. Major source countries of immigrants to Windsor Essex, 2006-2011. Adapted from George, Ku, Selimos, and Sriskandarajah (2014)

Immigrant and refugee youth in Windsor

Windsor’s youth population, defined here as persons between the ages of 15 and 24, comprise 13.5% (28, 510) of the city’s total population. In line with general population trends, the number of young people living in Windsor decreased between 2006 and 2011. However, in 2011 Windsor experienced an increase in its youth population (ages 0-19) (United Way of Windsor and Essex, 2015, p. 8). The United Way of Windsor Essex 2015 Community Well-Being Report admits that the loss of young people and families from the city and region remains a concern, and suggests that a major factor driving out-migration is the lack of economic opportunities (p. 14). Unfortunately, specific data on immigrant youth living in the City of Windsor are sparse. It is safe to assume that in line with Windsor’s larger immigrant population, Windsor’s youth population is socially and culturally diverse. This will clearly be evidenced in my report on the participant sample of this study.

Settlement services and supports in Windsor

Windsor has developed a robust infrastructure to help with the settlement of immigrants. Upon arrival, newcomer immigrants are often directed to various settlement agencies that deliver

programs designed to build their capacity and, at the same time, socialize them to Canadian values. Seven main agencies provide settlement service in the city of Windsor. Language classes, orientation and citizenship programs, and employment assistance represent the main services offered by these agencies, which are primarily funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada), although the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration also funds programs related to settlement. Settlement agencies throughout the city offer programs specifically targeting young immigrants, including homework support, access to computers and the internet, employment help, counselling services, and extra-curricular activities such as drumming circles, art classes, field trips.

Non-settlement organizations and agencies play a key role in supporting immigrant settlement in Windsor. School boards and public schools, colleges and university, religious organizations, the health care sector, and to a lesser degree ethno-cultural associations are key stakeholders in newcomer immigrant settlement. Furthermore, newcomer immigrant families are entitled to many social supports offered outside of the settlement sector, including childcare subsidies, access to housing support programs, and employment and financial assistance. These programs play an important role in newcomer settlement experiences and are delivered by the City of Windsor, the service system manager for residents of the region.

Schools remain a critical site for the settlement of young immigrants and several high schools in the city have developed robust curricular and non-curricular supports. When newcomer immigrant youth arrive in the city, their academic histories and language skills are assessed. Based on the results of these assessments, they are placed in specific academic programs and grade levels. Two local English-speaking high schools play a key role in the settlement of newcomer immigrant youth. These two schools have developed robust English

language curriculum, which serve a large percentage of Windsor's newcomer immigrant youth population. These schools are characterized by significant social and cultural diversity: about 18% of each schools' student body were identified as newcomer immigrant (having arrived in Canada within the last three years); about 50% of students first language was not English, and over 25% of the students were classified as low-income. Chapter Five outlines in greater detail the architecture of formal and informal settlement support offered in these schools.

The Windsor-Essex region was one of the first region in Canada to form a local immigration partnership in Ontario. Federally-sponsored but locally-coordinated, local partnership councils work to coordinate services and build connections with community stakeholders so that newcomer immigrant issues are taken up by a wide variety of social actors (George, Selimos, Ku, 2015, p. 5). The central idea is that the settlement of immigrant newcomers is a cross-sector responsibility that requires building capacity in sectors outside of the settlement sector. During its operation, the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WELIP) has been quite successful in doing this, as it now has nearly 90 members that represent organizations and agencies across various service sectors. Since its inception, WELIP has made important strides in supporting immigrant and refugees at the cross-sectoral and community level (see George, Ku, Selimos, & Sriskandarajah, 2014).

I now turn to a detailed description of this study's research design.

Research Design

Overview of research design

The study investigated young immigrants' and refugees' active participation in their migration and settlement, as well as institutional and contextual features that shape these experiences. As such, a qualitative research design was deemed applicable. The strength of a

qualitative inquiry lies in its self-reflexive nature (Tracey, 2001), its sensitivity to context when explaining social action and processes (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Tracey, 2012), and its effectiveness at capturing the meanings and intentions of people in ways that convey the depth, complexity, and subjectivity of their experiences (Devine, 2011, p. 11; Kalkhe, 2014).

Specifically, my research study unfolded over two phases. During the first phase, implemented roughly between January 2014 and May 2014, I conducted 18 interviews with teachers, social workers, and other professionals who work closely with immigrant youth living in the city. The second phase fell between August 2014 and January 2015. During this stage, I conducted three focus groups (n=35) and thirty in-depth interviews with immigrant youth themselves. I also attended community events and forums that focused on issues of immigration to the city, especially those that dealt with issues facing immigrant and refugee youth, and monitored local media outlets, collecting articles dealing with immigration topics or youth issues. Additionally, I learned about the lives of immigrant youth through many informal conversations with settlement workers and migrant youth themselves. These informal conversations happened at social gatherings, community events, over coffee, or during my own volunteer activities. Although these activities did not necessarily produce the ‘official data’ of my research, these experiences were essential for developing contextual knowledge of Windsor as a place and influenced how I thought about the lives of these young people.

This research study was also informed by my involvement in a previous study that explored Windsor and Essex County’s capacity to welcome newcomer immigrants. This research project, conducted primarily in 2014, drew attention to the settlement and social inclusion experiences of immigrants living in Windsor and Essex County. It also provided suggestions for enhancing the region’s welcoming capacity. This study utilized a multi-method design that

included interviews and focus groups with immigrants, interviews with key sector stakeholders, a local media analysis, and a survey of local organizations. Overall, the study demonstrated how the unique cultural, social, and institutional characteristics of Windsor shaped immigrant experiences of settlement and belonging (see George, Ku, Selimos, & Sriskandarajah, 2014; George, Ku, Sriskandarajah, & Selimos, 2015; George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015). The insights generated by this study provided an empirical base upon which I built my study of immigrant youth in the city.

Theoretical approach to interviews and focus groups

Given that my research project is based primarily on in-depth interviews and focus groups, a few points about how I understand and approach these methods are in order. To inform my approach to interviewing, I adopted Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interview approach. This approach to interviewing does not see interviews as simply a method of uncovering the hidden worlds and meanings of people. Rather, in line with social constructionist assumptions, interviews are understood to be performative and conversational journeys through which the interviewer and interviewee dialogically interpret and produce meaning (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; also, see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Tanggaard, 2009). Interviews are treated as social occasions where thoughts, feelings, stories, perceptions, and issues are generated and explored dialogically (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999; also, see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Bourdieu, 1999, pp. 607-626). Interviews allow researchers to examine the interpretive and discursive resources people use to make meaning of their lives, but those meanings are always understood to be evoked and produced *in situ* during the interview occasion. The subject behind the interviewee is, thus, assumed to be constructed in relation to the ongoing communicative dialogue of the interview situation (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

According to Holstein and Gubrium (1995), the goal of an interviewer is to encourage the production of personal narratives by creating an interview environment that allows for the production of both a range and complexity of meanings related to the topic of the research project. Holstein and Gubrium point to two conditions that influence the production of possible meanings during an interview. The topics of an interview, framed and selected by the interviewer, provide the interpretive resources respondents draw on to make sense and talk about their world. The information offered by an interviewee is continuously developed in relation to ongoing interview interactions. As such, the active interview requires that the researcher situate themselves reflexively in the interview process by considering how situational contexts and the differing subjectivities between interviewer and interviewee influence the types of thoughts and expressions evoked during the interview occasion. The constructionist assumptions of the active interview complicate traditional understandings of sampling, data collection, and analysis. Since interview participants articulate narrative accounts about their lives in many ways and from various subject positions, the 'sample' is never fully under control, but rather an ongoing process that involves the interviewer and interviewee. The goal of sampling is not to establish representativeness of a given population, but to solicit a range of horizons of meaning. Data collection is understood to be both processual and substantive. In this sense, the researcher looks toward two significant 'data' points: the subjective meanings expressed by the interviewee and the interactional processes that produced those meanings.

Smithson (2000) applies similar conceptual insights and alludes to similar methodological implications in her discussion of the focus group occasion. She defines a focus group as a controlled group discussion in which participants collectively produce accounts of a proposed topic (p. 105). Like the active interview, focus groups are performative occasions in

which people jointly interpret and produce meanings. Thus, “opinions stated in the groups should not be viewed as previously formed, static things . . . but as constructed in social situations” (p. 116). As joint productions, the thoughts, ideas, and themes that emerge do not simply “belong” to the individual, but must be understood as a result of all the people in the room working together (p. 116). In this sense, focus groups provide insights into both the situated production of knowledge and the debates and agreements prevalent among participants.

Phase 1: Interviews with teachers and settlement workers

During the first stage, which fell roughly between January 2014 and May 2014, I conducted 18 interviews with adult professionals who work closely with young immigrants living in the city. In total, I interviewed 15 teachers and three youth settlement workers. Many of the teachers I interviewed were either born in Windsor or were long-term residents. Their years of experience teaching ranged from five to 30 years. Many of the teachers I spoke to were second generation Canadians. One teacher I spoke to was herself an immigrant. It was not uncommon, therefore, for many of these participants to draw on their own family migration story when speaking about the lives of immigrant youth. The three youth settlement workers were themselves all immigrants. I decided to interview these adult professionals before interviewing migrant youth in order to gain a better understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional context of immigrant youth settlement in Windsor. On one hand, I used these interviews primarily as “factual interviews” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 150) to gain a contextual understanding of the range and types of services and educational programs available to young immigrants and refugees in the city. On the other hand, I asked them to comment, as adults with established lives in Windsor, on the larger context of immigration and diversity in the city.

In order to recruit teachers, I first contacted the principal of one of the main high schools that served many immigrant youth and set up an informal meeting to discuss my research interests. I had a good relationship with this school because the previous year I had volunteered as an assistant coach for their senior high boys' soccer team. The principal expressed interest in the research project and viewed my work as important to both the school and the city. She agreed to assist me in recruiting both teachers and youth for the study. The principal circulated a request for interviews on my behalf and arranged a meeting with the department head of the school's English Language Learning (ELL) program. In addition to re-circulating my letter of request, the department head assisted in the recruitment process by reaching out to her colleagues and advocating for my research. As I conducted interviews with teachers, I was introduced to other school professionals, as well as several educators who did not work at this school, but who worked or had worked closely with immigrant youth (two had recently retired). I recruited settlement workers through email requests and my own personal networks, which I had established through my involvement in previous research and volunteer activities. I spoke with settlement workers from two of the five settlement agencies in Windsor. The other settlement services or youth-serving agencies I contacted either did not respond to my emails or indicated that they were too busy provide an interview.

At the beginning of each interview, I explained the purpose of my research project and provided participants with a letter of information. I framed my interviews as invitations for participants to help me think and learn about the lives of immigrant youth living in Windsor, Ontario. This approach helped create a relaxed and conversational environment in which the interviewee was positioned as an expert and could talk freely and openly about their experiences. I conducted most interviews with teachers on the school premises during lunch hours, after

school, or during their preparation hours. These interviews were loosely structured into two parts. First, I asked about the history of their involvement in the school and how current experiences working in the school related to previous teaching experiences (assuming they have taught elsewhere). Second, I asked teachers to reflect on the relationship of the school to the community, what they perceived to be the most pertinent issues facing immigrant youth, and their perceptions of peer relations in the school.

Interviews with settlement workers were also semi-structured. Framing my interviews in a similar way to those I conducted with teachers, I asked settlement workers questions about their experiences working with immigrant youth, what type of services were available to immigrant youth in the city, how they assessed Windsor as a site of reception for immigrant youth specifically, and what they saw as some of the main challenges facing immigrant youth in the city. I conducted these interviews with settlement workers at local coffee shops or in their offices.

Phase 2: Focus groups and interviews with immigrant and refugee youth

The second stage of my research project fell between May 2014 and January 2015. During this stage, I conducted three focus groups (n=35) and 30 in-depth interviews with immigrant and refugee youth themselves. I conducted focus groups before interviewing migrant youth individually, because I wanted to use the insights generated during these group discussions to inform my semi-structured interviews. For both focus group and interviews, young people were sourced through settlement agencies and one local high school.

Focus groups To recruit focus group participants, I sent requests via email to settlement agencies that I knew had after-school programming for immigrant youth. I wanted to include a broad range of experiences so I intentionally kept my selection criteria broad: participants had to

be between 16 and 24 years of age and immigrants to Canada. Three settlement agencies agreed to help me recruit participants and organized for me focus group discussions on their premises during their youth programming hours. In total, I conducted three focus groups that included a total of 35 participants. Focus groups participants ranged from 16 to 22 years of age and their length of stay in Canada ranged from one to seven years. In total, 17 males and 18 females took part in focus group discussions. Their countries of origin were diverse: Lebanon, Sudan, Liberia, Russia, Iraq, Jordan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Burundi, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, the Philippines, and China. Some participants came to Canada as refugees, while others entered through the family sponsorship program. Others were unsure of the immigrant category they entered Canada. Many of the participants lived in multiple countries before coming to Canada, as well as other cities throughout Canada before moving to Windsor.

I requested that focus groups include between five and eight participants. However, for two of the three focus groups sessions, when I arrived on site the youth worker asked that I conduct a larger group discussion with all youth attending the after-school program. The first and second focus group included fourteen participants each, while the third focus group included five participants. This pragmatic reality produced limitations. When many people participate in group discussion, certain voices tend to dominate. I attempted to overcome this limitation by encouraging as many people to speak as possible and by inviting participants to speak with me after the group discussion if they had a point they wanted to make but were unable to express during the larger group discussion. These post-discussion comments were not recorded but documented in detail in my research diary. Despite these less than ideal situations, these focus groups were successful at generating a range of narratives about the lives and perspectives of immigrant youth in the city.

At the beginning of each focus group, I discussed the purpose of my research, circulated a letter of information about the research project, and asked participants to orally consent to their participation. As group events, I told focus groups participants that I cannot ensure complete confidentiality.² Furthermore, given the dialogical nature of focus groups, participants were told that they would not be able to withdraw from the study after the focus group was completed. This was made clear before the focus groups began. I framed each focus group session as an opportunity for me to learn about their life and for them to share their experiences. I told participants that there were no right or wrong answers to my questions; rather, I was interested in learning about their opinions and perspectives.

To explore their experiences of migration, settlement, and belonging, focus groups were organized in two parts. The first part of the focus group attempted to create a shared understanding among the participants. I asked participants to introduce themselves, share their migration stories, and how they came to live in Windsor. I then asked participants to reflect on their first impressions of Canada and how these impressions lived up to what they thought Canada would be like before moving here. Following these initial questions, I asked participants to comment on the biggest challenges they faced as they settled in a new country and a new city. Through their responses I probed the challenges of settlement with respect to various spheres of their lives including their family, school, and peer relations. I also asked for their thoughts and opinions about Windsor and Canada. Focus groups were conducted in English.

Interviews Interview participants were sourced through the high school I worked closely with during the first phase of the research project and through various settlement agencies in the city. Before recruiting youth interview participants from the school, I met with the principal and

² See University of Windsor Research Ethic Board guidelines for focus groups at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb/policies-guidelines>

the ELL department head to discuss the purpose of the interviews and alleviate any potential concerns. At this meeting, we also discussed the selection criteria: I wanted to interview young people who demonstrated a range of migration experiences and who would be able to speak English proficiently enough to express these stories in a one-hour interview. During this meeting, the principal and the ELL department head recommended that I interview students 18 years or older. They felt that receiving parental approval would be too burdensome and complicated. Not wanting to place too much work on the school staff, I agreed to this criterion. Following this meeting, the ELL department head in collaboration with several ELL and non-ELL teachers developed a list of potential interview participants. These potential participants were invited to a meeting held during lunch hour in the ELL department's main office. During this presentation, I introduced myself, explained the purpose of my research project, and invited questions. All interviews organized through the school were conducted at the school.

In addition to recruitment through the school, I also recruited interview participants from various youth-serving organizations, institutions, and associations in Windsor. I sent recruitment emails to the appropriate representatives of the organization or association to request interviews. Youth workers arranged the meeting times with the interview participants. All of these interviews were held at settlement agencies. Settlement agencies were less concerned about parental approval allowing me to interview several young people under the age of 18.

To create an interview environment in which participants would feel comfortable exploring a range of experiences, I purposely framed our meetings as opportunities for me to learn about their life. Such a framing placed me into a position of ignorance and the participants into positions of expert on their own lives. I also attempted to create a more open and free atmosphere and, therefore, asked participants to think of our meeting as informal conversation

about who they are and their experiences coming to and living in Canada. All interviews were conducted in English.

Through in-depth interviews I wanted to generate insights into how they understood themselves, their migration, and their settlement in Canada. I did this partly by asking participants to reflect on the “ordinary” ways in which they engage in day-to-day life and relate their experiences, if they could, to the experiences of people close to them. Our conversations were divided into three parts: past, present, and future. During the first part of the conversation, we talked about their ‘homeland,’ their life there, and how they came to live in Canada. I sought, in other words, to generate stories about their emigration, knowing that processes of leaving inform how immigrants will make sense of their life in Canada. After exploring their migration history, I then asked participants about their life here in Canada and in Windsor specifically. I asked about their family, friends and peers, school, neighbourhood, employment experiences, and their overall impressions of the city. In this section, I wanted to generate insights into their participation in multiple domains of life in Windsor. I also asked participants to reflect on how their experiences compared to siblings and parents. This proved to a fruitful line of questioning, evoking the intimate connections young immigrants and refugees drew between their lives and those closest to them. I always ended our conversations with a discussion about their future—what were their aspirations and goals and to what extent was Windsor and Canada more generally a place for them to achieve these goals? Asking about their orientations to the future was a very effective way of learning about how they made sense of their present lives.

In total, I interviewed 30 immigrant and refugee youth. Interview participants ranged from 17 to 22 years of age with a mean age of 18. Thirteen males and 17 females participated in the in-depth interviews. Most participants arrived in Canada during their adolescence with a

mean average age of arrival of 15. Although there were a few exceptions, most participants I spoke with were in their second stage of settlement, having lived in Canada for less than five years. One participant was born in Canada, but spent large portions of their childhood and adolescence outside of Canada. Another participant was born and raised in Canada, but I decided to keep her interview as part of my data set because her narrative revealed interesting stories and insights about her family's migration and settlement experiences (two of her sisters were not born in Canada).

Most participants came to Canada with family members, but not necessarily their parents. Others came to Canada, often with relatives, to join a parent already living in the country. Two participants came to Canada as unaccompanied minors. Forty percent (n=12) of interview participants came as refugees, either alone or accompanied by family members. However, many participants who arrived in Canada through other immigration pathways shared with refugee participants the experience of fleeing or trying to escape life-threatening situations. Their countries of origin were diverse and included Iraq, Congo, Somalia, Ethiopia, Albania, Guinea, Haiti, Eritrea, and China. The category of country of origin, however, hides the astounding religious, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of participants. Furthermore, seventy percent of my interview participants lived in at least one country in addition to their country of origin before coming to Canada. Many also lived in other cities throughout Canada before arriving in Windsor.

There was considerable variation in the size and composition of their families in Canada, with some living here without parents, with relatives, in one parent households, and in large families with many siblings. Some had parents who were highly educated professionals or who came from, as one participant remarked, "distinguished families," in their country of origin.

Often, however, their parents' accomplishments and credentials were not recognized in Canada. Others had parents with limited university education who worked in non-professionalized fields such as farmers, bakers, or stonemasons before coming to Canada. Some had parents who were small businesses owners in their home country. In Windsor, many of the participant's parents were attending English courses and were either looking for work or more reliable, full-time employment. Some young people I interviewed had part-time employment or worked through the summer months to help support their families. Over 80% of my participants were either attending or had attended one of these the two high schools specified earlier that work with most newcomer immigrant youth in the city.

Table 1 outlines the demographic information relevant to interviews conducted with young immigrants.

Table 1. Demographic information of youth interview participants

Interview	Gender	Age at time of interview	Age at arrival	Years living in Canada	Country of origin	Migration pathway, if known
1	Male	18	15	3	Ethiopia	Refugee
2	Male	19	16	3	Congo	Refugee
3	Male	21	17	4	Iraq	Family sponsor
4	Female	19	16	3	Iraq	Refugee
5	Male	16	13	3	Congo	Refugee
6	Female	19	14	5	Lebanon	Family sponsor
7	Male	18	14	4	Sudan	Refugee
8	Male	21	15	6	Ethiopia	Refugee
9	Female	18	4	14	Afghanistan/Pakistan	Unavailable
10	Female	18	14	4	Somalia	Refugee
11	Female	20	N/A	N/A	Canada (Lebanese)	N/A
12	Female	18	16	2	Eritrea	Family sponsor
13	Male	19	15	4	Sudan	Family sponsor
14	Male	19	18	1	Albania	Family sponsor
15	Female	20	17	3	Iraq	Refugee
16	Female	19	16	3	Iraq	Refugee

17	Female	18	4 (arrived in Canada) 13 (returned to India) 16 (returned to Canada)	Resided in Canada for a total of approximately 11 years	India	Family sponsor
18	Male	21	19	2	Iraq	Family sponsor
19	Male	19	16	3	Iraq	Refugee
20	Female	20	15	5	Somalia	Refugee
21	Female	19	13	6	Somalia	Family sponsor
22	Male	20	19	1	Iraq	Family sponsor
23	Female	18	2 (moved to Bangladesh) 17 (returned to Canada)	Approximately 1.5 years	Canada, (Bangladesh)	N/A
24	Female	22	15	7	Guinea	Family sponsor
25	Female	17	10	7	Guinea	Family sponsor
26	Female	18	17	Less than 1 year	Iraq	Family sponsor
27	Female	19	18	1	Iraq	Family sponsor
28	Male	18	18	Less than 1 year	China	International student
29	Male	20	18	2	Iraq	Refugee
30	Female	18	16	1.5	China	International student

Data analysis

I adopted a “bricolage approach” (Kincheloe, 2001; see also Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 233) to my analysis of interviews and focus groups. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define bricolage as “something put together using whatever tools happen to be available, even if the tools were not designed for the task at hand” (p. 233). The bricolage interpreter flexibly and pragmatically adapts techniques, approaches, and concepts to generate meaning and make sense of interview materials. This approach to qualitative data analysis contrasts more procedural approaches and techniques (p. 234) and aligns with Tanggaard’s (2013) appeal for scientific craftsmanship. By working and re-working interview materials in conversation with interview

participants and colleagues, the scientific craftsman uses analytical techniques and approaches as tools (like a hammer, nail, pen, computer) to pragmatically forge meaning out of the stories, opinions, and views expressed by interview participants. Such an approach values the subject matter as more important than the application of specific analytical techniques (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 234).

The process of meaning-generation in my research project unfolded over time through my own constant reflection and theoretical re-working of material. Below, I specify the several stages of data analysis. It should be noted, however, that these stages were somewhat overlapping and interconnected. I present my analysis process here as stage-based for heuristic purposes.

Note-taking, case write-ups, and reflective journaling I took extensive notes during interviews and focus group sessions, and wrote these notes up as detailed case write-ups. Following the instructions of Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) and Holstein and Gubrium (1995), I attempted to write these descriptions in as much detail as possible, much like how an ethnographer may write up a fieldnote. The case write-ups averaged from two to six pages single-spaced in length. They were primarily descriptive: explaining the setting of the interview or focus group, noting my general impressions, detailing how the conversation progressed, and highlighting major insights and themes emerging from the conversations. I structured my case write-ups along the following headings: Migration history, Family, Peer relations, School, Neighbourhood, and City. In case write-ups I also made interpretive comments, noting comparisons between other interview participants and identifying potential theoretical implications. Following the advice of Lareau and Shultz (1996) with respect to fieldnotes, I wrote case write-ups within 24 hours after conducting an interview to ensure essential details

were not forgotten. Case write-ups were important to my overall data analysis approach for several reasons. First, they provided an important record of my initial impressions and interpretations of interviews and focus groups, which I later referenced and compared to my more formal analysis of transcribed interviews. Second, the case write-ups provided a record of my research and thinking about the lives of immigrant and refugee youth, allowing me to map out aspects of my ongoing learning as the research unfolded.

In addition to these case write-ups, I maintained a research journal that included reflections on the research project, summarizations of books and articles I read that pertained to my topic, observations of community events, and explanations of various theoretical concepts and positions. Through this process, I accumulated four standard-sized research notebooks full of personal reflections.

Transcription, thematic analysis, and case-based analysis I transcribed all interviews and focus groups. While transcribing the interviews, I made notes on emerging themes and interesting narratives presented by research participants in relation to my research questions. I first subjected my transcribed materials to a thematic analysis. I read and re-read these transcripts to establish a familiarity with key themes and narratives. As I listened to the views, thoughts, and stories being told to me by the participants, I compared what they were saying to what was reported by other researchers interested in similar topics in order to develop a dialogue between various theories and the emerging data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 237).

I utilized both cross-sectional thematic analysis and case-based narrative analysis techniques. Thematic analysis was useful in identifying general tendencies and variations within and across themes regarding young people's migration and settlement experiences. In particular, I utilized the sensitizing concepts specified in chapter two—Aspirations and Agency,

Embeddedness, Search for Belonging and Confronting Exclusions—to draw out the participants' varied experiences. However, the identifications of themes (and variations within those themes) did not adequately capture the active work young people did as they attempted to settle and make a life in Windsor. Nor did it communicate adequately how immigrant and refugee youth themselves drew on their own personal histories and experiences to make sense of their lives in Canada. I wanted to capture this everyday work and the deeply personal aspects of their sense making processes. The only way to do this was to perform a narrative case-based analysis of my interview data (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Although perhaps not statistically representative, as exemplars (Flyvberg, 2001) these case-based analyses offer insights into the social-psychological dynamics (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Rathzel, 2012) of migration and settlement, and provide opportunities for sociological analysis and analytical generalization (Becker, 2014; Flyvberg, 2001; Herz & Johansson, 2012).

Analytical memorandum writing and personal/professional conversations Taking the advice that writing is a useful route to analysis (Mills, 1959), I also wrote in-depth and formalized analytical memos. I saw memorandum writing as opportunities to process what I was seeing and hearing by comparing my own insights to what other scholars have seen and heard in their studies. By the end of my data analysis, I had written approximately 160 single-spaced pages of refined analytical memorandums. In addition to writing analytical memorandums, I also discussed my interview experiences and insights with my supervisor and other professors at the university, fellow PhD colleagues, friends, and colleagues who work directly with immigration and immigrant youth. On several occasions, I presented rough drafts of chapters to colleagues who worked on an everyday basis with immigrant youth and presented working papers at academic conferences. All these conversations, both formal and informal, acted as important

“checks” on my interpretations. In fact, I found the questions, comments, and criticisms of both my academic and non-academic colleagues pointed me toward interesting analytical directions and further conceptual refinement.

Summary

In this chapter, I documented the setting within which the research took place and detailed the study’s overall research design. Viewing qualitative methodology as an iterative process and social activity, this chapter tried to attend to both the “context of justification” (Hammond, 1964, p. 3), as well as the “context of discovery” (p. 3). To paraphrase the words of Cole (1967, p. 25), the remainder of this dissertation study contains three important interweaving elements. First, it contains the words, stories, feelings, and statements of immigrant youth and those who work closely with them. Second, it contains my own attempt to put into writing what I think is important about their stories. Third, it includes the voices, ideas, and insights of other scholars who have researched and written about similar topics. In other words, what I have tried to do is consider as rigorously as possible, with whatever materials available, what it means to be a young immigrant coming of age in this city at this particular moment in history. The interpretations found in the remainder of this research study, although the product of a complex social activity, are entirely mine. I take responsibility for both the study’s strengths and its inevitable shortcomings.

CHAPTER 4

How Immigrant and Refugee Youth Make Sense of Their Migration

When immigrant youth arrive in a new country they face many practical problems. Among others, many must learn a new language, help their families with the everyday routines of life, adjust to new, and often different, school environments, and negotiate peer relations. These represent concrete and practical questions of ‘continuing to exist’ that young immigrants and refugees must face. This chapter, however, does not focus on these problems. Rather, it focuses on a more fundamental question: how do immigrant and refugee youth make sense of their migration? What consequences do these interpretations have on their aspirations and how they imagine their future selves in Canada? These questions are important to understanding processes of youth migration and settlement because they offer insights into how immigrant and refugee youth develop their life orientations that ultimately animate their social actions and choices they make in their lives, including their attitude toward education, career goals, the types of friends they seek, and how they will evaluate their experiences of migration and settlement (Crivello, 2015).

This chapter attends to young immigrant and refugee voices and agentic capacities by drawing on the notion of *biographical agency* (Heinz, 2002). The notion of biographical agency suggests that when we are confronted with important life course transitions and changes, such as those produced by peregrination, we must constantly make decisions between pathways which are compatible with our past experiences and future aspirations (Heinz, 2002). By telling autobiographical stories we engage in the important process of organizing our character and actions by drawing connections between our past, present, and imagined futures (Kolb, 2012).

These ongoing “cumulative reinterpretations of experiences” (Heinz, 2002, p. 227) become important resources for individual actions and decisions that help to structure our sense of “place and identity across the life course” (p. 227). Narrating our lives chronologically through these temporal and relational comparisons constitute a key way we develop a sense of our relationship to ourselves and our orientation to the world. Such a process is iterative and gives one’s life meaning and a purpose (Flum, 1998; Kolb, 2012; Lindgren, 2010; MacGhee, Health, & Trevana, 2012). Thus, life-course transitions are in many ways “biographical accomplishments” (Heinz, 2002, p. 226) that involve the active process of meaningfully integrating past and present experiences across time and place (Heinz, 2002, p. 226).

In order to explore these questions, I have divided the chapter into two main sections. First, I report on a thematic analysis of interviews to highlight general tendencies of how immigrant youth spoke about their lives before coming to Canada, their experiences of leaving, and their current and future lives in Canada. The chapter then moves to a micro-analysis of two young people—Rinor and Alina. Through case analyses of these two young people, I demonstrate how they actively transform their migration experiences and biographical histories into interpretive frames that inform their life plans. The chapter shows, in particular, how in the effort to make sense of their migration, immigrant and refugee youth draw important transnational and intergenerational connections in ways that inform their future goals, aspirations, and transitions to adulthood.

Narrating migration: A Presentation of General Tendencies

In the following section, I discuss the major themes that emerged when immigrant and refugee youth spoke about their experiences of their leaving and arrival, their lives in their ‘home’ countries, and their perceptions and expectations of life in Canada.

Leaving and arriving

Interviews revealed complex and differential experiences of emigration-immigration. For some, leaving was something that took place over a relatively long period of time. In other instances, a parent who had moved to Canada years earlier sponsored his or her children and spouse. In both these cases, participants were aware of their eventual move to Canada and had the opportunity to imagine their future life. Through this process of anticipatory socialization, young immigrants had time and space to negotiate feelings of excitement, fear, anxiety, and the sadness of leaving close friends and family. However, the question of leaving was complicated by the fact that many young people I interviewed lived in multiple countries for various periods of time before arriving in Canada. Others lived in several countries for shorter period—on average three to five years—with the understanding that their residence was temporary, a transfer point in their family's journey to a better life. During these periods of stay young people attended school, learned the ways of their new homes, and began to make friends, only to have to move again.

For several participants who came to Canada as refugees, the question of home and leaving proved especially difficult to answer, because life before coming to Canada centered on the repeated efforts of moving from one country to another, from one city to another, or from one refugee camp to another, in search of a potential way out of their situation. Take Amina's emigration as a case in point. Born in Somalia, her family (mother, father, two sisters, and a brother) fled ongoing civil strife to live in Kenya, where she lived for eight years. During this time her biological father died and her mother remarried. Increasing insecurity in Kenya convinced the family to leave and search for a better life in Europe. This began an intense process of border crossings. They took a boat to Yemen, entering illegally, where they stayed for

approximately six months as her mother arranged for transportation to Saudi Arabia. They remained in Saudi Arabia for about one year and then moved to Syria where her family worked odd jobs to raise enough money to cross into Turkey with an goal of getting to Romania. The journey from Syria to Turkey required walking for several days through a mountain range separating the two countries. In Turkey her family was caught by authorities and taken to a detention center for irregular migrants where they remained for about three months. At this point her family tried to apply for asylum through the United Nations but their application was rejected and her family was issued a deportation directive by the Turkish government. Apparently, however, her family's situation caught the attention of a local journalist who wrote a story about the family's plight. According to Amina, the story put pressure on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to act—something Amina describes as a stroke of luck. Within two weeks the family was admitted as government-assisted refugees to Canada.

Lana, 18, illustrates the complexities involved in a migration process characterized by multiple 'emigrations' and relatively prolonged stays in particular countries. Her family left Iraq around 2006 after they realized that the unrest and chaos was only going to get worse. They moved to Syria and lived there for nearly five years. But war followed them. In 2011, the Syrian civil war began and her family moved to Jordan. There they waited for two years for their application to Canada to be approved. Lana explained:

After the one year [in Syria] I had friends. And I got used to everything. Even my accent it becomes like Syrian not Iraqi . . . After five years, there was a war in Syria . . . we went to Jordan. . . This was like the hardest part. . . to do it twice . . . start over again. Two years in Jordan, they weren't good. You become tired, even to meet new people. You don't even want to meet new people anymore, because you are tired of that thing that you

might be going somewhere else. You are going to make relationships with people, you always going to miss them and love them and all that. It will be so hurtful. In Syria, it was so hurtful to leave my friends. Then I am going to Jordan, I have to do it all over again because I know eventually I am going to go to Canada.

Given the complexity and variation in experiences of emigration, it is not surprising that participants' arrival experiences were marked by a complex mixture of feelings that included relief, excitement, and happiness, as well as guilt, sadness, and remorse. In 2010, after living for ten years in a refugee camp, Gideon, 18, moved to Canada at the age of fourteen with seven cousins, an uncle and an aunt. "When we got the visa that we were coming," he reported, "I was so happy, so excited. But at the same time, I was missing my friends, my grandparents." Aniso, 19, originally from Somalia, lived much of her life in Ethiopia. She spoke of the complex emotions characterizing her experiences of leaving and arriving in Canada at the age of thirteen:

When we landed [in Canada], I was very sad. I didn't want to leave because my grandmother used to be my whole entire life. My mom left us when I was five. . . She came to Canada and then she sponsored us. I didn't remember anything about my mother. So the only person that raised me was only my grandmother. On the way [to the airport], we got a car. Someone said you'll have the time in the airport to say goodbye and everything before the flight leaves. So we said okay. When they asked us, the Ethiopian people, who are the travelers: "Oh, it's the three of us." They took us [the airport officials] . . . and they wouldn't allow us to say goodbye to our grandmother. . . . They dragged me to go to Canada because I didn't want to leave. I said, "No! I'm not going! I have to say goodbye to my grandmother!" [My Grandmother] wrote a poem about the three of us and she said, "God, don't take me until these three kids see their mother."

And He accepted. We came to Canada and after a year she died. All those years she prayed and prayed and prayed and He listened to her prayers. After a year she passed away and she died happily. So when I came to Canada it was very hard because I was sad leaving my grandmother behind.

Life before Canada

When discussing the contours of their life before migrating to Canada many participants spoke positively about their close connections to family, friends, and their city or town. They spoke of the love they felt for their country and the deep sense of belonging they had to the land and its history. However, despite this sense of belonging and pride, many participants conveyed a sense of *stuckness* (Hage, 2009), a generalized feeling that life could not move in a positive direction and that their societies could not provide the structures and opportunities to achieve a meaningful future life in line with their families' hopes, dreams, and desires. Their home countries lacked important attributes that would allow them to achieve a "better life." Corruption tainted their sense of hope for improvements in both their country and their own life chances. Lack of opportunities, especially with respect to careers and education, further limited their hope that society could provide them with the opportunities they desired.

Feelings of *stuckness* were expressed in statements like Ariane's, 19, who emigrated from Lebanon to Canada with her mother and siblings to join her father: "[In Lebanon] there's no jobs. You basically study and you do not use your diploma for anything. You can't even work at a restaurant there! There's no jobs." When Joseph was ten years old, a conflict broke out near his village in the Congo forcing his family to flee for safety in neighboring Uganda. Separated from his parents, Joseph lived in Uganda for six years with relatives. But Uganda "wasn't that good" and was especially bad for refugees, because "it is not easy to get a good job there."

Joseph, who arrived in Canada as a refugee approximately three years before his interview, told me that he knew only what immigration officers and relatives told him about life in Canada: “They just told us ‘it is safe for you’ . . . and they were telling you ‘you will get a good education’ . . . You go to school for free. . . In Canada, there is a chance and an opportunity for that person.”

Qualitatively different than the notion of stuckedness was the notion of *precariousness*. I use this term in the broadest sense possible to describe a general feeling that one’s life is not securely held—dependent more on chance than one’s own control—and a general sense of unpredictability in social life. Sometimes young people exemplified these feelings with reference to concrete examples: unreliable electricity and water services, their parents’ poor wages, underemployment, lack of safety in their communities, government instability, or fear that a conflict may break out with a neighboring country. The notion of precariousness was most vividly articulated by those who fled violent conflicts, often coming to Canada as refugees, either alone or with their families. In these cases, narratives of home centered on the collapse of civility and social life, as well as direct and impending threats of physical annihilation.

Paul, a 19-year-old refugee, described his life in a refugee camp in Ethiopia in the following way: “There are some places where you can go and end up just not coming back.” The following extended narrative, recounted by Simeon, a 19-year-old refugee from Iraq who at the time of the interview had been living in Canada for approximately three years, illustrates a life condition characterized by extreme precarity:

I remember very well from [when] the war of USA came to Iraq. That was like a really, really hard time . . . During that time, the Army was broken, so there were no more police, no more Army, no more nothing. So every house had to get a gun of course. My father got

one. He gave me one. I remember I was 14—not even—13 years old or 12 years old. I had a gun in my back. Because if you didn't have a gun over there, you would be killed. In 2003, when the war started, we didn't think about getting a gun. We said like this is a village. Who was going to come to us? But, actually I got beat up almost three or four times. Really hard beat up. You'd be walking on the street and somebody is going to pull you over and just beat you up for nothing. It's war. Nobody cares. They're going to beat you up take your money and run away. Nobody cares. . . . During the war, some people started expecting if you get out of the house, "Okay, this is goodbye. You may come back and you might not." They know there is a bomb happening every five minutes So, one day I was going out to get food and a bomb goes off. My mom knew I was there but she couldn't do anything. My dad couldn't do anything. They came to search for me but they couldn't find me. When the bomb happened, they didn't know anything. There is not like channel news there. There is no TV. There is no phone So, a bomb happened. Thank God I was helped by an ambulance. A priest came and helped me. He took me to the hospital.

Life in Canada

When asked to discuss their life in Canada, participants consistently cited learning English, negotiating peer relations at school, and understanding the expectations of the new society as the three most significant initial struggles they faced upon arriving in Canada. They spoke openly about the current economic hardships of their families and their parents' difficulty in finding decent work. Others spoke about missing family and friends 'back home' and their constant worry about the safety of their cousins, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles. Yet, despite these ongoing struggles, nearly every young person I spoke with described their

current lives in Canada as an improvement in the conditions of their previous lives. Participants' narratives revealed a depth of hopefulness and sense of possibility. Canada was a place where they believed, overall, they could achieve a "better life."

Participants prioritized three interrelated themes when describing their life in Canada: stability, opportunity, and duty. Regardless of the conditions of their migration, Canada was overwhelmingly and routinely portrayed as a place of relative stability and security. Even in cases where life in Canada was difficult due to economic hardship, participants highlighted Canada's sense of order. They commented on how the availability of services and other social amenities, such as housing, income support, schools, safe neighborhoods, and a clean environment created the impression that Canada was a good country that took care of its people. These assessments were made in comparison to the pre-migration experiences. For example, Natan was rather confused when I asked him to compare his life here in Canada to his life back home in Iraq. He looked at me, perplexed by the naivety of my question, and said, "At least there aren't bombs dropping on our heads." Although this is perhaps an extreme example, participants emphasized the sense of finally being in a society that offered safety from the precariousness of their previous lives.

Second, Canada was consistently depicted as a place of opportunity, and immigrant youth highlighted education as the central mechanism through which their dreams and desires for a better life could be fulfilled. The availability of good education provided many with a sense of hope and possibility. In some form or another, nearly every person I spoke with uttered variations of phrases like "I just want to get an education" or "For me, it is all about education." Many realized, like Ibrahim, that "If you don't have an education you are nothing. You can't do anything." On one level, school offered the ability to learn English, build skills, and learn about

how Canada works. These skills and competencies would help in attending post-secondary education and finding meaningful work to support themselves and their family in Canada and overseas. At a deeper level, the resolve in which many young people invested in the discourse of education relates to the fundamental assumption that education was the path toward a viable life—it was through education that young people could ‘invest in their social being’ and ‘become someone’. The notion that education was the key pathway to ‘becoming someone’ has been well documented by Crevillo (2015) in her studies of migrant children and youth in Peru.

Third, the motivation to achieve was bolstered by a deep sense of duty to their parents and other family members. For many young immigrants, their present practical energies and imagined life projects were often framed as ‘pay back’ for their parents’ sacrifices and ongoing struggles. Wahid, a 19-year-old from Iraq, told me: “They faced everything. They gave their jobs up just for us.” Gideon, featured above, connected educational success to his sense of duty toward his family both in Canada and abroad:

What kept me going was I wanted to make a change. So I let go of thinking about my friends and my family and just said I will come study, work hard, and hopefully when I get a good job, help them. So that’s what I’m trying to do: to study and do what I can so I can help.

In sum, there was a narrative tendency among immigrant and refugee youth to distinguish in life experiences before and after migration. In describing life before coming to Canada, participants prioritized themes of stuntedness and precariousness. In doing so, they framed their current lives in Canada largely through the ideas of security, opportunity, and duty to their family. However, a thematic analysis hides the complex biographical factors that explain how and why young immigrants invest in these discourses.

Rinor and Alina: A presentation of two case studies

In this section, I turn to a case presentation of two young immigrants, Rinor and Alina, to demonstrate how immigrant youth actively transform their migration experiences into meanings that inform their aspirations and goals in Canada. I focus in-depth on Rinor and Alina for several reasons. First, they had differing migration experiences, but both express in different ways the broader themes identified in the previous section of the chapter. Rinor and his family were sponsored by his father, who had been living in Canada for several years. Alina, on the other hand, came to Canada as a refugee, fleeing the war in Iraq. These differences allow us to observe how the conditions of migration are worked out by each young person in developing their orientation to their life in Canada. Second, Rinor and Alina were astonishingly reflective and articulate about their lives, which made analysis of their interviews especially fruitful and insightful. Through a micro-analysis of their interviews I demonstrate how they actively transform these past experiences into “constructive building blocks” (Flum, 1998, p. 157) to inform their life orientation in Canada. Although I realize that these case studies are not statistically representative, I do not showcase them to make statistical generalizations. Rather, as exemplars (Flyvbjerg, 2001) the lives of Rinor and Alina offer important opportunities for the analytical generalizations regarding the social-psychological dynamics of youth migration and settlement. I begin with the story of Rinor and conclude this section with Alina.

Rinor: “Sometimes my father jokes with me”

When I sat down to talk with Rinor, he had been living in Canada for a little bit less than a year. He emigrated from Albania at the age of seventeen with his mother and an older brother to join his father who had been living in Windsor and working as a cook for about five years.

Reflecting on his life in Albania, Rinor spoke about the “good memories” of his country and the beauty of his city. “I have good memories to be honest,” he tells me,

. . . I know there is not a lot of opportunities, there is not a lot of chances to live. But it’s not that I am annoyed with my country. . . My country gave me an identity. Everybody in this life needs an identity. I have a kind of theory that when we are born [we] are given something to start this life. And what it is given to us is this cultural background. So we can be somebody. Based on this cultural background, we can form a personality and be somebody in this life. So I think that even though I may not like the government, the way how some aspects of society is, I must respect it. . . To be honest, I love my city. The way it’s built. These kinds of days [laughing, pointing outside to the cold, rainy day] remind me of my city.

For five years, Rinor’s father had been sending money home to pay for attendance at a local private high school run by Catholic priests. Rinor’s school was “a very good school”, especially compared to local public schools. His school helped him become “familiar with how things works out in the real world and it really gave us a Western culture.” In some ways, this education prepared him for his eventual move to Canada.

Despite these privileges and his love for his country, Rinor recognized that the general conditions of his society offered few opportunities and prospects: “I know there are not a lot of opportunities, not a lot of chances to live.” These feelings were embedded into his experiences of leaving, an experience marked by a sense of ambivalence apparent in his discussion of a good-bye party held the day before he left for Canada:

[Leaving] was hard actually. We were moving here for a better life for sure. And we were dreaming about our future. But still you feel bad for people that you have been living

with, for your friends, for your cousins. But still the excitement and the joy that you are feeling inside you—that you’re coming here—is greater than that kind of sadness that you’re feeling. . . . I remember the night before I come here. My house was full of my friends. I had lots of friends in Albania. I remember that it was a moment that I just said to them “hi” and they went to the car and they just left because they had to go to their home. . . . Just that moment I kind of felt, I don’t know, I felt empty. I just know at that stage of my life, it was gone. It was gone forever. . . . But still, you feel kind of sad because time is moving always, and you can’t change time. I felt that stage of my life was gone forever. And it is gone. I will probably go for vacation there. And we will probably try to do the same things with my friends. But we will not get the same feelings.

Rinor narrated his emigration/immigration as a significant break in his life and acknowledged that his relationships with the people and place of his birth would be fundamentally altered. He understood his migration as the beginning of an ongoing alteration and transformation in his own identity—as an understanding that he was entering into a new “stage” in his life.

Throughout the interview, Rinor juxtaposed his current life in Windsor to that of his parents’. His parents’ lives were simply “work and home.” They have made few friends outside of family connections and nearly all of their friends are Albanians. He remarked that this was unlike his increasingly own diverse network of peers—a characteristic of his life that he held up to illustrate his entry into Canadian society. Despite this, he told me that his parents are happy—they have order and stability. But Rinor was quick to remind me that that they did not move to Canada for “adventure” or for their personal benefit. They moved for their children. So, they worked hard in the restaurant business with few dreams of personal fulfillment outside of providing opportunities for Rinor and his brother. In contrast, Rinor told me about all his dreams

and wondered openly about the many things could do in Canada. At the time of the interview, he was interested in studying political science and philosophy at university, something he never realized could be an option until moving to Canada. He had also taken up an old hobby of writing poetry. He described his life as a time of exploration and possibility.

Rinor's future imaginings were weaved into the threads and connections he drew between himself and his parents, specifically his father. "Sometimes my father jokes with me," Rinor explained:

[My father] says "my expectation is that in the near future you'll have your own office and I'll go there and knock on your door and say, 'May I come in?' . . . and then if you think that it will be a good thing [you will] accept me." That's what we joke. So that's his expectation: having a kind of better life and being adapted in society. Then if you are able to do more, go ahead. Nobody is stopping me.

Rinor's knew he was going to leave Albania to join his father in Canada. He had many years to prepare for his emigration. Part of this preparation involved explicitly recognizing, despite his love for his country, the need to break with his homeland, including his friends. In Canada, he could have nostalgic feelings for his home city (evoked by the rain), but this nostalgia coincided with a clear understanding that his life was now in Canada and that he must work hard to build a life here. Rinor narrates his life in Canada as a place of possibility and exploration. Here he has the chance to become someone else. He acknowledges the potential for this self-transformation, evidenced by his knowledge that when he returns to Albania to visit he will not have the same "feeling." But Rinor also draws connections between his future aspirations and his parents' sacrifices. He understands his migration not merely as a personal journey but one embedded in the relationships with his family. He expresses a sense of duty to

achieve, beautifully articulated in the story of his father's joke. He 'invests' into his life in Canada on their behalf. It is, in other words, a serious joke; a joke that carries the weight of hope, expectation, and obligation. Rinor's father wishes his son to make something of himself, to have his "own office," but Rinor is obliged to allow his father entry. The office was never and will never be only Rinor's. It is built on his parents' sacrifices. One can only wonder to what extent this joke is also Rinor's dream, to be able to invite his father in and to say 'look at what we have become?'

Alina: "I am doing a double thing. It is for me and it is for her"

When I first met Alina, 19, she had been living in Canada for nearly four years. She was entering her final semester of high school, and was anticipating acceptance letters from the various universities across Canada. Quiet, thoughtful, and contemplative, Alina was born in Bagdad where she lived with her father, mother, and two sisters until 2006. Her life changed significantly when war broke out in 2003. At one point between 2003 and 2006, her father was kidnapped (by whom and for what reason she does not say) and she witnessed increasingly personal attacks upon her mother, a Catholic. "What they did was totally wrong. I can't follow them," she explained, "They were throwing stones at my mom just because she was Catholic. They did not allow her to go and visit the church." So, out of loyalty to her mother, or perhaps out of anger toward the others who were perpetrating these abuses, Alina made a deeply personal and potentially dangerous decision: she converted from Islam, her father's religion, to Catholicism.

Eventually, her family realized that they were no longer safe in Iraq, so they decided to leave. A neighbour took them with his car to the border with Syria, and from there the family crossed the border of the two countries and moved to a suburb of Damascus, where they lived for

about four years. Alina does not look back happily on her time in Syria. Admittedly, Syria was safer in comparison to Iraq. But “Even though we were Arabs” she tells me, “Syrians and Iraqis did not get along at all. In school, they were blaming us. . . . The teacher . . . was like ‘I hate Iraqis because they were the reason for raising the prices for certain things and they did a problem for the economy.’”

After about two years, Alina and her family learned that the United Nations was accepting applications for refugees. Her family applied but were refused refugee status to the United States, because of cited inaccuracies between her father’s and mother’s accounts of the kidnapping and because, according to Alina, the United States “did not want girls.” Alina recounted vividly the interviews with American and Canadian immigration officers:

She was sitting in the front of us. She was, for the first interview. The girl was Syrian. Her name was ----- . For the second time, the girl was American. For the first time, the Syrian girl separated my father and my mother. My father, he is not really good at memorising stuff and he messed up the dates. . . like when did the group kidnap him. He was like “I think that date.” And he gave the day, the month, and the year, and she recorded it. And then when my mom came [she] said, “I think on that date.” I think the difference was two or three days. She was like “Okay. You lied and you are not qualified to move to America because it is not acceptable to lie. . . . The Canadian interview was awesome. They were much nicer. She did not even ask us about these specific things, like the date or the colour of the door. The Syrian girl was asking us about the colour of the door when we were in Iraq! It doesn’t even make sense!

Soon later her family was accepted as refugees to Canada. Not surprisingly, Alina narrated her family’s acceptance into Canada as a great moment of relief. “What we were living

in was horrible,” Alina told me, “I was like, ‘okay we’re leaving.’” Her family packed their bags and quickly flew to Canada. They stayed for fourteen days in a motel while settlement workers helped them find a home. They saw “too many houses, too many apartments” until they finally decided to move into an apartment close to a river. Her eyes lit up as she told me the story of moving into the apartment: “For us, it is the first time to see water.”

When Alina arrived her English skills were tested and she began attending English Language Learning classes for newcomer immigrants. She speaks highly of the school and the support she has received there, comforted by the fact that the school had many other immigrant students. She is now recognized as a promising student, having made honour roll several times. Contrasting her experiences of exclusion in Syria and Iraq, she told me that in Canada “they prepare you to be independent, to be your own person and make your own choices”:

As long as you are not hurting anyone you can do whatever you want . . . The most important [thing] for them is that don’t hurt [others], you get educated, you help society. They don’t really care about like who you are. They leave you alone. They give you personal space and you can practice whatever you want.

She has been volunteering extensively at her school, helping with a peer support program for recently arrived immigrant students. She also has been volunteering in the community through several Church groups, in order to “give back something . . . [because] they supported us.”

Her focus, however, remained oriented toward her family and her future schooling, and her dedication to her family and education were intricately linked. She wants to become a doctor, a goal encouraged and supported by her parents, namely her mother. This goal, on one level, was inspired by witnessing her youngest sister struggle with an illness. On the other hand, she viewed becoming a doctor as a way of completing her mother’s own unfinished journey:

My mother wanted to finish her studies, but her father did not allow her because she had to move to a different province [in Iraq]. She was forced to stop her education. That's why she is supporting me as much as she can . . . She is seeing herself through me. . . I am doing a double thing. It is for me and it is for her. . . This is what I feel, but she [did] not tell me.

In sum, Alina's narrative centers on the theme of rejection. Her family was not wanted in either Iraq or Syria. In Iraq, it was because her mother was Catholic. In Syria, her status as an Iraqi refugee led to xenophobic discrimination and hatred. Her family was also rejected by US immigration, accused of being liars. Being rejected, Alina rejects too. She boldly converts to Catholicism in solidarity with her mother. Nor does she look back nostalgically on life back home: "What we were living in was horrible . . . I was like, 'okay we're leaving.'" She embraces Canada, the country that accepted her family, wholeheartedly. Compared to her past, Canada is an open and tolerant society to which she feels a duty to give back. Education becomes the pathway to opportunity, "to be your own person and make your own choices." However, Alina's aspirations are intimately connected to completing her mother's unfinished journey, an understanding that animates her life in Canada.

Summary

This chapter explored how young immigrants and refugees made sense of their migration and the consequences these meanings have on their life plans and future selves in Canada. The point of departure was the understanding that migration marks an important moment—or moments, for those who had multiple migrations—in a person's life trajectory and that a key task facing young immigrants and refugees is to negotiate the experience of continuity and change across these temporal and spatial geographies. I contended that understanding how immigrant

and refugee youth make sense of their migration offers insights into how they develop their life orientations that ultimately animate the choices they make in their lives, including their attitude toward education, career goals, and even the types of friends they seek, as well as how they will evaluate their experiences of settlement and inclusion in their new ‘host’ country (see Crivello, 2015; Lindgren, 2010; Tanyas, 2012).

Drawing on Heinz’s (2002) notion of biographical agency, this chapter demonstrated that in narrating their migration immigrant and refugee youth drew especially poignant emotional, spatial, relational, and temporal connections in ways that informed their life plans and future aspirations. Canada was seen to offer important base upon which they could build their lives in line with their hopes and dreams. Such perceptions contributed strong sense of hope and future opportunity—a finding that corresponds closely with other research on young immigrants’ aspirations (see Bloch, Sigona, & Zetter, 2014; Crivello, 2015; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Lindgren, 2010; Yohani & Larsen, 2009).

This chapter also demonstrated, primarily through a micro-analysis of Alina and Rinor, that the ‘work’ that immigrant and refugee youth do to give meaning to their life is thoroughly social, shaped by their embeddedness in personal relationships (Flum, 1998; Taylor & Krahn, 2013). Immigrant and refugee youth, in their attempts to make meaning of their migration, drew threads and connections between themselves and close adults in ways that fueled their “self-determination” (Flum, 1998, p. 157) and informed their own goals, aspirations, and life projects (see also Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, & Siemiatycki, 2005; Lindgren, 2010; Tyyska, 2008). Key to this chapter, then, is the recognition that personal motivations, life projects, and aspirations of young immigrants and refugees relate to the specificity of the conditions of emigration and their social relationships with significant others (Flum, 1998).

I would like to conclude this chapter with a note of caution. It is important to remember that this study represented one moment in an ongoing process in which immigrant and refugee youth take stock of the quality of their going-ness in life. Their perceptions, life orientations, and aspirations will evolve, shift, and change as they confront new experiences, challenges, and institutional barriers. One can only speculate on whether Canada will be a place where young immigrants and refugees like Alina and Rinor will realize their dreams and aspirations. Krahn and Taylor (2005) demonstrate, for instance, that many young immigrants, especially those of visible minority background, will develop a growing sense of the limits to Canada's opportunity structures, as they are exposed to issues of systemic racism and blocked opportunities.

As this chapter underscored, immigrant and refugee youth view education as the key mechanism through which they could "become somebody" (Crivello, 2011) in Canada and through which their aspirations and desires could be achieved. So how do immigrant youth experience education and schooling? What consequences do these experiences have on their settlement and sense of possibility and social inclusion? The next chapter considers these questions by examining immigrant youth experiences of education in Windsor, Ontario.

CHAPTER 5

How Immigrant and Refugee Youth Experience Education and Schooling in Windsor, Ontario

Schools play a central role in the settlement of immigrant children and youth (Brewers & McCabe, 2014; Devine, 2011; Hall, 2002, pp. 87-88; LeVasseur, 2008) and that education represents a key factor in their overall well-being (Devine, 2011; Rossiter, Hatami, Ripley, & Rossiter, 2015, p. 749). Not surprisingly then, a relatively large body of scholarship in Canada explores the various dimensions of immigrant and refugee youth experiences of schooling. For instance, studies explore immigrant and refugee youth's educational aspirations and attitudes toward schooling, as well as the patterns and the complex factors influencing their educational outcomes (Garnett, Adamuti-Trache, & Ungerleider, 2008; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Smith, Schnider, & Ruck, 2005; Sweet, Anisef, & Walters, 2010; Wilkinson, Yan, Tsang, Sin, Lauer, 2012; Wilkinson, 2002). Many of these studies are quantitative in nature and compare immigrant and refugee youth's educational outcomes to their Canadian-born counterparts and/or to various immigrant and refugee groups (Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2009; Garnett, Adamuti-Trache, & Ungerleider, 2008; Hebert, Sun, & Kwoch, 2004; Ma, 2003). Other scholars employ qualitative approaches to document immigrant and refugee youth's educational aspirations, needs, and struggles (Anisef et al. 2003; Kanu, 2008; Ngo & Schliefer, 2005). Overall, these studies detail many of the factors that support or hinder immigrant and refugee youth educational achievement and well-being.

This chapter contributes to this body of literature by offering a more sociological exploration of *how* schools shape the settlement of young immigrants and refugees, as well as the overall effects of these experiences on their sense of social inclusion and belonging. It does so by exploring the case of immigrant and refugee youth's experiences of education and schooling in Windsor, Ontario. Several questions are considered in this chapter: How do schools attempt to facilitate the settlement of immigrant and refugee youth? How do young immigrants and refugees experience their education and schooling within this institutional framework? What effect, then, do schools have on young immigrant and refugee's sense of identity, possibility, social inclusion, and belonging to community life? Analysis shows that schools function simultaneously as sites of social inclusion and exclusion in ways that creates a dynamic of *inclusionary exclusion*. As this chapter demonstrates, a major consequence of this process is the production of an ambivalent sense of belonging and inclusion to community life.

In order to demonstrate this process, the chapter begins by outlining how specific schools in the city have taken on the primary responsibility for the settlement of immigrant and refugee youth and discuss the array of formal and informal supports offered to young immigrants and refugees in the city. With an understanding of these institutional features, the chapter then examines young peoples' perspectives and experiences of education and schooling. First, however, I outline briefly theoretical considerations of the function of schools in contemporary society.

The functions of schools in contemporary society

Scholars present diverse views on the function of schools in democratic and capitalist societies. Functionalist approaches assert that public education is an essential mechanism for the production of consensus and stability in society. By socializing the next generation, schools pass

on to ‘future citizens’ common worldviews and normative orientations that contribute to the maintenance and continuation of social order (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 15-16). Other scholars have long been interested in examining the central role schools play in the reproduction of social inequalities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992; Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, & Zine, 1997; Willis, 1977).

LeVasseur (2008) argues that schools have also come to perform a social inclusionary function, as they increasingly become the central mechanism used to ‘integrate’ groups that have not traditionally been considered part of the mainstream school population. The social inclusion function of schooling has intensified as a result of the massification of secondary education, increasing migration, the hyper-diversification of societies, and the relative success of efforts to include historically marginalized groups into mainstream institutions, including immigrant and refugee youth (LeVasseur, 2008).

In addition to these school functions, in this chapter, Devine (2011) and Hall (2002) conceptualize schools as largely adult-administered institutions. Inspired by the work of sociologists Michel Foucault, these authors maintain schools function to “socialize students through the productive power of disciplinary practice” (Hall, 2002, p. 89). Overt pedagogical practices, such as classroom teaching and learning, combine with covert practices of rituals, routines, and social relations to tacitly transmit values, beliefs, and norms (Hall, 2002, p. 89). As students are ranked academically and socially by both formal and informal school practices, schools function as networks of practices that position students “in relation to a number of identity constructs and classificatory systems that define and order the ‘student body’ (Hall, 2002, p. 89). Wider professional and bureaucratic discourses mix with dominant conceptions about class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, immigration, and ethnicity (Pollock, 2004). In this

way, schools help produce subjectivity among those defined as ‘normal’ or as ‘different’” (p. 89). Thus, daily schooling processes, interactions, and discourses impose conditions on young people’s possibilities for establishing relations with others (Sedano, 2012, p. 383).

Schools, as an adult-administered institutions, are also important source of symbolic resources that young people use to collectively fashion identities and practices (see Corsaro, 2014, pp. 151-262; Hall, 2002; Sedano, 2013; Willis, 1977). ‘Learning’ is more than simply a cognitive event involving the acquisition of skills and content; it is a sociological process that entails coming to understand our relations to other people (our social location) that, therefore, involves complex processes of subject formation (Devine, 2011, p. 133; see also Lave & Wenger, 1991; Willis, 1977).

As Devine (2011, pp. 133-134) reminds us, immigrant and refugee children and youth have to go to school. Through schools they are exposed to messages that shape them according to the various norms of what it means to be a Canadian and who has the right to belong and participate in society. Increasingly, immigrant and refugee youth are also offered supports to help with their social inclusion into Canadian society (LeVasseur, 2008). Attending to the perspectives and experiences of young people allows us to open our eyes to the complexity of how schools shape the settlement processes of immigrant and refugee youth, as well as how these young people make sense of the complex array of messages they receive.

Architecture of educational support for immigrant and refugee youth

Over the years two local English-speaking high schools have come to play a central key role in the settlement of immigrant and refugee youth. Table 2 demonstrates the differentiation of student populations in Windsor’s public high schools. On certain measures, these “immigrant-receiving schools” (Schools 2 and 5) share certain similarities with other high schools in the city.

This is especially true with respect to the percentage of students that come from households described as low-income. In relation to other schools in the city, these two schools have among the highest percentage of students who live in low-income households and among the lowest percentage of students whose parents have some university education—two common-place indicators of social class. A major difference remains the ‘newness’ of the school population with recent immigrants largely concentrated into these two high schools. It is important to note that both these immigrant-receiving schools are located in areas in the city that have higher levels of low-income residence and newcomer immigrant populations. This statistical overview suggests both the spatialization and concentration of poor, racialized, and immigrant youth into particular schools and city locations. The social significance and effects of this concentration on immigrant and refugee youth identity will be explored later in the chapter.³

Teachers and administrators with long-term work experience in the city, particularly those who have worked in these ‘immigrant-receiving schools’ for much of their career, spoke extensively of the evolution of these schools into ‘immigrant-receiving schools’. They suggested that as a result of increased immigration to the city beginning in the mid-1990s, immigrant and refugee families moved into neighbourhoods within the catchment areas of the two schools, mostly because these schools were located in neighbourhoods with affordable housing. Teachers consistently reported in line with the diversification of immigrant demographics to Canada that many new students were arriving from non-European countries. In response to these changes, these schools developed robust curricular and social supports to address the increasingly complex educational and social needs of immigrant and refugee youth. Immigrant and refugee

³ Windsor has a substantial French-speaking immigrant population, and some young French-speaking immigrant youth attend French-speaking high schools in the city. This study focuses on those who attended English-speaking high schools. An exploration of immigrant youth attending French speaking high schools and their settlement experiences would add important insights to the findings presented in this study.

youth began attending these schools in order avail themselves to these English language learning programs, even if their families did not live in the schools' catchment areas.

When immigrant and refugee youth arrive in the city, their educational levels are assessed. Based on the results of these assessments, they are either placed into one of three academic streams: English language development (ELD), English as a second language (ESL), and 'regular' or 'mainstream' curricular programs. ELD programs specifically target students with significant gaps in their previous education that speak very little or no English. These students require intensive specialized literacy and English language instruction. The English as a second language program, on the other hand, is designed primarily for students who have received a more or less steady and consistent education but require English language instruction. Both ELD and ESL programs have five levels, referred to as level A, B, C, D, and E. When students are in the first two levels (A and B), they are typically placed in 'sheltered classrooms' in combination with some regular classes such as Art, Physical Education, and Drama. Sheltered classes allow for intensive targeted language instruction. Participation in these select mainstream classes provides additional social engagement opportunities. When students enter the C, D, and E levels, they begin to take more regular academic or non-academic classes. By Level E students usually take only one ELD or ESL course and are enrolled regular academic or non-academic classes. Regular courses offer an array of program streams including applied, academic, and essential-level courses. Applied and academic courses place students on an educational path toward either community college or university. Students who graduate from the ESL program typically enter applied or academic level classes. Students who complete essential level courses are awarded a certificate of completion and move directly into the workforce upon completion of their studies. Students who graduate from the ELD program typically enter applied or essential

level classes. School officials recognize that for various reasons initial assessments may result in the placement of a student into the incorrect stream. As a result, it is now common practice to reassess student placements after about six months. This is done primarily through teacher assessments and observations of a particular student's progress.

In addition to the English language and development curriculum, these schools offer various supplemental services and programs that assist immigrant newcomer youth, such as free breakfast and lunch programs and transportation vouchers. Although these services are available to all students, they benefit immigrant and refugee youth whose families may need additional supports due to economic hardship. These schools have also established partnerships with local settlement agencies through the Settlement Workers in School programs (SWIS), a Citizenship and Immigration Canada funded program which places trained settlement workers directly into schools in order to provide a direct point of access for young immigrants and their families to various settlement services. Every year students, teachers, and SWIS workers organize Newcomer Orientation Weeks, an event where newcomer immigrant youth gather with current students and staff a week before the official beginning of school. Orientation weeks provide newcomers with vital information about the school and the opportunity to develop initial friendships with their new peers, helping young people establish informal peer-to-peer support networks. These schools also organize various multicultural celebrations, cultural days, and sometimes citizenship ceremonies. The schools are also decorated with artistic works, such as murals, flags, and maps, depicting the diversity of the student body.

Experiences of education and schooling

Taking into account the architecture of formal supports, I now present findings on immigrant youths' experiences of education and schooling in Windsor. Several important key themes regarding education and schooling consistently emerged in my discussions with immigrant youth. I organize these findings around four topics: General orientation to education and schooling; Initial concerns; Teacher-student relationships, teacher expectations, and course placement; and school belonging. These topics are discussed in detail below.

Table 2. Student population characteristics in Windsor public high school

Population Characteristics	Provincial Average (%)	Windsor Public High Schools 1 – 18																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Percentage of students who live in low income households	16.9	24	29	13	27	36	10	23	13	11	23	22	11	18	20	20	22	12	N/A
Percentage of students whose parents have some university education	35.6	26	20	21	21	17	40	19	25	26	21	20	37	17	24	23	31	25	N/A
Percentage of students who receive special education services	14.9	16	16.1	19.5	98.4	13	15.1	5.6	13.4	24.8	N/A	3.3	7.6	17.1	12.8	21.6	17.3	19.2	N/A
Percentage of students identified as gifted	1.4	0.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.5	0.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.9	N/A	0.4	0.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of students whose first language is not English	23.9	20.9	48.3	6.7	5.3	55.1	13.9	24.6	18.6	15.2	3.9	13.8	43.3	8.6	6	9.4	84.6	41.8	N/A
Percentage of students whose first language is not French	96.7	99.5	100	99.9	100	98.6	99.3	100	99.9	99.3	100	99.5	99.2	99.3	99.9	99.2	80.8	70.1	N/A
Percentage of students who are new to Canada from a non-English speaking country ⁴	3.0	1.5	24.5	0.7	0.3	29.7	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.6	N/A	3	2.8	0.2	0.8	N/A	13.5	2.7	N/A
Percentage of students who are new to Canada from a non-French-speaking country ⁵	3.1	1.8	23.1	0.9	0.5	26.8	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.7	N/A	2.7	2.8	0.5	1.0	0.4	N/A	1.4	N/A

⁴ New to Canada from non-English speaking countries refers to the percentage of students who moved to Canada within the last three years from a country other than Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, or the United States

⁵ New to Canada from non-French speaking countries refers to the percentage of students who moved to Canada within the last three years from a country other than Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Laos, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, Niger, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, St. Lucia, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu or Vietnam.

Orientation to education and initial concerns

As was documented in chapter four, participants consistently framed Canada as a place of opportunity and stressed education as the central mechanism for their integration into Canadian society, as well as the central mechanism through which their dreams and desires for a better life could be fulfilled. Participants spoke of their desire to achieve, their high educational aspirations, and their strong valuation of education (c.f. Krahn and Taylor, 2005). These insights align with other scholars who suggest that the very decision to migrate “is indicative of a ‘goal directed’ activity that is centered on working actively toward improving familial life chances, which will in itself be reflected in positive orientations and work effort in school” (Devine, 2011, p. 136-137).

Although young people came to Canada with differing levels of English proficiency, most participants viewed mastering English as the most essential step in making a life in Canada. As one participant stated rather succinctly, “with English you’re going to get more opportunities to get jobs.” English fluency also meant being better able to “make a life” in Canada and assist one’s family in daily activities outside of school. For those who came with limited English proficiencies, learning English was both difficult and time consuming, and many spoke of feeling “stressed” over how much they had to learn. But they worked very hard to learn English, and they shared remarkable stories of the effort they put into learning English. However, linguistic insecurity remained a key feature of young immigrants’ anxiety in and outside of school. Participants spoke often about their fear of being teased or singled out for mispronouncing words and the frustration of being unable to adequately communicate their thoughts.

Some participants also relayed that people assumed that they lacked intelligence simply because of their limited English proficiency. In addition to being a key source of their feelings of difference, lack of English proficiency often meant that immigrant youth could not adequately advocate for their interests with teachers and school officials. For instance, Oscar, expressed a feeling that his country, China, was often misrepresented by his teacher in a Social Studies class. When he attempted to challenge his teacher, he was unable to adequately communicate his point and left the class feeling that his teacher and peers continued to hold misconceptions about his country. In another case, a young immigrant told a story about being unable to change a grade on an assignment where she felt inaccurately graded. Such an experience made her feel powerless and disheartened. Thus, in addition to being a source of anxiety and a marker of difference, limited knowledge of English meant that immigrant youth often lacked a key component of cultural capital—linguistic acumen—that could mobilize school institutions in their favour.

Another major source of initial concern, particularly for those who immigrated during late adolescence, was the experience of a disruption in their educational progression. As mentioned earlier, after arriving in Canada, young immigrants' educational credentials are evaluated and their English and math proficiencies tested. These evaluations are important because they determine their grade placement, as well as their placement in English Language Learning Programs. Many had to repeat grades and, in these cases, young people spoke about feeling “put back” or even “losing time.” As Ibrahim, 20, explained:

I wish I came to Canada before two or three years . . . I wish that I was in Canada like 17 or 16. Why? Because most of this time I lost two years catching up my education to go to college or university. If I were in this place before three or four years I would be much better English student and much, better educated to go to college or university.

This disruption led to an array of feelings including frustration, embarrassment, and jealousy at having to remain in high school, while many of their friends outside of Canada moved on to their post-secondary careers. Lana, 19, who was close to graduating high school in Iraq, was placed in a mix of grade ten and grade eleven courses upon arrival. She explained,

Other than this semester I have two and a half semesters, so I'll be graduated, like next year will be my last year . . . It is kind of like, not depressing, but it makes you feel anxious about your future. I see all my friends in university and having the university experiences and stuff like that. And I miss it, like you say I came to Canada . . . You always have these moments where you say I wish that I was in university and I am done with all that.

Yet, despite feeling that they were no longer “kids” or frustration with the disruption of their life trajectory, many understood, and were often grateful, that they could stay in school to practice and hone their English language and build the skills necessary for life in Canada. As one young immigrant stated, despite “losing time,” staying in high school “prepared us [for] Canadian society”:

Sometimes I was like, ‘No; I want to move on.’ [Being placed in a previous grade] might slow my progress in graduating. But they put us in the program. Actually now I am so happy that I am in the ESL program. It helps us to build the confidence.

In this sense, school also provided an interstitial space in which these young people, especially those who arrived in Canada at the age of 17 or 18, could gain the knowledge and competencies to make a life in Canada. So, the sense of ‘losing time’ sat together simultaneously with the sense of having ‘extra time’ to build themselves through education in order to succeed in Canadian society.

Student-teacher relationships, teacher expectations, and course placements

In general, teachers expressed very positive attitudes toward immigrant youth, framing them as respectful of adult authority, motivated, appreciative, and hardworking. This framing was often made in comparison to ‘Canadian’ students who were sometimes framed as unappreciative and entitled. As one teacher suggested, immigrant youth have a strong work ethic, appreciate their opportunities, and respect teachers. These students “put Canadian students to shame.” Teachers relayed stories of young immigrants’ everyday politeness: offers to carry their books, cordial greetings in the hallway or on street outside of school, or holding a door open for them. These qualities were expressed as often lacking in young people of other schools:

You have that respect for the teachers. . . Kids are always “oh do you need help?” They hold the door for you. They would help you carry stuff. They are always asking. From my own experience I didn’t experience that at other schools. And from what other people have told to . . . We have a lot of teachers, a lot, would’ve been in and out . . . they get somewhere else and they come back here and they are like “oh thank God I’m back here!”

Another teacher echoed these thoughts:

The kids are very appreciative; they’ll hold the door for you. They are kind and good kids ... I would be a heck of a lot more fearful teaching in a school like [name of school] here you have parents down your throat. Whereas these kids, as long as you’re, the whole idea, that I’m nice to you I’ll be nice to you, it works.

Many of the educators I interviewed took pride in the fact that they taught in such a school. These schools were where “real life happens” and where they could really make a

difference in students' lives. Although every school has "difficult students," it was very common for teachers to express the idea that they felt needed, wanted, and respected by immigrant youth.

Given that education was seen as the key path to future success and that most immigrant youth had extremely high educational aspirations, many young immigrants framed their teachers and school officials as particularly powerful and influential adults in their lives. Teachers were key gatekeepers to future success and immigrant youth realized had significant power over their educational progress. Participants were, thus, very open to talk about the positive and negative roles teachers played and continue to play in their lives. Given this general understanding, it is not surprising that many were quick to identify—often by name—teachers and school officials who were "good" and those who were "bad." "Good teachers" were supportive, understanding, and helpful—they had high expectations and encouraged participants to study and learn. "Bad teachers" conversely, were rude, unhelpful, ignorant, racist, had low expectations and discouraged participants.

Immigrant youth often reciprocated the positive feelings communicated by teachers. They often spoke highly of their teachers and framed them as key adults who provided encouragement, support, guidance, and assistance. In addition to their everyday teaching responsibilities, teachers provided all the types of 'extra-help' and support in their everyday lives. This extra-help included such things as meeting students after school to assist with homework, providing assistance with filling out various applications forms, discussing future career plans, attending sporting events, giving advice, supervising after-school clubs, providing rides home (especially in the winter months), and, in some cases, even giving young people money to buy lunch, school supplies, or a bus ticket.

Immigrant youth spoke highly of the English language support they received at school and the particularly close relationships they developed with English as Second Language teachers, often identifying these teachers by name as the teachers who really ‘helped them out’. In fact, it was common for participants to speak about how they ‘loved’ certain ESL teachers, considering some of their ESL teachers to be “like mothers.” As Aniso, 19, said, “Teachers are like my family” who “tell me what Canada is.” Ayaan, 20, expanded on this point:

When I came here I wasn’t known the language. The people that I met them in my life when I came into Canada and they were so nice to me. They help me a lot, with the lockers, the language, homework. If I need to talk someone, a student bullying me, I would always go and talk to my teachers. They help me, and they were always telling me what Canada is. How people is. They teach me a lot about Canada. So, I would say [my school] was part of my life being in Canada.

These close relationships develop as a result of long periods of time spent with these teachers, especially for those young people who required extensive English language development. In addition to teaching young people, as one participant described it, “the gift of language,” ESL teachers represented for many the key source of information about Canada and a critical node of care and support during very difficult time of their initial transition to Canadian society. Finally, English language teachers were also more likely to understand the struggles and challenges brought on by migration.

However, immigrant youth also spoke of feeling that some teachers treated them in ways that communicated they were somehow less intelligent than Canadian-born youth. These messages were communicated, perhaps often unintentionally, to immigrant youth through everyday interactional occasions. For example, Moti, 18, who told me that

Most of the teachers are nice. Some teachers, they are a bit too much. They think that everybody who comes from a different country doesn't understand what they're saying. So they have to repeat the same thing over and over until your head hurts. When you tell them "Miss, I understand." She has to say it again . . . When they do that in front of Canadians, they make you feel that you are stupid! Even though you have 80s and 90s in class! . . . You can see my mark. Why would you do that? It's kind of embarrassing. And some students make fun of you. You know when they get that type of opportunity, they start making fun of you.

The impact of teacher judgments was particularly salient when participants spoke about course placements. Course placements were contentious issues for immigrant youth, as with all students, because they stream students into particular academic trajectories. Course placements were negatively felt when students were placed in course streams that did not align with their educational and career aspirations. Some participants reported feeling that they were unfairly placed by school officials into course streams below their perceived abilities and in contrast to their academic and career goals. This related to placement in English language learning courses (ELD versus ESL), as well as content area courses such as math or sciences. In the cases where immigrant youth felt they were placed in courses below their competencies or wishes, many found it difficult to convince school officials to switch them out of those courses, especially those who did not have family members or adults who could advocate on their behalf. Immigrant youth were particularly upset about being streamed into non-academic classes because they knew very well that the achievement of their high educational aspirations required being in the 'right' classes.

Samuel told a long story of being placed in an applied mathematics course, despite the fact that according to him he had the sufficient grades to be placed in a more advanced class. Despite meeting with his teachers and expressing his concerns, he was unable to transfer out of the class and is now trying to upgrade his courses through distance education. Other participants relayed other stories of being told that their expectations were too high and that they should aim to “become” plumbers or welders. Moti observed that “all the people who come from Africa, they put them in ELD [English language development]. The people who come from European countries who don’t speak English goes to ESL [English as a Second language].” Amina told me that both her friend and sister were placed into workplace English even though her sister “passed with 80 in her ESL” and that she “should go to academic or applied classes.” The experience was very disheartening: “They started crying, you know, [because it meant] you can’t go to college until you’re 21.”

Another important concern raised by participants was the issue of unfair school discipline and punishment. Some young immigrants relayed stories of being unfairly or more harshly punished by school officials. Analysis of both interview and focus groups revealed that black males were the most likely, although not exclusively, to comment on the negative judgments and low expectations of their teachers or other school officials. These comments pertained to issues of not only course streaming, as discussed above, but to the perception that they were often unfairly disciplined by teachers and school officials. They blamed this unfair treatment on both racial bias and low expectations for immigrant youth.

School belonging

When asked to comment on their schools more generally, participants were quick to suggest that their schools were critical site for their social inclusion and settlement. Participants

understood school as more than just places of learning: they were central sites of their belonging. It was at school where they learned English, learned about the community, and met their friends. To Tahir, 21, like many other participants in my study, it was at school where they learned how to become “involved in the community”:

I really love this school. I think it's a place they gave me like experience. It's the place that taught everything about, I don't want to say the outside world, but it's a place that taught me mostly everything. How to interact with people, how to make friendships . . . High school for me in Canada was beyond just getting lessons and marks. . . Like they teach you things that are not in the books . . . I would say they teach you to be involved in the community.

Young people developed deep attachments to their schools and it was common for participants to describe their schools as second “homes” that “helps a lot” and “feels like a family.” Many spent most of their days at school, arriving early to study or socialize and staying late to hang-out with friends or participate in extra-curricular activities. Even those who had graduated spoke of returning to the school to visit their former teachers or volunteer with sport teams or after-school clubs. As one participant communicated:

I think they are doing their best to help English second language people. From all countries, they are coming to [our school]. I think it's the only school in Windsor that does the ESL program. I'm not sure. But they are doing very good. And we have a test when we first came in English, math, and I think physics so they can know what level are you. Everything is good in the school. The teachers are great. My ESL teachers are very good. They are doing their best to help the students, the newcomers.

The multicultural nature and the presence of other immigrant youth were highlighted as key features that made participants feel a sense of welcoming and belonging. Participants saw themselves reflected in the peers around them and felt that both their peers and some school officials (some themselves immigrants or second-generation) shared an understanding of the problems and pressures they faced. School was a place where “everybody was from somewhere else” and where cultural differences were accepted as a normal feature of everyday life. Multicultural celebrations, hallways decorated with flags and maps from around the world, and citizenship ceremonies contributed to a feeling that their schools were international places that valued diversity. This cultural validation and expression constituted a strong component of their feelings of support and inclusion.

Although participants took tremendous pride in the multicultural nature of their schools, many also recognized that their schools were somehow different from other high schools in the city. As staff of the schools suggested, “to be different is to be normal here” or “to be the minority is to be in the majority”—sentiments often reiterated by the young people I interviewed. In fact, young people referred to their high schools as the “multicultural schools” while the other high schools were where “Canadians” go. Although this perception ignores the complex social and cultural diversities characterizing other schools in the city, as well as the presence of long-term residents and Canadian-born youth attending their own schools, it does highlight a common perspective among both staff members and immigrant youth that their schools were somehow “marked off” from ‘mainstream Canadian’ schools.

Many teachers and some youth participants, namely those who had lived long enough in Canada to become equated with the larger community, were sensitive to negative stereotypes surrounding their schools. Their schools were often seen as poor, non-academic, violent, and full

of drugs. These characterizations mixed classist, xenophobic, and racialized discourses with stereotypes about the particular ethnic and racial groups that attended these schools. Participants shared some of the ‘nicknames’ others in the community had of their schools: ‘Welfare High’, ‘Little Mogadishu’, and ‘Terrorist High’. As one teacher commented on his experiences of attending sporting events:

We get stuff when we go to other schools. You know people cheer, “They will blow-up your house!” Just this year we had one of our kids, a basketball player, he was a tall skinny kid, and they started cheering, “he’s hungry, he’s hungry, he’s hungry!” You know ridiculing the kid . . . Or we go to games and they cheer “E-S-L, E-S-L. What do our kids do? S-T-Ds S-T-Ds. So we get that crap. . . We get Welfare High thrown in our face.

“People assume things from the outside” another teacher told me. “They hear the stories that there are gangs and all that stuff going on in our building.” One youth participant suggested that people “look at the school as a place [that is] academically poor, a place where all disputes and fights take place.” He continued,

They always try to find the bad things within the school. That’s what I’m looking for. While other schools that have bad things too, they don’t focus on the bad things that happen in other schools . . . I actually don’t have an answer for that. I have no idea. . . Maybe, just because they are immigrants. You know what I mean? So it’s that would make a difference.

School stigmatization had a significant impact on how immigrant youth understood themselves and their place in the larger community. For one season, I assisted coaching one of the ‘immigrant-receiving’ schools’ soccer teams. I documented the following conversation I had

with one of the players as I drove him home after our team lost a match that was poorly and unfairly officiated:

Player: They always treat us like this. They hate us.”

Me: What do you mean they hate you?

Player: They hate [our school]?

Me: Why do they hate [the school]?

Player: Because we’re multicultural.

Teachers and youth participants qualified these stereotypes by asserting that all schools have problems and that, in fact, their schools were much safer and had much less drug-use problems than many of the other “middle class” schools in the city. It was common for teachers to contrast their experiences working in what they called “middle class” schools in the region as a means of explaining why they preferred to teach in the “immigrant school.” Often times they framed immigrant youth as more respectful, appreciative, and hard-working. Similarly, immigrant youth themselves suggested that they were much more appreciative of teachers and their educational opportunities than Canadian students, who in their opinion were more likely to feel a sense of entitlement, and be disrespectful and unappreciative of teachers.

Although most students were not interested in leaving their schools—many having developed a strong sense of belonging—some did transfer or attempt to transfer to other schools in the city after completing their language courses, usually because those other schools were closer to their homes or because they believed that these other schools offered more advanced academic courses, which they thought would better improve their chances of attending university. Participants had varying experiences of transferring from their ‘multicultural schools’ to these ‘Canadian’ schools. Gideon, 18, for instance, contrasted the diversity of his old

school to his new school in the city, framing his experience primarily as opportunity to learn about Canadian culture.

[My old school] was very different because it was like everyone was from all over the world. So I got to learn a lot about different cultures . . . When you're there, you feel like you're somewhere else. You travel the world. . . That's the beauty of [it]: you get to know different cultures. But at [my new school], it feels like everyone is the same. It's mostly like one culture. Like Canadian people. At ----- you actually learn more about Canada, which is good for me because I really lack a lot of stuff about Canada. So going there helps me know more about Canada and their culture.

Amina, 17, on the other hand, relayed the negative experience she faced when she attempted to register in another school in the city:

I am not in ESL anymore. . . I went there. I gave all my papers and [the principal] looked at me in a dirty look way, because I wear hijab. My level of English, honestly, it's not that good. I know that. I have an accent. [*Mocking the voice of the principal*]: "In here, we have to measure the language of how you speak and how you read. Our students, they have a really high-speaking English." I know what was meant: "I don't think you should be here." . . . Actually it was my dream school, like to go there . . . There it's like the same thing as college. What you're taking, it's really hard. . . I was dreaming about it even, honestly. But what [the principal] said ruined my day. I even cried. I just walked away.

Moti, featured earlier, relayed a similar experience:

I went by myself and then [they] saw my mother with the hijab . . . [The principal] is smiling at me like this and then sees my mom walking from the back. [Their] face

changes. . . Right away, I knew that [they] wouldn't accept me . . . So you just deal with it and go back to your school.

Summary

In line with previous scholarship, young immigrants and refugees demonstrated high educational aspirations (Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Sweet, Anisef, & Walters, 2010), viewing education as the 'life-line' through which they could establish a viable life for themselves and their families (Crivello, 2012, 2015). They spoke about the importance of learning English and the need to renegotiate life trajectories in the face of having to repeat grade levels in Canada (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003; Ngo & Schliefer, 2005; Stermac, Elgie, Clarke, & Dunlap, 2012).

Overall, participants deeply appreciated the level of educational and social supports they received, viewing their education as the key mechanism through which they could build their knowledge, skills, and competencies in order to become part of Canadian society. Participants consistently formed positive relationships with their teachers, especially ESL teachers, who were shown to be critical sources of social support and care. The establishment of generally positive relationship with their teachers stemmed from immigrant youth's high valuation of education, inter-generational patterns that encouraged respect of adult authority, and the positive valuation teachers made toward immigrant children and youth more generally (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003; Devine, 2011; Krahn & Taylor, 2005).

However, young immigrants' goals and aspirations were shown to be reshaped, curtailed, thwarted, and redefined through their schooling experiences. While young immigrants and refugees are goal-oriented, their ability to follow up on their individual and collective goals were also limited by schools. Participants commented passionately on teachers with low expectations,

the poor career advice they received, the unfair practices of course streaming, and unfair school discipline.

It is impossible to know from this study the intentions of the career and educational advice perceived by immigrant and refugee youth as so disheartening, the reasons for course placements, or the veracity of young people's accusations of racial bias and unfair treatment by school officials. However, these findings corroborate previous research that shows how racialized minority youth, immigrant or not, are often stereotyped by school officials in ways that shape and limit their educational experiences and opportunities (Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, & Zine, 1997; Kelly, 1998).

With respect to course streaming of immigrant and refugee youth in particular, Krahn and Taylor (n.d.) note inconsistent findings in statistical research. Some studies indicate that immigrant youth can be disproportionately found in educational streams that would restrict their educational options, while other suggest that these young people 'aim high.' This research study cannot nor did not seek to demonstrate the frequency of these reported phenomena. However, focus group conversations and interviews with immigrant and refugee youth demonstrate that issues of low expectations among teachers, academic and career streaming, and unfair treatment remain a recurrent and passionate topic of concern.

In his study of social inclusion, diversity, and schooling in Montreal, LeVasseur (2008) demonstrates how a confluence of factors, including demographic changes, spatialization of poverty, decentralization policies, and school choice practices, produce role differentiation among schools within cities. As schools become more selective of the types of students they serve, socially vulnerable, marginalized, 'high need' or 'at-risk' youth become increasingly concentrated into particular schools. These schools increasingly and disproportionately function

as institutions for the social inclusion of marginalized populations. In the context of immigrant-receiving cities, LeVasseur's insights predict that particular schools will take on the specific role of settling and including immigrant children and youth (LeVasseur, 2008; see also Devine, 2011; Hall, 2002, pp. 87-88). Indications of this process were observed in Windsor as well, as poor, racialized and immigrant and refugee youth are concentrated into particular schools.

Within this context, participants developed very strong attachments to their respective schools. This sense of school belonging relates to social and cultural recognition and comfort emerging from the presence of other immigrants, co-ethnics, or people from similar regions in the world, as well as a reaction to a growing recognition of their social stigmatization and racialization. The concentration of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth into particular schools and course programs—in the attempt to ‘meet their educational needs’—practically and discursively marked them out from other youth populations and reproduced categories of ‘mainstream’ and ‘other’. Although other schools in Windsor are diverse in terms of the social, cultural, and economic background of the students and staff, participants of this study understood ‘their’ schools to be the ‘multicultural’ (read: immigrant and racialized) schools while other schools are where the ‘Canadians’ (read: white, middle class) go.

Participants incorporated this distinction into how they speak of their schools and themselves. Through the process of differentiation, segregation, and concentration young immigrants and refugees recognized their marginalized position in the society. This social process, which seems largely unintended, shaped the types of relations young immigrants and refugees could have with their peers and positions them in relation to a number classificatory systems which work to define, order, and thereby produce certain types of subjectivities (Hall, 2002, p. 89). This finding corroborates the work of other scholars both in Canada and

internationally who demonstrate how spatial segregation and social stigmatization (pertaining to neighbourhood, as well as school segregation) affect minority youth identity formation (Fangen, 2010; Strompl, Kaldur, & Markina, 2012; Sriskandarajah, 2015; Zaami, 2015).

Ultimately, this chapter points to a paradox: schools function simultaneously as sites of inclusion and exclusion in ways that create a dynamic of *inclusionary exclusion*. That is, the everyday practices and social organization of schooling produce contradictory effects on immigrant and refugee youth's sense of themselves, their aspirations, their sense of their social position in society, and their feelings of belonging.

This chapter focused on various aspects of immigrant youth experiences of schooling, but it did not examine a key component of school life: young peoples' peer relationships. How do immigrant youth experience peer relations in Windsor, Ontario? Who do they make friends with and why? What consequences, if any, does this have on their sense of belonging in Canada? The answers to these questions form the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

How Immigrant and Refugee Youth Experience Peer Relations

After they realized that the unrest and chaos was only going to get worse, Lana and her family left Iraq. In 2006, they moved to Syria where they lived for nearly five years. There, Lana attended school and made friends. With her new friends, Syria was becoming Lana's new home. But war followed them. As the Syrian civil war intensified, her family moved to Jordan, waiting for the decision on their application to immigrate to Canada. As they waited, Lana retreated inwards:

After the one year [in Syria] I had friends. I got used to everything. Even my accent became like Syrian, not Iraqi . . . After five years, there was a war in Syria . . . we went to Jordan . . . This was like the hardest part, to do it twice, start over again. . . You don't even want to meet new people anymore, because you are tired of that thing that you might be going somewhere else. You are going to make relationships with people, you always going to miss them and love them. It will be so hurtful. In Syria, it was so hurtful to leave my friends. Then I am going to Jordan, I have to do it all over again because I know eventually I am going to go to Canada. So I didn't have a lot of friends and I tried to be closed. I didn't want to make a best friend; someone that I would really love. I would just talk to them "hello and bye." After Jordan we went to Canada . . . I decided that I would change a little bit of myself. I would become more open and I would just meet new people.

As Lana's narrative suggests, her sense of home in Syria was deeply related to the close friendships she developed with her peers. In contrast, she knew she would not be in Jordan for a long time and "tried to be closed," avoiding close friendships and the emotional attachments they entail.

Lana's experiences point to the understanding that having friends is a critical component of being in a place (Davies, 2011) and that for many immigrant youth making friends represent a key concern and central aspect of their migration and settlement experience (Devine, 2011; Hebert, Lee, Sun & Bert, 2008; Teja & Schonert-Reichl, 2013). In this chapter, I aim to analyze how immigrant and refugee youth negotiate peer relationships in their new 'home' country. This chapter is based on the insight that making friends and building social networks among peers constitutes a key component of immigrant and refugee youths' settlement experience (Devine, 2011; Hebert, Lee, Sun & Bert, 2008; Teja & Schonert-Reichl, 2013). This chapter is guided by the following questions: What meanings do immigrant and refugee youth give to friendship? How do they make friends? With whom do they become friends? Why these people and not others? What consequences, if any, does this have on their sense of belonging and social inclusion in Canada?

To answer these questions, the chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section provides a brief presentation of general findings regarding immigrant youth peer relations gleaned from a cross-sectional thematic analysis of my interview and focus group data, illuminating interesting patterns of everyday peer relations. The presentation of tendencies across my interview sample, however, hides the active work young people do as they attempt to 'make friends.' In order to appreciate the creative capacities of how immigrant youth work to build a

life for themselves in their new home, the second section of the chapter focusing on an analysis of the lives of Wahid, Moti, and Saba.

Through a close examination of their friendship practices, I demonstrate that immigrant and refugee youth's migration experiences provide an interpretive frame from which they make sense of and invest meaning into their migration to and settlement in Canada. These meanings inform how they view friendship and what type of friends they may want. Youth are strategic in their friendship practices and peer relations are a key site where they search for belonging and 'work out' their place in Canadian society. However, various factors including personal dispositions, parental expectations, language abilities, the social organization of schooling, the perceived 'openness' of friendship groups among their peers, and societal discourses of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia shape the type of friendships possible in varied and differential ways.

Immigrant and refugee youth peer relations

As described in detail in the previous chapter, when newcomer immigrant youth first arrive in Windsor, their academic history and language abilities are assessed. Based on the results of this assessment, they are placed in specific academic programs. Two schools in Windsor typically receive immigrant newcomer students, mostly because these schools have developed in response to demographic changes robust English Language Programs for newcomer immigrant youth. Ninety percent of those I spoke with were attending or had attended one of the two high schools in the city that offered these robust English language learning programs. These schools are socially and culturally diverse, including a mix of newcomer immigrants, 1.5 generation, and Canadian-born youth of various racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The following three statements, expressed to me by staff of the schools, and often

re-iterated by students provides insight into the how the population of these schools are understood: “To be different is to be normal here”; “There is nothing different about being different”; and “To be the minority is to be in the majority.” Participants themselves recognized these schools as a critical site for their social inclusion and settlement: the key place where they learned English, learned about the community, and important to this chapter, met their friends. Some participants also regularly attended youth groups organized by local settlement agencies. These after-school programs constituted secondary, yet important, site where immigrant youth forged friendships with other immigrant youth.

After first arriving, the initial weeks in school were often depicted an intense period of learning about and negotiating their peer group system. Stories focused on their initial feelings of trepidation—questioning whether they would be accepted by their new peers. One young participant told me, for instance, that for the first two weeks of school she pretended that she could not understand a word of English. She wanted to ‘scope out’ and observe her classmates, and figure out the ‘good’ ones from the ‘bad’ ones. Some participants had relatives, often cousins, who were already attending the school. In these cases, their relatives provided pathways to meeting peers, easing the fears that came with not knowing anyone. Some entered school with brothers or sisters who were able to offer each other support and encouragement, eating lunch together or meeting in the hallways between classes. Others spoke of feeling socially isolated and alone; some were teased, spoken about behind their backs, or looked at funny by their classmates

When many young immigrants talked about ‘building a life’ in Canada, finding the “right” friends represented a critical feature of their narratives. They sought friends who shared similar life goals and values. They routinely articulated that a good friend was one who they

could trust and who offered them respect and support, whom they felt comfortable to share their thoughts, opinions, and worries (c.f. Berndt, 1995). Most participants liked having or wanted diverse friendship groups, as having a diverse group of friends offered the possibility to learn about other places, practice and refine their developing English skills, and gain access to knowledge and social resources advantageous to settlement and making of a life in Canada. They did not, they told me, use ethnicity or membership in a particular ethno-cultural group as a basis for making choices about friends. Indicative of the perspective of the majority of young people I spoke with, Joseph, 19, originally from the Democratic republic of Congo, told me cultural background did not constitute a key criterion for choosing friends:

Man, I never choose a friend like that . . . If we went to class and if I feel and if he feels comfortable to talk with me, he is my friend . . . For me what matters is just a moral: You were nice to me. You respect yourself. You respect my privacy. That's it. Then we are good.

Typically, initial friendships developed after a peer would reach out and introduce themselves and offer assistance to the newcomer. Participants relayed stories of peers helping them open their lockers, show them to their classrooms, provide assistance on a class assignment, or invite them to sit with them in the cafeteria. Ethnic, regional, or linguistic similarities often provided a common reference point that encouraged initial interactions and formed the basis of initial friendships. The two schools have implemented newcomer orientation weeks, typically two weeks before school starts. During these orientations, newcomer youth meet with more established immigrant youth who offer initial support and advice. This program was cited by many as very important to reducing feelings of anxiety, worry, and trepidation.

Participants typically divided their discussion of friendships between, on the one hand, their relationships with other immigrant youth and, on the other hand, the nature of social relationships between immigrant youth and long-term resident or Canadian-born youth. This is not surprising given that the curricular organization of the school into English language learning and ‘regular’ academic streams significantly shaped with whom immigrant youth would spend much of their time. I now turn to a brief discussion of each of these major topics in order to identify the general contours of friendship relations as reported by the participants of my study.

Friendship among immigrant and refugee youth

The daily structure of school and after-school life meant that many participants developed friendships with other newcomer immigrant peers, often across different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, bonding over “shared tastes” (Harris, 2013, p. 42-45) in school, music, film, sport, or fashion, as well as their common experience of migration and settlement. Vilina, 18, for instance, told the story of how she became close friends with a group of girls from Somalia, connecting over her ‘Indian hair’ and mutual enjoyment of Bollywood films:

I have some friends from Somalia. . . . We get along so much because they watch a lot of Indian movies. . . . They come to me and be like are you Indian? We watch Indian movies. All of them used to come to me and they’d be like, ‘I love your Indian hair.’ I was like “Oh! Thank you!” I came really close to them.

When discussing everyday peer relations among newcomer immigrant youth, by and large, participants commented on the normality of routine intercultural encounters and highlighted the high levels of civility and appreciation for cultural differences. The presence of other newcomer immigrants, co-ethnics, or peers from similar regions in the world made many young immigrants feel comfortable, welcomed, and at ease. Aniso, 19, a refugee from Somalia

who has lived in Canada for nearly five years, expressed the common feeling of belonging that resulted from the presence of many other immigrants in her school:

When I am with people from all around the world, I don't know it's just, I don't know how to describe, it's just a feeling that I get, it just makes me, automatically I feel comfortable around with them. I could do whatever I want. But when I'm around with, I'm by myself and I'm around all white people. It just feels weird. I love white people. They are very nice. But it's just a feeling. You can't change what you feel. So I would just sit by myself, quiet. Just don't say anything to them. I would say hi and goodbye. Don't have anything against them. I don't know. It just feels weird. It just feels great to be a part of where you feel like you belong . . . It feels good because everyone speaks different language and you have so many people. And then, here you have Canadian people that only mostly speak English and it just feels that maybe, if you speak their English, they might laugh at you or say something

As Aniso's words nicely express, there was a general sense that immigrant peers understood each other difficulties and struggles, and many told stories of how they supported each other in school by helping with homework, re-explaining assignments, and providing each other with information about the school system and the larger community. One teacher vividly illustrated this sense of solidarity when describing a typical second period class:

You can come in any period two and just sit here and you will laugh your butt off, because half of them don't speak English. I have two Haitians, a girl from the Dominican Republic, a girl from the Congo. I have a boy from Nepal and everybody else is from Iraq. And it's 18 kids. Four of the five of the kids from Baghdad speak fluent English. I have a boy, he speaks English and French. So I will speak English, two or three of the

boys will translate to everybody else, my lesson. The boys who speak French and Arabic he will translate to my Haitian kids in French. The boy from Nepal also speaks French and he will translate to my Haitian kids.

However, despite these routine encounters and intercultural friendships, many participants suggested that outside of structured school activities “immigrants that are from the same culture, they stay together.” Joseph echoed these insights, suggesting that “many kids want to hang out with their own kind. Arabs want to hang out with the Arabs. Mexicans wants to hang out with the Mexicans.” Oscar, who immigrated to Canada from China at the age of 18, reflected on the difficulty he has faced making close friends with non-Chinese students: “I think is very hard. You can say ‘hi’ and ‘bye’ to each other. But really after school you don’t have that much chance to go with them, to have like after school activities.”

Recent immigrants were more likely to ‘hang out’ with their own ethno-cultural groups or with students who shared similar cultural, religious, or regional affiliations. Participants explained this as a natural tendency to seek comfort in those who shared cultural or linguistic similarities, especially in the early period of settlement. Limited English language abilities also encouraged people to interact more closely with those who could speak their language. These young people were often not judged negatively by their immigrant peers, as many could empathize with the feeling of seeking comfort in people who share a similar background:

I can’t say that it’s a bad thing or a good thing because everyone has different opinions. So, maybe they feel comfortable if they are together with their culture and stuff. Or maybe they’re not interested in knowing other people’s cultures and stuff. That’s why I really can’t say that it’s bad or wrong. (Gideon, 18)

Some identified strong social pressure to hang out with peers from their ethno-cultural background. They told stories of being teased, gossiped about, or criticized on occasions when they sought to make friends with other peers. In some cases, these criticisms impacted their desire to build friendships outside of their ethno-cultural group. The following discussion between Ayaan and Aniso, both originally from Somalia, illustrate clearly aspects of this sort of group pressure. The discussion centered on Ayaan's desire to become friends with non-Somali peers and the reactions from her co-ethnics:

Ayaan: Actually, I always have friends with the Indian, Pakistan, Bangladesh.

Aniso: [*laughing*] She doesn't hang out with Somali!

Ayaan: No, no, no, no! It's not like that. I don't know . . . I want to be friends with everyone right, but I don't know. Whenever I want to make a friend, Indian people always there for me. Pakistani, Bangladeshi. Sometimes Arab.

Me: Why do you think those people have become your friends? Do you ever think about why?

Ayaan: I am friends with them because I want to learn the language. If I am with Somali I always talk my language. I'm not going to learn the English so fast. I just want to learn the language and I just want to learn how to be with other people and see the difference between me and them.

Me: Would people criticize you for not hanging out with Somalis?

Ayaan: Somali people sometimes do this. . . . Why don't you hang out with us?

Aniso: I was joking. I heard people say about her that she always runs away from her people, [that] she doesn't hang with her people.

Ayaan: A lot of people say this. When they [non-Somali friends] come, if I'm with Somalian people, they won't say to me "let's go." They sit beside me. But if we speak my language, they won't understand. I don't want to make them feel bored . . . But I cannot say "let's speak English." If I do they will say "If you are one of them, go with them. We are going to speak our language. We don't care." So that's why whenever they [non-Somali friends] want to come I'm always like "okay, bye guys. I have to walk with them."

Others explicitly said that they distanced themselves from people of their own cultural or linguistic background, actively seeking friends with those who did not share their cultural background. They found their co-ethnic peers 'gossipy', judgmental, and jealous. For instance, Alina, a refugee from Iraq, whose migration story was featured in chapter four, attempted to maintain cordial relations with other Iraqi peers, but she preferred to form closer friendships with peers from other immigrant groups, who she described as "more understanding" and less jealous:

It's kind of a cultural thing. When you say something, especially when they are Iraqi, you will hear the next day from another people . . . I find that the other groups that are opposite from my culture are nicer. I don't know. This is how I feel . . . Iraqis, they don't change. They judge you based on your religion. They judge you based on what you wear, how you walk, how you act . . . That's why I feel more comfortable to talk to people who are non-Iraqis. They are more understanding.

Participants reported that intercultural conflicts among immigrant youth were quite rare. When conflicts did occur, participants often downplayed the role of inter-ethnic hostilities. Race and/or ethnic differences were sometimes evoked when talking about conflicts, but those differences were very rarely highlighted as the cause of the conflict, a finding similar to Harris'

(2013) research on the role of ethnicity and race in peer conflicts in hyper-diverse settings (p. 71). Rather, peer conflicts that did occur were usually explained as the result of interpersonal disagreements or masculine performance. Take, for example, Kuma's story of a fight between Somalis and Arabs:

One time a friend of mine and another kid, we went to a school party and my friend and a girl came to my friend and she wanted to dance with him. The other guy came running and he said "don't touch my girl!" The girl said "I am not your girl. Why are you calling me your girl?" They argued a little bit. The next day we came to school and the guy told him we have to go outside and fight. My friend told him "I can't I'm in class." He told him "You're a pussy if you don't fight me." He told him "Okay, I will meet you after school. This guy called all his friends and my friend called all his friends. So it was two groups and they wanted to fight and a big fight happened. . . It started over a girl but I don't know somehow a lot of things happened between Arabs and Somalians.

However, some participants did speak of being the target of racial name calling from other immigrant students. For example, Michael, originally from Ethiopia, experienced several months of racialized teasing from a group of immigrant peers after first arriving in Canada. However, as he established himself as a good student and premier school athlete, these peers became eventually his friends. This suggests that racialized teasing may be experienced more acutely during the "first phase of strangeness and adaptation" (Sedano, 2012) and fade as common bonds are formed and as new students enter into peer status culture.

According to participants, heterosexual dating was an unremarkable and somewhat common phenomenon (c.f. Harris, 2013). Often dating was between similar ethnic groups, but participants did report instances of intercultural dating relationships. Although many of the

participants I interviewed were not themselves interested in dating, they did share stories of their own or their friends' 'crushes' on peers, as well as stories of 'drama' emerging from dating relationships. Dating was often "closely guarded" (p. 47) from adults and even fellow peers, especially by female participants, often because of the fear of family disapproval, namely from parents or overprotective brothers or cousins. Interethnic or interracial dating was not always looked on favorably on by peers and parents. Joseph, for example, relayed a negative experience he had dating a fellow immigrant peer. Her parents "were not okay" with her dating a "black guy" and forbid the relationship. This event generated significant negative gossip among his peers about both her and him. Insults were hurled at him and he expressed that this experience was his first memory of direct racism in Canada.

Friendship among immigrant and refugee youth and Canadian-born or long-term resident youth

Participants identified in their own lives a tendency to toward expanding their friendship groups as they improved their English abilities, became more comfortable with their school and the contours of peer relations, and progressed into either higher grades or 'regular' classes. However, close friendships between newcomer immigrants and Canadian-born youth were relatively uncommon among the participants in this study. Although Canadian-born youth were largely seen as kind and welcoming—saying hello or smiling in the hallways—befriending Canadian-born youth was difficult, especially in the first few years of moving to Canada. Participants cited a range of reasons for this difficulty. First, they highlighted the lack of opportunities to interact with Canadian-born or long-term residents. This makes sense considering that most of their school time was spent in English development and English language learning courses. It was only after they successfully transferred out of these courses

into a 'regular' stream that they had more opportunities to interact and build friendships. Second, lack of English abilities and a lack of confidence in their communication skills meant some felt intimidated and embarrassed to approach 'Canadian' students. They worried about being teased or criticized for linguistic errors. Third, Canadian students also belonged to already established, close-knit groups that often stretched back to grade school. These groups formed identities, interests, and norms and were not necessarily open to new members, and immigrant youth described these friendship groups as difficult to break into. If newcomer immigrants did hang out in these groups, they often had difficulty understanding the 'jokes' or did not share interest or knowledge of similar activities. As Wahid, 21, reported:

See the thing is you would see Arabs who were born here and their friends with Canadians, like white people who were born here. It's mostly like the people who are born here, as a group, and then the people who were not born here is another group . . . I think it's an obvious reason. Most people you see at [school], they come from the same grade school. It's your grade school friends who come out with you to grade nine. . . . They attended grade school and they would obviously hang out together rather than hang out with someone new.

Oscar, 18, expands on this point by identifying his own difficulties in befriending long-term residents:

[It is difficult to] make close [Canadian] friends and hang out with them, do real fun stuff with them, have a party for together. I have my own friends. You know, I've tried to have really good Canadian friends, but I couldn't make it. Sometimes when you talk I really want to join the topic, but I'm not interested in that or I couldn't have the same

conversation with them because I don't know what they're talking about. [I don't] understand what they are talking about.

In some cases, immigrant youth did not want to hang out with certain Canadian-born youth because they felt that they shared little interests or tastes in common. Kuma, 21, originally from Ethiopia had difficulty relating to his Black Canadians peers—those either born here or who moved here when they were quite young—partly because of differing leisure tastes:

They talk about basketball. They don't talk about soccer. Us, we only talk about soccer . . . East Africans used to talk about soccer. Most of us we used to come together. We used to understand each other and talk. When I say a soccer player's name they understand, so it's just right off the bat we just understand each other.

In several cases, participants were wary of getting too close to certain Canadian youth, including those who shared a similar ethnic or racial background. These participants disliked certain ways they thought Canadian-born youth behaved. They pointed to behaviours such as being disrespectful to teachers, doing drugs, drinking alcohol, swearing, or being sexually active or open about their sexual exploits. These behaviours went against their moral sentiments and values. Some also spoke of racist slurs or xenophobic comments made by Canadian youth toward them: being told they were terrorists, to take off their hijabs, or “go back to the jungle.” Although most saw these racist occurrences as the actions of a few ‘bad apples’—reaffirming that they believed Canadians were ‘very nice’—these incidences did have the impact of qualifying with whom they wished to become friends.

Some participants did form friendships with Canadian-born youth. In many cases, this was a result of a Canadian peer reaching out and introducing themselves, and typically this friendship formed after several years of living in Canada. Male participants were more likely to

comment that they formed friendships with Canadian-born youth, usually through participation in extra-curricular or leisure activities, especially sport teams. Participation in these activities encouraged interaction and provided a common interest around which friendships could form. Some male participants, for instance, remarked that being good at sports was a key reason they became friends with Canadian-born males. This was less common for female participants, many of whom had no history of sport participation and therefore could not use physical aptitude as a means of forming friendships. Females were also more likely to speak about restrictions placed on them by their parents regarding when and where they could hang out with friends. For some female students, this meant that most peer socializing happened either at school or in formally structured extra-curricular activities, usually at youth programs offered by immigrant-serving agencies. This was different than many young men who were able to stay out later and hang out with friends in unsupervised settings.

How Wahid, Moti, and Saba make friends

I have attempted to present in the above section some of the general contours of immigrant youths' perspectives of friendship and peer relations. What is clear is that peer relations were quite complex and multivariate. I have tried to make sense of this complexity by presenting peer relations across two axes: immigrant youths' perspectives on their relationship with other immigrant youth and their perspectives on the relationships with Canadian/long-term residents. However, a presentation of general tendencies across my interviews, although illuminating regarding everyday peer relations, hides the active work young people do as they attempt to make friends. In this section, I turn to an examination of this everyday work by demonstrating how young immigrants actively build their 'social being' in Canada through their negotiation of intercultural peer relationships. In what follows, I examine of these everyday

practices through a micro-analysis of how Wahid, Moti, and Saba actively build their ‘social being’ in Canada through their negotiation of peer relationships. The life narratives of Wahid, Moti, and Saba were chosen for several reasons. First, Wahid, Moti, and Saba were exceptionally articulate in explaining their lives and actions—especially with respect to their friendship practices—which made an analysis of their interviews especially productive. Second, their friendship experiences highlight both similar and unique experiences that when read in contrast to each other provide fruitful analytical insights. These cases offer insights into the social-psychological dynamics of migration and settlement (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Rathzel, 2010), providing important opportunities for analytical exploration (Becker, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2001).

Wahid: “They really tend to trust you more when they see you’re hanging out with Canadians”

When I met Wahid, he was entering his second year of university. Eight years before we spoke his family left Iraq in search of a “better future.” Together with his mother, father, and brother, he lived in Ukraine for five years, moving to Canada about three and a half years ago. Wahid understood Ukraine as a transitional place away from war and instability, where his family could arrange their Canadian immigration application. He describes Ukraine as the best five years of his life: “All I cared about was just having fun, playing soccer, going out with my friends, eating...I didn’t have any responsibilities back then. . . . My parents had to do all the worrying.” At the time of the interview, Wahid spoke of paying little attention to the situation in Iraq, but remained connected to Ukraine, maintaining contact with friends and often listening to Ukrainian pop music.

When they received word that they were accepted to Canada under the skilled workers program (both his parents were highly educated professionals), Wahid was very happy. He saw Canada as “professional place”, where you “want to have your family...want to study...want to work in. It’s something that you feel proud to be part of.” When discussing his immigration to Canada, his parents’ sacrifices were not lost on him: “They faced everything. They gave their jobs up just for us.” His words expressed a feeling of finally being in a place where a better life could be built, of being in a stable place permanently. His words also expressed an understanding that he had to work hard to make a life in Canada; his future success would be repayment of his parents’ sacrifices. Perhaps these feelings animated his drive to achieve and make something of his life in Canada.

Even though he nearly graduated high school in Ukraine, when Wahid arrived in Canada, he was placed in grade 9, mostly because of his limited English abilities. He learned English quickly, finishing four years of high school in three years. He committed himself to speaking English, meeting new people—especially Canadians—and trying hard not to be, in his opinion, like other newcomers who he thought tended to stay “in their own circle.” He actively extended his social networks considerably by joining sports teams, getting involved in extra-curricular activities, and volunteering extensively in the community. As Wahid explained:

I don’t want to say I am a different case, but my teachers have always told me that I’m different. . . . I was always outside my circle. I would talk to Canadian friends. . . . I valued the Canadian morals more than other newcomers, like helping the community, being part of the sports team, not being afraid of English—always talking English in class.

His Iraqi peers criticized him for ‘mixing’ and only speaking English in school. They accused him of showing off in front of the teacher and not wanting to be an Arab. But, “it’s not that I don’t want to be an Arab. . . . I just tend to distance myself from Arab people lots of the time.” The complexity of this ‘distancing’ was revealed in this following narrative:

It’s most likely [the] reputation that is around Arabs. You know how they say “there is trouble wherever an Arab is?” . . . So that’s why most likely I actually started distancing myself from Arabs. . . . But I just want to explain something to you about talking only English. I really think that talking only in English—this thing of kind [of] distancing myself from Arab groups—is also what made me close to a lot of teachers. This is because I don’t want to say they look bad at students, because they don’t. All the teachers are great. . . . [But] they really tend to trust you more when they see you’re hanging out with Canadians. . . . That’s why lots of them trust me. And I’m really proud of this thing and I don’t regret it at all. It’s the image that people have of [Arabs]. . . . It’s more like a stereotype rather than as an actual thing. . . . Again I did not fully distance myself from them. . . . You see, I distance myself, but I also picked who I wanted to be with.

After living in Canada for nearly four years, Wahid has developed deeply intercultural friendship groups, which he divided into his Canadian friends and his Arab friends. He described his Canadian friends as culturally diverse in the sense that they had different ethnic heritages but were all born in Canada. Wahid told me that “there is no mix” between these two friendship groups, hanging out with his Canadian friends and then separately with Iraqis.

Bolstered by his view that Canada was a “professional place” and his desire to establish a life there, Wahid saw ‘mixing’ and developing intercultural friendships, especially with Canadian-born peers, as a strategy to showcase his desire to become Canadian. In some ways, we

can say that accumulating Canadian friends was a means for Wahid to accumulate ‘Canadian-ness’. Wahid strategically decided to only “go with one or two” Iraqis. He understood that social discourses framed Arabs as bad, violent, dangerous—even ‘integration failures’. He learned this while living in Ukraine, but these notions followed him to Canada. He feared that being seen to have too many Arab friends would be detrimental to his social advancement, cause ‘trouble’, and interfere with his acceptance as a Canadian. Being seen to ‘mix’ differentiated him from other immigrants in ways that garnered the praise of teachers who labeled him as a unique case of ‘successful integration’—a distinction of ‘belonging’ that he took much pride in.

Moti: “To respect my reputation . . . I get away from people who are not from my race or my religion”

When I met Moti he had been living in Canada for about two years. He was in his final year of high school, but recently decided to return to school for one more year to upgrade some of his courses. When he was young, Moti left Ethiopia, the country of his birth, with his father, mother, and seven siblings after his father was targeted by government officials. After abandoning their properties in Ethiopia, they fled to Kenya where his father was jobless and all nine members of the family lived in a one-room apartment. In time, however, Moti and his family established a life. His father, a doctor, found work and Moti “started getting used to the people,” making many friends in school. However, life was still marked by a sense of fear, uncertainty, and insecurity: “They [were] hunting down my father. . . They crossed the border even after seven years. We moved six or seven times, like from different apartments, because of that.” Then, all of a sudden, “we got a call from the Canadian embassy.” They were now moving to Canada.

The move happened quickly, with only a short period of time to say good-bye to friends and family. Moti remembered his experience of leaving with mixed emotions. While they were leaving friends and family they loved, Canada represented a release from the insecurities and fears his family faced: “It was the most peaceful time for [my father] . . . because [he could] put all that behind him.” Canada was also a place from which they could support their family remaining in Africa. “Now it is our responsibility,” he told me, reflecting on moving to Canada, “to take care of . . . all of those [relatives] in Ethiopia.”

Similar to Wahid, the sense of opportunity, responsibility, and obligation motivated Moti to work hard in school. Since being in Canada for a little over two years, he has learned English, garnered the respect of his teachers, and developed close friendships with two other immigrants—one originally from Sudan and the other from Ethiopia. These two young men are his only “good friends” who he can look to for advice and support, and who share similar values and life goals. He contrasted these friends—the trust and security he feels with them—to other peers, both immigrant and Canadian-born, in his school: “You have to stay away from them because they are on drugs and . . . they don’t pay attention in school [and] I know that they will pull me back. . . . I’ll just say ‘Hi. How are you?’”

Moti spoke of his intercultural peer network he has developed by living in a neighbourhood and attending a school with peers from various places around the world. But he also told me that he does not really have ‘white’ or ‘Canadian’ friends, terms he often conflated when talking about his peers. In fact, he avoided getting too friendly with Canadians or ‘white’ people. As he explained:

Some people are just saying bad stuff about refugees [and] immigrants coming to Canada. . . . Anybody who’s black and has an accent: ‘They come from the bush, a

jungle'. That's how they consider you. . . . Even though they seem nice, [if] something happens, they'll put it on us for sure. . . . It makes me feel like if I have a friend who is Canadian, what will happen if something happens? Who are they going to blame? Probably me because I'm from a different country. That's how everything is turning out now. . . . I think because of ISIS. I think because of that kind of stuff. . . . Before I went to the University and I went to the washroom, opened the door, I close the door and I see, "ALL MUSLIMS GO KILL YOURSELVES. WE DON'T LIKE YOU. WE DON'T LIKE YOU IN OUR COUNTRY." This is at a university! How could this happen? Moti's responded to this social hostility by not forging too close of a relationship with white people:

To respect my reputation, it is better for me to just be quiet about it. I get away from people who are not from my race or my religion. It is not that I hate them. It's for their safety, so they can feel better.

But Moti did not want to leave our conversation on such a note. Near the end of our conversation, he told me that there was one more "important thing" he would like to say. "I'm actually glad that I'm here. . . . I want to say thank you to Canada [for] taking us refugees. . . . I hope I can do something really good to give back."

To Moti, then, Canada was a place of opportunity and a place from which to support his family, both in Canada and abroad. Motivated by a sense of duty, he was very concerned with staying out of trouble and on the straight path. With this in mind, he made friends with peers who would support him and who shared similar values, actively steering clear of others who he believed were "on drugs" or did not care about school. He formed close friendships with two immigrant peers who shared common experiences of being racialized and newcomers to Canada.

Unlike Wahid, he avoided making friends with Canadians or “white people.” Even though they may appear “nice,” he felt that at any moment new global events like the rise of ISIS may cause people to turn on him, blame him, or target him. In order to maintain dignity in the face of xenophobia and Islamophobia, he purposively distanced himself from “white” peers (which he uses interchangeably in his interview), searching for existential safety in other immigrant youth. He framed this distancing as a polite act of accommodation for Canadians— “so they can feel better”—revealing an attitude that as a racialized Muslim immigrant, he must keep his head-low, avoid attention, perhaps in an attempt to show respect to the country that accepted him.

Saba: “A friend of mine is going to be nicer and smarter because we are all here for education”

When I first met Saba, originally from Eritrea, she had been living in Canada with her mother and younger brother for nearly two years. Saba’s little brother had a health problem and the search for access to medical treatment prompted her mother and younger brother to move to Uganda. Saba remained behind to live with her aunt, a decision related to their family’s limited financial resources and their inability to receive permission for Saba to travel. This was because government authorities required travel documents with both her mother’s and father’s signature, but her father was kidnapped several years earlier for reasons pertaining to his religious practices.⁶

From 2007 to 2011, Saba lived separated from her brother and mother. Being apart was quite difficult: “You know, you lived until you were 14 years old with your parents and then all of a sudden your parents are not with you. It was so hard for me.” During these four years,

⁶ Eritrea has come under increasing scrutiny for its treatment of citizens who “practice religions other than the four it recognizes—Sunni Islam and the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran churches.” Saba’s father was a practicing Pentecostal. See Human Rights Watch World Report 2015 at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/eritrea>

Saba's mother and brother moved to South Africa for a short time, where her mother scraped together enough money to pay for Saba's brother's heart operation. In 2011, Saba reunited with family in Uganda, a complicated affair involving a cousin forging her father's signature so that she could receive the required travel documents. Life in Uganda was better than in Eritrea, but life was certainly not easy. "The problem was [my mother] didn't have money . . . There's no jobs. Where do you get the money if you don't work?" Eventually, Saba's mother became increasingly desperate and contacted an uncle and second cousin living in Canada. "She told him, 'I can't live here. . . there is no job, and my kids are going to die here. I need your help. I need to come to Canada. I can work anywhere but I need my kids to have food!'"

As a result of her uncle and second cousin's successful sponsorship, Saba and her family arrived in Canada in 2012 and came directly to Windsor. Similar to Wahid and Moti, Saba focused on her schooling and education, motivated by a sense of duty she expressed toward her mother who, despite her dreams of returning to school, worked daily at a local greenhouse. She has often offered to work (she is 18 years old) to help contribute to the family income, but her mother, uncle, and aunt refused to allow her, insisting that her focus be on her education.

School was her central site of her social life, and she spoke very highly of her education in Canada, especially the sense of welcoming she received from her immigrant peers when she first arrived. "I thought people wouldn't talk to you. . . I thought they were going to be mean and stuff. But here it is the opposite. They were so nice." To illustrate her point she told me a story about her an experience during her first few weeks of school:

I have the schedule and always got lost in the hallway . . . so I am always confused. Then there was one person who helped me, a student. That is when I started to know that they

are so nice. If you stayed alone, they come [and ask] ‘are you okay?’ They talk to you.

They want to know what is going on to you, which is very nice!

These initial experiences informed her general perspectives of peer relations as positive, friendly, and supportive:

“Even though they come from different countries, when they come here, it’s the same, it’s one place . . . you know all the problems, all the struggles you passed. You know that person has the same as you did. So you’re going to help them. You had that feeling before.”

At the time of the interview her closest friends were three fellow Eritreans. Their common cultural background and interest in academic achievement formed the basis of their initial encounter and ongoing relationships. She met these friends about three months after first arriving. She describes this period as a time when she observed her peers, trying to “understand their personalities.” Explaining how she first met her closest friends, Saba tells me that

We are the only four people here [at school] from Eritrea. I had class with them in math. We were sitting and the teacher called her name . . . So she looks at me and I look at her. Then after that she came to me ‘you from Eritrea?’ . . . She told me if you want to come for lunch in the cafeteria. I started coming there. We study and I did very well in maths, so she likes me because I was doing very well in math and stuff.”

Over the year and a half she has built large network of friends from many different social and cultural backgrounds, attributing this to the fact that she has “a lot of classes so you meet students and sometimes they like you.” But to Saba it “doesn’t matter where you are from.” She did have a few ‘Canadian’ friends, whom she interacted with primarily during classes, but most of her acquaintances were immigrant youth. What mattered to Saba, rather, was “to go with

someone” who offered reciprocity, respect, and common values, and who would support her in her educational goals. As she told me, “Your friends [determine] who you are”:

Teenagers, we are like copying each other. If someone says let’s go to a bar, the other is going to go to the bar. We just follow each other. So if you are smart and you just love to learn and stay at school and do your homework and stuff, that’s the person that you want because you’re coming here to school to learn something . . . a friend of mine is going to be nicer and smarter because we are all here for education.

Outside of school, her mother and uncle set a strict rule that Saba was not allowed to be outside the house after 8 p.m., a curfew she does not seem to mind. She agreed that the curfew was primarily for her safety, and she personally doesn’t like to ‘go outside.’ “I just go home and if I could I watch T.V. or just study . . . Everything is about school. Because the purpose that I came here is about school. So I just need to focus on school. That’s what I always think.”

In sum, Saba depicted her experiences of peer relations as generally positive, friendly, and supportive, especially among other immigrant youth. She attributed this to the fact that immigrant youth understood the problems and pressures of each other’s’ lives. Although she has many friends, both Canadian-born and immigrant, she found a supportive group of friends primarily among three Eritrean peers. This group provided her with comfort and support—a place where she could speak her own language—and their common background initiated their first encounters. But her choice of friends did not seem to be primarily guided by a strategy to accumulate Canadian-ness like Wahid or to seek existential safety from external misrecognition like Moti. Rather, Saba’s search for friends seemed to relate to an understanding that it was her duty to her family to do well in school. Knowing that “your friends [determine] who you are”,

she searched for friends whose perspectives, values, and goals aligned with her own in ways that would ‘keep her on track’—a goal deeply wrapped up in collective ambitions of her family.

Summary

This chapter analyzed how young immigrants and refugees negotiate peer relationships in their new ‘home’ country. The chapter considered the meanings immigrant and refugee youth attribute to friendship, how they attempted to make friends, and with whom. As the chapter demonstrated, immigrant and refugee youths’ own migration experiences provided an interpretive frame through which they invested meaning into their settlement in Canada. These meanings shaped many aspects of their lives, including their views of friendship and what type of friends they want. However, these meanings mixed with various factors including personal dispositions, language abilities, family expectations, the perceived ‘openness’ of friendship groups among their peers, the social organization of schooling, and societal discourse of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia to shape the type of friendships possible.

Educational spaces were shown to be especially critical sites shaping immigrant and refugee youth peer relations. As the case of Wahid demonstrated, it was through school that young immigrants and refugees receive messages about what constitutes a ‘good’ immigrant, largely defined as someone willing to ‘mix’ and expand his/her social relations outside of their own ethnic group. Immigrant and refugee youth attempted to live up to these expectations in various ways, but also viewed friendship with much more complexity than just a sign of ‘integration’. For some developing a diverse group of friends was a strategic choice because it offered them access to resources and opportunities that will help them ‘build a life’ in Canada and achieve their goals. But, ultimately, a good friend was largely defined by participants as those who are helpful, supportive, trustworthy, and kind. As immigrant and refugee youth

experience the emotional and social stresses of settlement, they search for friends who make them feel good about themselves and who offer them support in their attempts to build a new life.

Various structural conditions shaped who immigrant and refugee youth befriended. The daily structure of educational spaces, for instance, was shown to limit opportunities to interact with Canadian-born or long-term resident youth, so most developed friendships with other newcomer immigrant peers, often across complex social and cultural differences. These friends understood each other's struggles; the common experience of migration and settlement becomes a central feature of their collective bonds. Furthermore, the perceived exclusiveness of already existing peer groups made it difficult for immigrant and refugee youth to forge friendships with Canadian-born or long-term resident youth. For some, experiences of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia were felt as direct threats to one's 'reputation' and sense of self. In response, immigrant and refugee youth searched for friends who provided existential safety and this sometimes meant selecting friends socially and culturally similar.

The next chapter moves beyond young immigrants' and refugees' experiences of schools and peer groups to consider their perspectives and participation of in various spheres of city life. In particular, the next chapter attempts to trace young immigrants' participation in the various domains of city life, including specifically neighbourhoods, the labour market, and everyday public spaces by asking what types of identifications and attachments they make with the city.

CHAPTER 7

How Immigrant and Refugee Youth Participate in Various Domains of City Life

Chapter four and five documented immigrant and refugee youth's high educational aspirations and the significance many placed on educational attainment as the main mechanism for their social advancement. Schools were more than just places of learning; they were central sites of belonging and inclusion. However, the experiences of course streaming and the regulation of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth to specific schools had contradictory effects of producing feelings of stigmatization and "othering" in ways that created what I referred to as a dynamic of *inclusionary exclusion*. Chapter six further illustrated how various social, cultural, and institutional factors, including the social organization of schooling in the city, shaped peer group social engagement opportunities.

This chapter moves the analysis outside of schools and peer groups to explore young immigrants' and refugees' participation in the larger city context. Two reasons inform this chapter. First, as youth studies scholars suggest, local place continues to retain both material and symbolic significance in young peoples' lives (Harris & Wyn, 2009; Nayak, 2003). Young people are often restricted in their movements and the sites they can occupy and tend to spend most of their time in residential locations that link them to their neighborhood, family, and school (Harris & Wyn, 2009, pp. 327-328). Their lives, identities, and available opportunities—that is, how they may 'continue to exist—are importantly shaped by resources offered by their local environments (Harris and Wyn, 2009, p. 328). Second, policy initiatives introduced across

Canada—called Welcoming Initiatives—aim to remove barriers to newcomer immigrant and refugee participation in economic, political, and community spheres (Esses, Hamilton, Bennet-AbuAyyash, & Burstein, 2010; George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015). These locally focused and, arguably, social inclusion-driven, initiatives provide an impetus for understanding how cities shape immigrant inclusion and belonging (George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015).

Therefore, this chapter considers the types of identifications and attachments immigrant and refugee youth make with the broader community. In order to explore this larger question, the chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section outlines participants' prior knowledge and initial impressions of the city, demonstrating their varied reasons for moving to Windsor and the different initial impressions they had of the city. These initial impressions are important to consider because they provide us with an understanding of the expectations upon which immigrant and refugee youth evaluate their participation in city life. The chapter then analyzes young immigrants' and refugees' experiences of neighbourhood life, the labour market, and public spaces. The chapter ends with a presentation of how participants understood the place of Windsor in their future lives.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates that immigrant and refugee youth's capacity to participate in various spheres of urban life is varied and partial, relative to their social, economic, and migratory experiences. Their participation in social spheres outside of school is marked by their regulation to immigrant-specific spaces, namely immigrant settlement agencies, uneven and limited neighborhood connections, differential access to employment opportunities, and differential treatment in public space. The result is a complex picture of immigrant and refugee youth's sense of inclusion and belonging to the city, which is expressed by an ambivalent stance toward the place Windsor will play in their future lives.

Prior knowledge and initial impressions of Windsor

Participants demonstrated varied reasons for moving to and settling in Windsor. In most cases young people had little influence on the choice of place. In fact, some were not told until a few days before that they were moving, illustrating the relative lack of power many young people have in the choice of where to reside and live. Those who came to Canada as government-assisted refugees were often placed directly in Windsor. Other families were originally settled in other cities across Canada and through informal connections and familial advice, learned about Windsor. This was especially the case for participants of Middle Eastern background who either moved to Windsor in order to be closer to family living in Dearborn, Michigan or learned upon arriving in Canada that Windsor had a rather large Middle Eastern population. Some were sponsored by family members already living in the city.

Participants also had varying degrees of knowledge about Canada and Windsor prior to their arrival; however, as I identified in chapter four, most shared the understanding that Canada was a safe and stable country that offered opportunity for a better life for themselves and their families. Given the insights discussed in chapter four, it is not surprising that the conditions of their migration provided interpretive frames through which they made sense of Windsor and what the city had to offer them. For instance, those who escaped violent or dire circumstances tended to frame Windsor as a place that offered them stability and safety. Their narratives often communicated stories of relief and finally feeling safe. Natan, who fled war and conflict in Iraq, framed Windsor as “great,” matter-of-factly noting that it was certainly “Better than seeing bombs” and that there was “green everywhere, not smoke.” Others, like Amina and Aniso, projected onto Windsor a sense of possibility and opportunity. Amina, 17, whose family’s arduous journey to Canada included traveling through seven different countries and a stay at a

detention center in Turkey described Windsor “like Disney World for me!” Aniso, 18, pointing to the availability of education could not help noticing all the students:

School, school, school. . . . When I first came to Windsor I was like ‘oh my God there’s so many people with their backpacks. Where are they going? . . . Even now there is always someone with their backpack. School, school, school, school.

These perspectives tell us a lot about the feelings of hope many immigrant and refugee youth felt toward Canada and Windsor after first arriving. But it is also important to note that these interpretations contrasted with others who expressed initial disappointment in the city. In many cases, this initial disappointment related to the fact that the conditions of the city did not match their anticipated images of Canada. Some participants commented on what they considered to be Windsor’s poor aesthetic quality, lack of cosmopolitanism, and/or poor physical conditions. Rinor, for instance, was very happy to immigrate to Canada. He saw Canada as a developed country that would afford him opportunities unavailable in Albania. But his initial impression did not match his anticipated image of Canada. When he arrived in Windsor, he told me, “Actually, I thought that the streets would be better, to be honest.”

However, when asked to express their opinions about the city more generally, participants commonly used words like ‘safe’, ‘small’, ‘affordable’, ‘good education’, and ‘multicultural’. The majority of participants viewed Windsor as rather welcoming to immigrants and refugees and saw the city as a relatively good place to build their futures. They cited several reasons for holding this belief. Participants pointed to the array of supports they or their families received through school, social programs, and various settlement agencies in the city as a key reason for feeling welcomed. Some compared these supports to the general lack of support and even overt hostility they faced when they lived in other countries before coming to Canada.

Second, participants also suggested that Windsor's ethno-cultural diversity and large percentage of newcomer immigrants promoted a sense of belonging, as many could see themselves reflected in the demographic characteristics of the city. Many expressed the feeling, like Ibrahim, originally from Iraq, that Windsor was a tolerant city because "almost everyone is new." Sabeen, 19 and also originally from Iraq, lived in Drummondville, Quebec for several years before moving to Windsor. Both Drummondville and Windsor had strong schools and kind teachers, but "in Quebec the people were so rude to us because we wear hijab but here we don't see anything like we see in Drummondville." In other words, most shared Vilina's belief that Windsor was a manageable and "small city" with "a lot of diversity . . . a really nice place to come if you are just migrating . . . [because] like now they're pretty open about diversity. . . . We've also some really good immigrant services."

Participation in various domains of city life

An examination of young immigrant and refugees' everyday engagements in the city reveal varied and uneven participation in various aspects of city life, relative to their social, economic, and migratory experiences. The following discussion illustrates how these varied and uneven experiences of participation qualify many young immigrants and refugees' sense of inclusion and belonging to the city. The section begins with a discussion of their neighbourhood ties and moves on to a description of their experiences of the labour market and public space. The section ends by identifying the role settlement agencies and religious organizations play in forging attachments to the city beyond school participation.

Neighborhoods

As already noted, familial and ethno-cultural connections shaped the reason many families moved to Windsor. Familial connections, not surprisingly, were also revealed to be the

key source of connection to the city. Having close and extended family nearby also provided participants with emotional and social support that ameliorated the pressures of migration and settlement. In describing routines of everyday life, participants typically depicted their daily life as centering on participation in family life and school. Everyday life for many immigrant and refugee youth was a lot like Saba's or Joseph's, who got up early to catch the bus to school, spent six or seven hours in school, returned home, did some daily household chores, studied, and then perhaps watched a little bit of television before going to bed.

However, participants did demonstrate varied spatial connections to the city. Some had lives that were densely concentrated in a particular area of the city, while others were spread thinly across the city depending where they or their families could find affordable housing. Some participants lived in neighborhoods located close to the downtown core, others lived on the west side of the city, while yet others lived in more suburban areas located to the east and south of Windsor. Most participants, however, attended schools located near the city centre or on the west side of the city, as these were the schools that offered a robust English language learning curriculum described in detail in chapter five. For those who lived around the downtown core area, this meant that school was a walking distance or a short bus ride away. Those who lived in more suburban neighbourhoods had to arrange rides with family and friends or take a long bus ride—sometimes over one hour—to attend school. Some participants, especially those who lived in suburban areas of the city who did not have access to a family car, spoke of knowing very little about the city, spending most of their time at home, on the bus, and at school.

Many immigrant and refugee youth described their neighbourhoods as socially and culturally diverse that included other newcomer immigrant families, as well as long-term or Canadian-born residents. Although most participants felt safe in their neighbourhoods and spoke

of relatively friendly interactions with residents, it was common for participants to speak of not knowing their neighbours or having only superficial “hi-bye” relationships with them. Saba, for example, has lived in her neighbourhood for the last year and a half. She describes her neighborhood as diverse, but her family does not even know her two closest neighbours. Their relationship is “not something mean” but “we don’t go outside that much so you don’t know your neighbors that much.” It was common for participants to contrast this lack of connection to the often highly connected neighbourhoods many experienced while living outside of Canada. Gideon’s comments summarize a general sentiment among most participants regarding neighbourhood life in the city. “That’s the main big thing that I don’t like about Canada,” he remarked,

People are mostly inside. They don’t go out. I don’t get to know my neighbors. We live close with the people, but we don’t really know them. Because they’re busy with work. They never stay at home. Or they never even come out. . . . Back home, you pretty much know the entire city because everyone is outside. That’s what I like. Mostly you learn stuff from your neighbor. Like if, for example, we got here, and the neighbors were like the ones back home, we wouldn’t even have problems.

A few participants did speak of the positive connections and relationships their families forged with their neighbours. These relationships were often between immigrant families of the same ethnic background, but several participants did speak of friendship formed across social and cultural differences. Ariana and her family, originally from Lebanon, developed a relatively close relationship to another Arab family living across the street, sometimes meeting for coffee or visiting each other’s houses. Kuma neighbors are mostly “White Canadians” and although his family has a mostly “hi-bye” relationships with them, on several occasions his neighbors have

cut their grass and shoveled their snow, actions of kindness that created a positive and friendly relationship. Although most participants wanted to have less superficial relationships with their neighbours, in some cases participants spoke of steering clear of them because of the impression or suspicion that these neighbours were perhaps not “good people,” used drugs, or engaged in criminal activities.

Participants who had lived in Windsor long enough to learn more about the city suggested that certain neighbourhoods were associated with particular ethno-cultural groups. One area of the city, which contains many Middle Eastern stores and restaurants, was referred to by participants as “Little Beirut” or “Little Baghdad.” Another area on the west-end of the city was sometimes referred to as “Little Mogadishu,” apparently referencing the large number of Somali families residing in the area. On the eastside of the city, there was a particular area that some colloquially refer to as “Little Nepal.” Sometimes these different areas were labeled in ways that stigmatized the area within the larger community. For instance, one area located near the downtown core contains several social housing units and was on several occasions referred to as “the ghetto,” referring to the concentration of low-income and visible minority residents, both immigrant and Canadian-born.

Overall however, interviews and focus groups with immigrant and refugee youth revealed a large degree of residential instability. Participants told many stories of moving around the city, especially in the first several years of their settlement in Canada, as their family pursued more affordable rent or better rental conditions. In fact, at the time of my interviews, several participants and their families were in the act of moving or considering moving from their current neighbourhood of residence. This residential instability, definitely a source of stress for

families, may have interfered with their willingness and ability to get to know their neighbours and form strong identifications and attachments with their neighbourhoods.

Employment and work

Interview and focus group participants expressed varied attitudes about employment. Some participants did not want to work and expressed the idea that their job was school. In fact, several participants told me that their parents even forbade them from working, telling them rather to focus on their schooling. However, others did speak about wanting to find at least part-time work in the city and, in some cases, their parents encouraged them to work, especially those older than sixteen. Finding some form of paid employment was seen as important to help support their families, both in Windsor and abroad, and a way to build skills and develop Canadian work experience. Male participants were more likely than female participants to speak of their paid work, their desire to find paid work, the difficulties they faced finding employment, and/or the feeling of being responsible to provide for their families through paid employment. Many female participants, on the other hand, spoke of the expectations to help with household labour, including housekeeping and child-care. This tendency may relate to culturally-based expectations that split household tasks along class and gender lines.

Some participants did work part-time or spoke of temporary jobs they were able to secure. They worked in small, family-owned restaurants, usually doing low-skill jobs such as bussing tables, dishwashing, or helping with food preparation. However, the most commonly cited source of work accessible to participants—especially among male participants—I interviewed was temporary employment as general laborers in the various greenhouses located in the rural areas outside of the city. They described greenhouse work as physically taxing and boring, but the most easily accessible work opportunity, especially when one needed money

relatively quickly, because such work did not require strong English proficiency or Canadian work experience. In these greenhouses, participants worked primarily with other immigrants or temporary foreign workers, because as one participant described, it was the type of work that “Canadians did not want to do.” When I asked Ahmed, a 20-year-old originally from Iraq who eventually found full-time work in a local falafel restaurant, if he would ever consider working at the greenhouses again, he replied, “Oh, hell no!”

Generally, participants who did work typically found paid employment through ethno-cultural, familial, or peer connections. Some participants seemed to have denser social connections than others, and these connections opened them up to certain job opportunities. For example, many participants of Middle Eastern descent, such as the young man who worked in the falafel restaurant quoted above, were able to draw on a network of ethno-cultural or familial ties to gain access to work in a number of Middle Eastern grocery stores, small businesses, shops, restaurants, and/or bakeries in the city. However, this did not seem to be the case of many participants originally from African countries, such as Ethiopia, Congo, Uganda, Sudan, or Somalia. For example, during one focus group of primarily Somali youth, several participants spoke of the difficulties they have had in finding at least part-time paid work, arguing that this arose due to their lack of connections in the city. “Arabs just helped Arabs” one female focus group participant remarked in a discussion that pointed to their impression that these social networks were largely based around ethno-cultural affiliations and that Middle Eastern immigrant and refugee youth could draw their connections to better secure employment opportunities. It should be noted that this study did not focus on the dynamics of labour market participation specifically, so these insights are tentative and require more focused empirical research. However, previous work on immigrant and refugee youth labour market participation

does suggest that ethno-cultural connections play a critical role in finding initial employment (see Wilkinson et al., 2011).

Although some were willing to work temporarily in greenhouses or in low-level jobs to gain experience and to ‘pay the bills,’ participants aspired to careers and professions in line with their professional dreams and aspirations. They wanted well-paying jobs that could support their family both in Canada and abroad. They expressed a range of professional/work goals, including among others becoming a doctor, research scientist, small business owner, police officer, flight attendant, border security officer, nurse, architect, engineer, and baker. Almost all of the types of work immigrant and refugee youth spoke of wanting to do required some form of post-secondary education and only a very small minority of participants did not want to attend some form of post-secondary education, preferring rather to start a family and enter into the general labor market.

Encounters in public space

Social scientists have demonstrated that actions or even non-actions in public space by strangers communicate messages that shape one’s feeling of belonging. As Fangen (2010) notes, immigrant and refugee youth may be particularly sensitive to signals from strangers, namely non-immigrant persons. Scholars suggest that when analyzing the effects of everyday interactions in public space, it is more important to take into account how these instances are interpreted and felt rather than the intentions of those imposing it (pp. 149-150). To adapt Thomas’ famous notion of the definition of the situation, how events are perceived have real consequences on young immigrants and refugees’ sense of belonging. So how did immigrant and refugee youth in this study experience everyday encounters in public spaces, such as while

walking down the street, traveling on the bus, or shopping at Devonshire Mall (Windsor's largest shopping center)?

Interview and focus group data revealed that everyday encounters in public spaces shaped immigrant and refugee youths' sense of inclusion and belonging in both positive and negative ways. Other young people as well as adults were both sources of positive and negative interactions. On the positive side, young people relayed stories of how strangers' acts of civility and kindness—a nod, smile, or greeting—created positive feelings of acceptance and welcome. Others compared their everyday encounters to their pre-migration experiences. To them, Windsorites, and Canadians more generally, were tolerant, friendly, and embraced cultural differences. Some participants spoke of being both surprised and relieved at how accepting Windsor was of religious differences as well. “They respect you for your religion” Hani, 20, told me,

For example, if I go to emergency room. If I asked them a place to pray, they say, “oh we made Muslim people a home, so you can pray.” Whenever I went in, there was the Koran there. They brought the Koran and they put the things that we pray on there. They are so nice. They respect the religion. . . . I was so surprised.

Gideon spoke about how random encounters in public spaces with strangers provided him with a sense of community, as well as the opportunity to learn about other residents of the city:

In summertime [the Riverside] is really a great place to go to because you get to meet people. People go there to relax and then you meet them. And you get to talk to them. For example, me I like talking to people when I meet them. . . . Well, sometime I said “hi” when they “hi” back. Mostly, the older people I like to talk to them because they're really like give you great advice. There was this man, I met him there, at the Riverside. He

really gave me really important advice. He was just sitting there, and I was kicking my ball and it went there. And I was like, may I sit there? And he was like yeah. And we started talking. I asked him “where are you from?” And he told me his background. Where he came from. . . . He was like 60 years old. He gave me advice about school and how you have to be responsible and all this stuff to be successful. . . . I’m just like that when I see someone, I just said “hi” and they said “hi” back.

Others like Alina enjoyed what she perceived as the relative indifference residents paid to religious and cultural differences. “Here they respect your freedom,” she told me, “As long as you are not hurting anyone you can do whatever you want . . . They don’t really care about who you are. They leave you alone. They give you personal space and you can practice whatever you want.” Originally from Iraq, Alina is comparing her experiences in Windsor to her family’s experiences in Iraq, where her family was targeted by various groups for being Christian. Her positive framing of people’s everyday “ethical indifference” (Harris, 2013, p. 51) must be understood in relation to her pre-migration experiences.

To complicate matters, everyday acts of incivility in various public spaces—such as on the bus (a common space referenced by many participants), on the street, in a park, in stores, at the mall, or even communicated through graffiti—also created feelings of hostility, being an outsider, and non-belonging. Some negative experiences were explicit—participants knew they were being targeted because of their race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or immigrant status—while other interactions were subtle and interpreted as hostile. Participants spoke of being told by random strangers on the bus or while walking down the street to “go back home,” “go back to the bush” or that they were “terrorists” and not welcomed.

Stories of instances of everyday hostilities circulated among friends. They often shared their experiences and so even if they themselves had not experienced hostilities directly in everyday encounters, their friends' experiences became incorporated into their perceptions of the place. Moti, for instance, told me that he has never experienced direct hostility in public, but that he "heard from some people there was people yelling at the bus":

One woman stood up and was like "Go back to your jungle houses! Now you're coming to Canada and acting like this!" What? What? What? The people acting like that weren't actually immigrants. They were born here!

Hearing of such experiences contributed to his feeling that "they think that every problem comes from somebody who's actually from a different country." Moti continued,

But I know a guy who that [discrimination] happened to. He's French and they're Canadian and they get into fights. . . . This kid was harassed because he was an immigrant. "Immigrant, why you coming here now?" Making everybody fight. For no reason, you see, because he was from a different country.

Female Muslim immigrant and refugee youth who practice hijab reported how their headscarf promoted both subtle and explicit negative encounters in public space from both other young people and adults. Young Muslim women spoke of being sneered at, told by strangers to "take off their rag," or accused of being terrorists. These experiences correspond with previous research that demonstrates how within the context of ubiquitous discourses of Islamophobia and Orientalism, the hijab immediately and publicly marks young women as "different" and "foreign" in ways that increase the likelihood of becoming the target of harassment and abuse (Mian, 2014). Several young men of color recounted stories of being treated rudely or being called racial slurs in public by passing strangers. Two focus group participants—who happened

to be close friends—relayed a story of feeling humiliated when they held a door open for two women who subsequently refused to pass through the door. Another participant of the same focus group told a story of being called a “nigger” by a neighbor when walking down street. Others still relayed stories of negative interactions with police, who as one participant remarked “just stop you randomly.” They interpreted these events as a result of being “young and black.”

Sometimes it was difficult for participants to determine whether an act of incivility was in fact due to racism or xenophobia. For instance, Joseph was “walking from school, going to downtown” when someone driving by yelled profanities at him, calling him a “bitch.” Although Joseph recognized that such incidences “don’t happen often,” he told me that “they do happen.” In interpreting the events, he expressed frustrations at how people often misjudge him or jump to conclusions: “I know some people are lazy and they don’t know anything about others. They just jump to conclusion really quick without knowing the people they want to judge.” Like Joseph, participants often interpreted everyday incivility as actions committed in response to their skin color, ethnic membership, presumed citizenship status, or religious affiliation. The tendency to interpret acts of incivility as instances of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or immigrant status suggests a recognition of, or sensitivity to, a growing acknowledgement of racialized young peoples’ positions within a larger status system based on a complex combination of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and citizenship (among others).

Participants made sense of and responded to incidences of everyday racism and xenophobia differently. A common reaction was to explain everyday racist or discriminatory incidence as the result of a ‘few bad apples’. They shrugged these incidences off, stressing that such actions were not indicative of all Canadians, most of whom they believed were not racist or xenophobic. A minority of participants pointed toward what could be more systemic issues of

racism, xenophobia, and exclusion. Such insights are revealed by one young man who came to see Canada as “way too racist” or Laila, 18, originally from Afghanistan but who had lived in Windsor for much of her life, who told me rather succinctly that there are

A lot of issues that exist get swept under the rug . . . You never hear about the racism. There is nothing being done to encounter racism. There is a lot being done to assist people who might be experiencing culture shock, who might be having difficulty to settling in life in Windsor, but nothing is being done to address casual racism, which unfortunately exists.

Settlement agencies and religious organizations

Outside of family and school, settlement agencies emerged as an important non-school space for many immigrant newcomer and refugee youth. Settlement agencies throughout the city offer a wide range of youth settlement programs, including homework support, access to computers and the internet, employment help, extra-curricular activities such as drumming circles, art classes, field trips as well as access to counseling services. Although not all participants attended youth programming offered by the different agencies in the city, those who did described them as a critical secondary space that offered educational and social support, friendship opportunities, and access to leisure activities. Several of the settlement agencies that offer youth programming are located in the downtown core area of the city, walking distance from each other. It was not unusual for young people to drop in to several youth programs on the same day. Even when I visited the different youth groups during the period of my fieldwork, it was common to see familiar faces at more than one site. Many young people were quite aware of the activities and opportunities offered by each agency and they would use these services rather strategically, ‘hopping’ from youth center to youth center to see friends, hang out, attend

workshops or activities that interested them, receive homework help, have an after-school snack or even dinner, use computers and access the internet, and play video games.

In addition to formal programming and leisure opportunities, these settlement agencies were an important space where immigrant and refugee youth received informal mentoring and personal support from adults other than family members or teachers. Young people often confided in these youth workers, telling them about personal problems that perhaps they would not wish to share with teachers and/or parents—often because the issues they were experiencing dealt with their relationships with teachers and/or family members. When asked about supportive adults in their lives, immigrant and refugee youth often spoke about staff members working at settlement agencies. Some participants established close, supporting bonds with youth workers and several spoke about the cherished relationships they formed with staff members. In fact, it was not uncommon for participants to refer to certain staff members as being “like a mother” or “like a sister.”

For some participants, settlement agencies also acted as a node that could expand their social engagement opportunities in the city. Through their connection to settlement agencies, some young people were able to gain access to additional programs and opportunities offered throughout the community. Often, they were informally recruited by youth settlement workers to join initiatives and activities. Involvement in these programs and activities linked them to other organizations, other young people, and other adults in the community. Those who expressed interest and enthusiasm were often asked to be involved in additional activities. In these ways, select young people entered a sort of network of ongoing opportunities and activities.

Many participants expressed that their faith was important to them. Approximately one-fifth of the young people I spoke to attended religious services or organizations on a regular

basis. Some participants were not religious, while others preferred to pray at home and attended religious services only on major holidays. Furthermore, places of worship were not always close to their homes, and some spoke of having to drive or take the public transit across the city in order to attend. In some cases, the long bus ride discouraged their family's attendance. For those that did attend religious organizations regularly, these spaces represented an important arena for their attachment to Windsor. During periods of initial settlement, religious organizations offered a lot of practical support by providing families with help finding housing, furniture for their new homes, and other forms of practical advice. In addition to this practical support, religious organizations offered a space where immigrant and refugee newcomers could practice their faith—often a key component of their identities—and build friendships, sometimes meeting long-term or Canadian-born residents. Finally, it was also through their church, temple, or mosque that some participants sought to 'give back' by volunteering activities in the community.

Michael, originally from Ethiopia, described his church as “the first place I felt welcomed.” Although he described his initial settlement in Windsor as a confusing period in which he became involved with some “bad people,” attending church reminded him of his values and morals and provided him with guidance for how he should behave and “how to be speaking with others.” Through his church, he eventually attended leadership camps where he met a lot of friends, many of whom were Canadian-born and who helped him by providing him advice and social supports. Likewise, Alina reported the centrality of the local Chaldean church to her family and many other Iraqi immigrants. Like Simon, the church assisted in her family's initial settlement by helping her family furnish their new home. Through her church, she volunteers every Saturday because she “doesn't want to be isolated” and “wants to give something back” to the community that helped her family.

Ambivalent feelings toward Windsor's place in their future lives

Interviews and focus groups revealed an *ambivalence* about Windsor's place in the future lives of many young people. On one side, most participants liked Windsor, even if it lacked the excitement of larger urban centers. They referred to the city as their home, where their friends and family lived, and "the place that welcomed" them. Those who enjoyed strong ethno-cultural and familial connections in the city expressed, like Natan, that they "don't want to go elsewhere—they know people." Furthermore, the city was relatively safe. Most were planning on staying in Windsor for their immediate future, as the city offered good post-secondary educational opportunities through either the University of Windsor or St. Claire Community College. These post-secondary institutions were seen to be relatively affordable and would allow participants to stay with their family as they completed some form of post-secondary training. On the other side, much discussion about future life in Windsor revolved around perceptions about future job prospects. There emerged a general perspective that Windsor, due to its ongoing economic problems, lacked work opportunities and 'good jobs' that would make establishing a life in the city rather difficult. Participants cited as evidence their own or their parents' difficulties in finding work and that "even Canadians" in Windsor were unemployed. As one young participant summarized, in Windsor the "economy is really bad and the jobs are really bad."

Many were quite pragmatic about their desire to remain in Windsor. Ibrahim, 21, who would like to remain in Windsor close to his family both in Windsor and Dearborn, was interested in a career as an automotive engineer and pragmatically suggested in his interview, "The problem with Windsor is if I can find my job . . . if I will have trouble working here, I have to [leave]. I can't stay here doing nothing. . . . If my life in Windsor starts getting better . . . why

not all stay here? But if I start getting troubles after finishing my education I have to [leave]. I have no choice.” Similarly, Mia’s, 17, plan was to complete undergraduate education in Windsor in her path to becoming a genetics researcher. She knew that such a career would require moving anywhere in Canada. Farrah’s words summarize this general perspective:

I like Windsor. . . . It’s very, very multicultural. . . . Whenever you need help there’s always someone there. . . . Windsor is very, very good for education, and for children, a family that is looking for a place where there is not a lot of violence. Small. You don’t get too lost. It’s pretty good. I like Windsor. But I would move one day.

Some participants, namely those nearing high school completion and not planning to attend post-secondary education in the short-term, were already looking for any type of work, either in Windsor or outside of the city, and often outside of Ontario. “I know so many people that have moved to Alberta,” Vilina tells me, “You will always hear that if they want to go into the job sector. They are like ‘I’m moving to Alberta.’” This comment was corroborated by several other participants who told me that they themselves were considering ‘going west’ to find work and join friends, acquaintances or family members already living there.

This general tendency may also relate to an emerging feeling of being ‘locked-out’ of labour market opportunities. Some participants spoke of their *expectations of future employment discrimination*, beginning to suspect that ‘being immigrant’ played into their difficulties of finding paid employment outside of the informal labour market in ways that limited their desire to stay in the city. Take for example, Joseph, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo who was living with his younger brother in the city. Very close to graduating high school, his concern centered largely on finding a good paying job so he could raise enough money to pay for college and alleviate some of the difficulties of supporting himself and his brother on a small

welfare allowance. However, he expressed feeling locked out of the job market, having applied for various low-wage employment opportunities with no success. To make some money he occasionally traveled outside Windsor to pick fruits at local greenhouses. He drew on stories heard from relatives and other young African immigrants to make sense of his own employment situation:

If they read your name and it's not a Canadian name, they are like "No. This guy I am not going to deal." Maybe they got scared you know . . . Because I see some kids . . . they used to change their names. They say my name is really hard for other people to pronounce. It's an African name. It's a different culture. . . I think that some employers they kind of discriminate people based on their names because they just think maybe this one is an immigrant and doesn't have the skills required for this particular job.

During one focus group discussion about young peoples' perceptions of opportunities in Windsor, several young African male participants relayed, quite vividly, feelings of frustrations that Windsor, and Canada more generally, was not a place for them. They felt that even if they were to gain education and credentials, they would not get jobs because of their racial and immigrant backgrounds. Summarizing this conversation, one young man said, "To be honest, Windsor, actually Canada, is way too racist." Such a comment suggests not only a sense of lack of opportunity in Windsor, but a perspective of a general lack of fair opportunity in Canada more generally. Interestingly, during the same discussion, another participant, Paul, 16, originally from Iraq, expressed surprise at the stories of discrimination or the expectations of future discrimination, citing that he had never experienced such things and thought that Windsor and Canada was not racist, but very open and tolerant with many opportunities.

When I reviewed interviews and focus groups to categorize participants along a continuum of ‘relatively positive’ and ‘relatively negative’ about future life in Windsor, a general tendency emerged in which those of Middle Eastern descent appeared more positive about staying in Windsor and being able to find good work compared to, for instance, to those of African descent. This discrepancy in expectations, discussed in relation to future employment expectations, pointed to how ethnic and racial background played a role in young peoples’ perceptions of the place of Windsor in their future lives. This difference may have something to do with the level of social capital enjoyed by participants of Middle Eastern descent, including the trans-border community connections to Dearborn, and the presence of more or less established and visible Middle Eastern communities, small businesses, and professionals. Together these factors may have produced differential feelings of future possibility.

Summary

As Harris and Wyn (2009, p. 328) note, despite the increasingly globalized and transnational nature of young peoples’ lives (like the participants in this study), youth identities and future life opportunities remain importantly shaped by resources offered by their local environments (see also Nayak, 2003). With this theoretical insight in mind, this chapter explored the types of identifications and attachments immigrant and refugee youth make with Windsor, Ontario, namely by discussing their participation in various aspects of city life. The chapter focused on immigrant and refugee youths’ participation in spheres of activity outside family and school domains (which are documented in more detail in chapters four, five, and six), including their experiences of neighbourhood life, the labour market, and everyday encounters in public space. The chapter also sought to understand how young immigrants imagined the role Windsor would play in their future lives.

Immigrant and refugee youth expressed quite positive orientations to Windsor, viewing it as their ‘home’ and appreciating the opportunities, services, and social and cultural diversity provided in the city. These attitudes and perspectives were related to their migration experiences. Not surprisingly, those who had strong familial and ethno-cultural connections expressed strong positive attachments to the city. Participants also spoke positively of Windsor’s multicultural nature, educational opportunities (including the presence of a good secondary education, a community college and a university), relatively inexpensive living costs, and safety as key positive features of city. Many also saw Windsor as a tolerant and open city, especially when understood in comparison to their treatment living in other countries before coming to Canada, as well as to their treatment in other Canadian cities. However, despite these positive evaluations, immigrant and refugee youth experienced varied, partial, and somewhat insecure engagements to city life, relative to their social, economic, and migratory experiences. Uneven and limited neighborhood connections, limited and differential access to employment opportunities, and differential treatment in public space qualified immigrant and refugee youth’s sense of opportunity, possibility, inclusion, and belonging. Furthermore, although settlement sector agencies and religious organizations were critical nodes of community attachment, the immigrant and refugee youth’s participation in various domains of city life was marked by their regulation to immigrant-specific spaces.

With these factors taken together, like many young people their age, participants conveyed diverse and ambivalent feelings about the place the city would play in their future lives (see Thompson, 2014). Some saw it as a place of future opportunity: others did not. A key factor influencing whether Windsor was viewed a ‘place for them in the future’ was whether participants believed they could access and secure good jobs after completing school. Many

expressed a practical understanding that one may have to move to other places in Canada to secure work in their chosen professional field. This corresponds with others who have found that despite young peoples' localized imagined futures, they, especially those with high professional aspirations, understand the necessity to move in order to achieve professionally (Evans, 2015). The discrepancy of 'staying' or 'leaving' related to participants' access to social connections, which were somewhat ethnicized (those with denser ethno-cultural connections enjoying more positive evaluations of their future life in Windsor), as well as a growing sense among some that systemic racial discrimination will hamper their chances of finding work. But these observations are tentative and these patterns require more systematic study.

I now turn to the concluding chapter of this study where I offer a summary presentation of the main findings and point to how the insights of this dissertation relate to previous scholarship on youth and migration in Canada. The chapter then moves to a discussion of the study's theoretical implications by asking what broad lessons we have learned about young immigrant lives.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Immigrant children and youth make up an important proportion of Canada's population, but research focuses predominantly on the concerns of immigrant and refugee adults. As I suggested in the introductory chapter of this study, Canadian scholarship that does investigate various aspects of immigrant and refugee youth migration and settlement experiences tends to adopt problem-based approaches that depict young immigrants and refugees somewhat passively as 'objects of concern', 'at-risk' or 'in need of services' in ways that overemphasize their vulnerabilities and neglect their active participation in their own lives. Furthermore, at the level of practice and policy, service providers and policymakers remain interested in understanding the social concerns and experiences of immigrant and refugee youth (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003; Ngo & Schleifer, 2005; Pathways to Prosperity, "Pan-Canadian Research Themes," n.d.) and point to the continuing need to explore the migration and settlement experiences of immigrant youth living in smaller Canadian cities (Anisef & Murphy Kilbride, 2003; de Finney, 2010).

This dissertation research addressed these gaps in knowledge by exploring young immigrants' and refugees' experiences of migration and settlement in Windsor, Ontario, a mid-sized immigrant-receiving city in Canada. The leading questions of this study were: 1) How do immigrant and refugee youth, living in Windsor, Ontario, experience migration and settlement? 2) What consequences do these experiences have on their overall sense of belonging and social inclusion to Windsor and Canada more generally? The study sought to highlight young people's

active participation in and contributions to their migration and settlement processes. By doing so, it investigated the institutional and contextual features that shaped young people's migration, settlement, social inclusion, and belonging experiences.

To make sense of the complexities of young immigrant lives, the dissertation employed an analytical framework that combined insights from the sociology of childhood and the sociology of migration. I argued that as young people, immigrant and refugee youth occupy the social realm of youth and, therefore, face many of the same general conditions and challenges of other young people in post-industrial societies. However, as newcomer immigrants, themselves diverse in terms of race, gender, and class, among others, they also face the problems associated with their newness. The immigrant condition, I suggested, intersects with the youth experience to create both vulnerabilities and possibilities that young immigrants and refugees must negotiate as they attempt to build a new life in Canada. Through a sociological analysis of the concepts of 'immigrant' and 'youth,' I offered a sociological approach to understanding young immigrant lives and their migration and settlement experiences that take seriously their statuses as both immigrants and youth. While the theoretical approach attends to the aspirations and agency of young immigrants and refugees, structural, institutional, and relational arrangements are understood to shape their experiences of migration, settlement, social inclusion, and belonging. A focus on a set of interrelated sensitizing concepts—aspirations and agency; embeddedness; and, searching for belonging and confronting exclusions—informed my overall analysis of young immigrant lives.

Conducted between January 2014 and February 2015, the study adopted a qualitative research approach based on in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted with immigrant and refugee youth, as well as adult professionals who worked closely with them. A qualitative

research approach was deemed an appropriate choice for this study because of its effectiveness at capturing the meanings and intentions of people in ways that convey the depth, complexity, and subjectivity of their experiences within the context of their personal histories and larger social milieu (Devine, 2011, p. 11; Kalkhe, 2014). Through thematic and case-based narrative analysis, I sought to highlight the range and complexity of their experiences, the active way young people make sense of and navigate their migration and settlement, and the structural and institutional arrangements that impact their lives.

The findings of this dissertation are chapter specific. I encourage the reader to return to each empirical chapter for a more detailed discussion of the study's findings. In this concluding chapter, I first offer a summary presentation of the main findings of the dissertation and then discuss the study's theoretical and methodological contributions. The chapter concludes with a series of practical recommendations for enhancing the social inclusion of young immigrants and refugees in Windsor, Ontario, a discussion of the study's limitations, and an outline of potential areas of future research.

Presentation of main findings

The study revealed a complex picture of youth migration, settlement, and social inclusion. Immigrant and refugee youth demonstrate high aspirations and many view Canada as a place where they could pursue these aspirations and achieve well-being for themselves and their families. Such perceptions contribute to strong feelings of hopefulness and future opportunity—a finding that corresponds closely with other research on young immigrants' aspirations (see Bloch, Sigona, & Zetter, 2014; Crivello, 2015; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Lindgren, 2010; Yohani & Larsen, 2009). Their life orientations and aspirations are deeply connected to the conditions of their migration and the intergenerational connections and obligations they draw between

themselves and significant others in their lives. These life orientations and aspirations animate their pursuit in building a life in Canada in ways that fuel their “self-determination” (Flum, 1998, p. 157; Taylor & Krahn, 2013). Young immigrant and refugee youth ‘work’ hard to find a place for themselves in their new society, employing multiple strategies to negotiate belonging and pursue their aspirations. Their efforts to “continue to exist” (Sayad, 2004, p. 288) play out across multiple social domains, including schools, peer groups, and the wider community.

At the level of community provisions, Windsor possesses social and institutional characteristics that support young immigrants and refugees’ social inclusion and assists them in pursuing their aspirations. The education sector, for instance, has developed relatively strong supports for immigrant and refugee youth with committed personnel. Settlement agencies provide a vital space for young immigrants and refugees to receive support, socialize, and take part in extra-curricular activities. Other organizations, agencies, programs, and services play a key role in supporting immigrant settlement more generally, including religious organizations, the health care sector, and ethno-cultural associations. Youth-focused (but not immigrant specific) voluntary organizations also provide important services such as employment training. Many provincial and federal social supports, including childcare subsidies, housing programs, and financial assistance, provide a level of social protection that indirectly supports many immigrant and refugee youth. The multicultural nature of Windsor has an important impact on immigrant youth belonging, as the visibility of diverse cultural groups helps some recognize themselves in their surroundings.

However, young immigrants’ and refugees’ participation in the city is limited and concentrated to immigrant-specific spaces in schools, in settlement agencies, somewhat in neighborhoods, and in the labour market. Thus, newcomer youth forge social relationships with

other immigrant and refugee youth, often across complex social and cultural differences. As a result of this social segregation, some young immigrants and refugees come to recognize their marginalized position in society. This finding corroborates the work of other scholars both in Canada and internationally who demonstrate how social segregation, especially when associated with social stigmatization contribute to a sense of marginalization and outsider status (Fangen, 2010; Strompl, Kaldur, & Markina, 2012; Zaami, 2015).

In their attempts to achieve their aspirations, immigrant and refugee youth also confront complex and differential experiences of social exclusion and blocked opportunities, relative to their status as newcomers, as well as their age, race/ethnicity, gender, social class backgrounds, current economic status, and religious affiliations. Young immigrants confront social exclusion and blocked opportunities across various social domains, including in their schools, in peer group relations, in the labour market, and in public spaces (i.e., low teacher expectations, course streaming practices, peer group exclusion, everyday racism, xenophobia, difficulties accessing the labor market, and poverty). Many of these experiences humiliate, degrade, and dishonor in ways that communicate to many young immigrants and refugees their marginalized status in Canadian society. Research by Krahn and Taylor (2005), for instance, suggest that many young immigrants, especially those of visible minority background, will develop a growing sense of the limits to Canada's opportunity structures, as they become increasingly exposed to issues of systemic racism. Through the accumulation of these types of experiences confidence and optimism may turn to disillusionment, frustration, and a diminished sense of personal worth.

The dissertation also revealed that immigrant and refugee youth also face many of the same general problems as Canadian-born or long-term resident youth, although perhaps uniquely due to their position as newcomers. Immigrant and refugee youth are concerned with their

transition to post-secondary education, rising tuition costs, and future career plans. They worry about Windsor's capacity to support their future goals and aspirations, especially with respect to finding quality employment (c.f. Thompson, 2014, 'Windsor Gone' series). They often lack access to transportation and share with low-income youth the multifaceted challenges associated with poverty. Those who are Muslim or visible minorities share with their Canadian and long-term counterparts the problem of Islamophobia, racism, and discrimination (Daniel & Cukier, 2015; Dei et al., 1997; Kazemipur, 2014; Mian, 2013; Oxman-Martinez & Choi, 2014; Zaami, 2015; Zine, 2006).

Overall, immigrant and refugee youth are shown to be active social actors who in relation to their unique migration experiences and biographies attempt to craft a life for themselves and their family. However, they attempt to fashion a new life and 'become someone' within the contexts of complex institutionally structured supports and constraints. Immigrant and refugee youth confront inclusions, exclusions, supports, and barriers in complex and often unpredictable ways. They are simultaneously promised, denied, nurtured, blocked, respected, and stigmatized. The result is the production of a sense of social ambivalence: a recognition among many of their uncertain status in a society that helps them and hinders them, accepts them and rejects them.

Theoretical and methodological contributions

Central to this study has been the nexus between migration and youth. In the presentation of my analytical framework, I suggested that to best understand the lives of young immigrants it is important to consider the interpenetrating social statuses of 'youth' and 'immigrant.' I argue that these status positions significantly structure their experiences in ways that produce particular social concerns. However, very few studies of immigrant and refugee youth in Canada successfully integrate childhood studies and migration studies. Thus, a major theoretical

contribution of this dissertation study is the development and demonstration of a useful analytical framework that assists researchers in making sense of the complexities of young immigrant lives. This analytical framework takes as a starting point of analysis young people's social concerns and perspectives, not those of adults or the larger 'host' society. Through the analytical framework developed in this study, it is possible to hold in productive tension 'young immigrants as youth' and 'young immigrants as immigrants.' The sensitizing concepts of 'aspirations and agency,' 'embeddedness,' and 'searching for belonging and confronting exclusions' provide an analytically useful set of concepts to assist in making sense of complex lives of immigrant and refugee youth as they unfold during their settlement processes.

As Fangen, Hammaren, and Johansson (2012) write, young immigrants "cross not only geographical and political boundaries, but also biographical and relational: they are moving into a new country, but also on their way to becoming adults" (p. 207). Questions of youth migration are in many ways integrated with questions of life course transitions and social identity development:

Migration represents, for many young migrants, not just a rite of passage in the transition to adulthood and to a new social role, but also a formative and transformative experience which shape their present identity and their actual relationships with their peers and with society in general. (Bloch, Sigona, & Zetter, 2012, p. 150)

This study demonstrates how immigrants' and refugees' social development occurs across often unstable spatial and temporal geographies. Young immigrants and refugees are shown to be both beings and becomings (Uprichard, 2008) who live in the past, present, and imagined future, as well as spatially across many geographies. Take for example the case of Wahid, featured in

chapter six: he was a child in Iraq, a teenager in Ukraine, and a young adult in Canada. His migration experiences were linked to his social development as a young person.

Under the circumstances of their migration, which increasingly involves multiple stays in different countries, young people actively engage in “biographical management” (Peou & Zinn, 2015) to give meaning to their lives, their current social identities, and their life aspirations.

In her study of young Peruvian migrants, Crivello (2011) illustrates how for many young people migration marks a key moment in their transition to adulthood. Although this was certainly demonstrated in the empirical findings of this research, this study also illustrates how migration can have the opposite effect. Childhood, youth, and adulthood are not stable categories, and migration can also destabilize taken-for-granted expectations of social development. This was particularly true for older young people who upon arrival in Canada had to repeat grade levels. Their ‘re-scholarization’ upon arrival, although understood to be necessary to ‘recapitalize’ themselves for Canadian society, was often expressed through metaphors like ‘loosing time’ or ‘being put back’ in ways that conveyed a sense of ‘becoming younger again.’ Their placement back within the status of child, of course, stood in contrast to the so-called ‘adult’ responsibilities many young immigrants and refugees held outside of school. This insight complicates unilinear interpretations of young immigrants’ and refugees’ social development, and suggests a need for sociological and nonlinear approaches to understanding the intersections between young people’s social development, migration, and settlement.

There is also an important methodological implication here for Canadian immigrant youth studies. This dissertation points to the important place of qualitative approaches that attend to the personal (May, 2012; Smart, 2007) or biographical features of young immigrant lives. Bailey (2009) notes in her review of literature on transnational mobility and childhood that “in

general, there is a paucity of child-centred biographical analyses that follow the experience of children over space and time” (p. 414). This is despite the fact that contemporary child migration occur across various geographic locations. “Without following children through their constitutive networks,” Bailey contends, “the active ways in which re-negotiated childhoods change such networks and relations are lost” (p. 418). This dissertation demonstrates that a child-centered biographical case analyses is possible and that such a methodological approach captures the complexity of young immigrants’ lives, their biographical agency, their complex social development processes, and the emotional depth of their migration and settlement experiences. Furthermore, child-centered biographical approaches can be used to investigate how pre-migration experiences inform settlement experiences and how inclusions and exclusions direct young immigrant’s settlement pathways in often complicated ways. Child-centered biographical approaches attend to how immigrant youth themselves navigate inclusions and exclusions, negotiate belonging, and incorporate these experiences into their unfolding social identities.

There is also an important ethical component implicated in focusing on the personal or biographical in social research, especially in the study of young people. Drawing on the work of Back (2007), I argued in the introductory chapter that a central task of sociology is to pay serious attention to the life stories and life conditions of other people, especially the voices and stories of those “otherwise passed over or ignored” (p. 1). Young immigrants’ and refugees’ thoughts, opinions, and perspectives are often discounted. In scientific literature, their lives are often reduced to sets of variables that are measured in relation various outcomes. The focus on the personal brings a flesh and blood account to young immigrant lives, where young people are represented as what they are: thinking, feeling, and acting people with dreams and aspirations that matter.

While this study took seriously young people's aspirations and agentic capacities, it also points to the utility of conceptualizing youth migration and settlement sociologically as a type of *collective work* that is performed within a complex web of social and institutional relationships (Tanyas, 2012; Flum, 2012). As immigrant and refugee youth actively confront the questions of moving and building a life in a new place, they do so in response to the competing demands, influences, and effects of various social actors, including parents, siblings, friends, teachers, social workers, and even strangers passing on the street, and across various social fields, such as family, school, and community. As members of the youth class, immigrant and refugee youth negotiate their settlement experiences among and with other young people. As other scholars have shown, young immigrant's and refugee's relationship to fellow peers and their participation in unique peer cultures is a critical part of their settlement experience (Devine, 2011; Hebert, Lee, Sun & Bert, 2008; Teja & Schonert-Reichl, 2013). This dissertation study illustrates this through its demonstration of how young immigrants navigate their sense of belonging through their participation in peer cultures and their friendship formation processes. As chapter six demonstrated, the common status of 'immigrant youth' formed an important position upon which participants created social solidarities often across social and cultural differences.

The study also highlights the necessity of attending to the local in understanding immigrant youth settlement processes. Young immigrants negotiate their place within the constraints and confines produced by the politics and structures of the specific places where they find themselves. Local realities, especially the arrangement of service provisions designed for and directed at immigrant and refugee youth, significantly shape their settlement experiences (George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015; Malsbary, 2012; Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2009). Such a realization begs for 'place-based' approaches that pay close attention to how local realities and

social arrangements shape the settlement and inclusion experiences of young immigrants and refugees (George, Selimos, & Ku, 2015; Malsbary, 2012; Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2009) and that take seriously the local in young peoples' lives (Evans, 2015; Harris & Wyn, 2010). However, it is important to qualify the significance of the local. Local realities are nested in broader societal discourses (racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, multiculturalism), institutional practices (such as school and social service funding arrangements), and larger social-economic trends (deindustrialization, post-industrialism, and hyper-diversification). As this study has demonstrated, public attitudes and societal discourses “affects the social figurations [immigrants] both respond to and construct themselves” (Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2009, ¶ 48).

Given the complex ways young immigrants and refugees are embedded in various social and institutional relationships, it is not surprising that the study also supports research demonstrating that young immigrants' and refugees' social inclusion experiences are multidimensional, complex, and 'lived out' in ways that do not fit easily into binary frameworks (Fangen, 2010; Herz & Johansson, 2012; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Silver, 2007). Immigrant and refugee youth encounter an array of institutionalized supports and exclusions relative to their age, race, ethnicity, gender, and citizenship status in ways that produce varied, contradictory, and ambivalent senses of belonging in Canadian society. Processes of exclusion and inclusion in socially and culturally complex societies are “multidimensional and multivalent” (Malsbary, 2010, p. 109), the result of the “coalescence of factors that condition people's lives” (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1045). However, Herz and Johansson (2012) remind us that exclusions are prefigured in terms of race, class, gender, age, and migration status, among others. Thus, certain types of bodies will be “more inclined to 'being stopped' than others” (p. 159)—that is, to experience both subtle and explicit everyday discrimination and institutionalized blocked opportunities.

Contemporary societal conditions produce complex “hierarchies of belonging” (Back & Sinha, 2012) and differential forms of inclusion and exclusion (Fangen, 2010), which complicate blanket categories such as insider, outsider, ‘integrated’ and ‘not integrated’.

Throughout the dissertation, I brought forward diverse subjective experiences that highlight contrasting themes of social acceptance, opportunity, hope, support, as well as discrimination, exclusion, disillusionment, misrecognition, and humiliation. For example, one young immigrant may feel welcomed and comfortable in their school, happy and grateful for the opportunity to learn, but then be a target of racial, xenophobic, or Islamophobic slurs while riding the bus or walking down the street. Another young immigrant may feel supported by local settlement agencies but frustrated and heart-broken by school officials who stream her into non-academic courses—a decision she feels powerless to change. Such practices communicate profound messages about her social position in Canada relative to other young people in her school. Another young immigrant may love his school, have supportive friends, look forward to his college and university studies, and even experience the friendly smiles of strangers while walking in the park, yet feel increasingly disillusioned and confused by his inability to make Canadian friends and find a part-time job outside ‘survival jobs’ like those offered in the greenhouses outside the city. Finally, another young immigrant may have accumulated enough negative experiences to conclude, as one participant in this study conveyed (discussed in chapter seven), that Canada was simply no longer a place for him.

Building on the notion of complex hierarchies of belonging and the multidimensionality of social exclusion, this study stresses the emergent, ‘poly-directional’, and non-linear qualities of immigrant and refugee youth social inclusion. Although there is tremendous movement in the lives of the young immigrants as they search for belonging and confront exclusions, this

movement cannot be presumed to be in any particular direction, toward any finished state, and especially toward any identifiable ‘mainstream’ (Malsbary, 2010; Ratzhel, 2010). Immigrant youth’s perceptions, life orientations, and aspirations evolve, shift, and change as they confront new experiences, challenges, and institutionalized barriers. Given the social and cultural complexities of highly differentiated societies and the proliferation of ‘factors that condition people lives,’ this study points to the question, and the need for ongoing discussion, of whether ‘integration’ is still the most useful concept through which to understand the experiences of young immigrants as they see it and as they live their lives from day-to-day?

A final important theoretical contribution of this research study is its demonstration of young immigrants’ and refugee’s active contributions to community life and society. A large body of literature on childhood and youth argues (Corsaro, 2014; James, Jenks, & Prout, 2005; James & Prout, 1997; Qvortrup, 2005) that the significance of young lives is predominantly framed in relation to their eventual ‘incorporation’ into society. The argument follows that young people should be ‘invested in’ so that in their adulthood they will be productive members of society (for a detailed examination of this argument see Qvortrup, 2009). We can see a similar framing with immigrant and refugee youth, who are newcomers in both the generational (age) and societal (migration) sense, in discourses that suggest, often based on good intentions, that we should invest in young immigrants to facilitate their integration. There are two consequences of such a framing. First, it ignores that young people’s current life conditions is important topic of consideration in its own right. Second, it prevents us from recognizing the contributions young immigrants are already making to community life and society. These contributions are social, cultural, and economic. This dissertation has accounted for some these contributions by

documenting the many ways young immigrants contribute: as students, as family caretakers, as workers, as volunteers in the community, as artists, and as neighbours.

Practical Implications

Flyvbjerg (2001) notes that the strength of social science is its capacity to offer a reflexive analysis of social organization, power, and values. Social sciences should aim to not only build theory, but also to delineate “the problems and risks we face” (p. 140) and outline “how things may be done differently, in full knowledge that we cannot find ultimate answers to these questions or even to a single version of what the questions are” (p. 140). This dissertation study delineated the complexity of young immigrant lives in Windsor, Ontario and the unique social, institutional, and economic arrangements within which their lives unfold. Ultimately, the insights presented in this study bring us, as Flyvbjerg’s words suggest, to questions of values, practice, and policy: Should things be done differently in our support of immigrant and refugee youth? How should these things be done differently?

I hesitate to provide specific policy recommendations or suggest alternatives to social service provisions and programing. Such an endeavor falls outside both the scope of this study and my own expertise on the matter. However, young immigrants and refugees “need to be viewed as agents whose aspirations are relevant to institutional decision-making” (Bhabha, 2014, p. 10) and this dissertation study does provide important insights that may assist community planners and practitioners in effectively directing their efforts in building a city that supports the full inclusion and participation of immigrant and refugee youth. It is these insights that I wish to outline here.

Recommendation 1: Coordinated youth strategy

Any strategic action aimed at enhancing the belonging and social inclusion of migrant youth must begin with the premise that immigrant and refugee youth are part of the larger youth population. To be sure, I do not wish to homogenize young people, who are diverse in terms of their social identities and life conditions. Immigrant and refugee youth face many unique challenges. But they face many of the same problems and pressures of their generational counterparts. Supporting the inclusion and participation of immigrant and refugee youth should begin, therefore, with coordinated strategies aimed at enhancing the welfare, well-being, and opportunities of young people more generally. Many organizations advocate on youth issues in city and provide targeted services for the younger populations. However, these organizations tend to ‘split’ young people up among different social service sectors, as funding parameters and specialization among civil society organizations target the specific needs of different youth groups. Although these targeted programs are essential, a broad-based community development approach with municipal commitment and buy-in aimed at making Windsor a child- and youth-friendly city would go a long way to improving the general well-being of Windsor’s younger generations. UNICEF’s “Child-Friendly Cities” initiative (UNICEF, n.d.), successfully implemented by municipalities in Canada and throughout the world, represent an intriguing model for such a community development approach.⁷ Given existing supports and its unique

⁷ UNICEF defines a child-friendly city as a system of local governance that is committed to fulfilling children’s rights. The CFC initiative is based on the assumption, embodied in the CRC, that children are active agents who have the right to have their voices and opinions taken into consideration in decision-making processes. A document produced by UNICEF entitled “Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action” identifies nine major “building blocks” or key components of a Child Friendly City. A Child Friendly City is one that:

1. Promotes children’s active involvement in issues that affect them, listening to their views, and taking these views into consideration in decision-making processes;
2. Ensures that legislation, regulations, and procedures consistently promote and protect the children’s rights;
3. Develops a comprehensive local strategy for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention;
4. Creates permanent local government structures to ensure the ongoing consideration of children’s perspective;

social and cultural composition, Windsor seems well-positioned to develop a broad-based child- and youth-focused community strategy. There are indications of a movement in this direction with groups such as the Windsor Essex Youth Strategic Action Committee (WEYSAC) already working toward such goals.

Recommendation 2: Coordinated immigrant youth inclusion strategy

Windsor was one of the first municipalities to form a local immigration partnership in Ontario. The goal of the local partnership council is to build connections with community stakeholders so that newcomer immigrant issues are taken up by a wide variety of social actors (George, Selimos, Ku, 2015, p. 5). The Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WELIP) has been quite successful in doing this, as it now has over 90 members that represent organizations and agencies across various sectors. Given the strides and positive developments made by WELIP, the partnership council could become a key leader in developing a community-

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5. Develops a systematic process to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children;
 6. Ensures adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children;
 7. Develops sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children;
 8. Promotes awareness of children's rights among adults and children; and
 9. Supports non-governmental organisations and independent human rights institutions, such as children's ombudspersons or commissioners for children, which promote children's rights.

The Child-Friendly Cities (CFC) initiative was first launched in 1996 after the Second United Nations Conference of Human Settlements passed a resolution that declared the well-being of children to be the most significant indicator of a healthy habitat, democratic society, and good governance. More specifically, the resolution urged governments and key actors to work toward making cities liveable places for all people by placing children's rights, needs, and interests at the forefront of social development goals, policies, and practices. Since this resolution, UNICEF's CFC initiative has led a global movement to promote and support approaches to municipal governance that work toward the realization of the rights of children and youth as articulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Child-Friendly Cities initiative is based on several important observations. First, globally speaking the experience of childhood and youth are increasingly urban, with over 50% of the world population now living in cities or towns. Despite this, municipalities typically lack local structures and capacities to meet the needs of young people. Second, local contexts continue to be significantly shaped by the lives of children and youth. Children and young people are often restricted in their movements and the sites that they can occupy. Thus, their experiences, identities, and available opportunities are significantly shaped by resources offered by their local environments. Third, child and youth civic engagement and participation is associated with positive outcomes and also represents a critical component of good democratic governance. Fourth, investment in children has significant spill-over effects that positively benefit society more generally. For more information, see UNICEF, Child-Friendly Cities at <http://childfriendlycities.org/overview/the-cfc-initiative> or UNICEF, Child-Friendly Cities Fact Sheet at <http://childfriendlycities.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/pdf/CFCI-fact-sheet-14-sept-final.pdf>

based strategy for supporting immigrant and refugee youth specifically. Given that immigrant and refugee children and youth make up an important proportion of Windsor's immigrant population, a focus on young immigrants and refugees as a strategic priority could go a long way in supporting its goals of making Windsor a welcoming community for immigrant newcomers.

Recommendation 3: Support targeted initiatives that promote social recognition and social participation of immigrant and refugee youth

The development of strategies and initiatives to promote the welfare and social inclusion of immigrant and refugee youth should center on the guiding principles of youth-adult partnership, in which young people work in partnership with adults on addressing the issues young people face and designing policies and services to address these issues (Norman, 2001). Furthermore, strategies and policies that aim to enhance social inclusion should promote young peoples' social recognition and social participation in community life. By social recognition I mean designing and supporting initiatives that: promote public awareness of young immigrants and refugees' contributions to local life and the issues they face; combat adultism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia; and encourage public initiatives that feature youth voice prominently in the community. Social participation refers to young peoples' active involvement in various domains of community life. In addition to already existing programs, initiatives that aim to enhance young people's social participation may focus on: youth-led evaluations of community strengths and needs; paid internships with intentional placements so that young immigrants can learn useful skills; career guidance initiatives that include young immigrants and their families; mentorship programs that link young immigrants and refugees with established professionals; leadership development programs that actively bring together young people of various social and cultural backgrounds; and, outreach programs that link young people and their

families to post-secondary education institutions.

Ultimately, key to any concerted effort is the recognition that young immigrant and refugee settlement happens across various social domains, their sense of belonging is experienced across multiple life arenas, and that the issues they face are cross-sectoral in nature. Promoting the welfare and inclusion of young immigrants will require the collective effort and commitment of multiple stakeholders, including, most importantly, young people themselves.

Limitations and future work

The study encountered several limitations which I wish to consider here. These limitations, however, also suggest important avenues for future research.

All of the young people who participated in this research study were permanent residents, on track to becoming Canadian citizens, or already Canadian citizens. The study did not include young people currently seeking asylum whose status had yet to be determined or those of ‘irregular status’. As Bloch, Sigona, and Zetter (2014) demonstrate, legal status has a significant impact on the social and economic lives of young people, their sense of belonging, and their future orientations. Research attending to this particular demographic of young migrants would contribute significantly to policy question around the social inclusion of migrant youth. Moreover, the majority of participants in this study were living with family members. While a significant body of research has focused on the impact migration has on family dynamics and intergenerational relations, less work has focused on the experiences of unaccompanied minors. The experiences and concerns of these young migrants represent an important area of future research.

Due primarily to budget restrictions, I was unable to hire a translator. Strong English proficiency skills, therefore, was an important selection criterion for interview and focus group

participation. This selection criterion limited the inclusion of immigrant youth who lacked English abilities, especially those who perhaps recently arrived to Canada. Future researchers should consider using translators (if using qualitative interviewing) or adopting arts-based or visual methodologies that do not require advanced linguistic proficiencies (c.f. Farmer, 2016). The young people who participated in this study also attended English-speaking high schools in the city. Windsor has a relatively substantial French-speaking immigrant population, and some young French-speaking immigrant youth attend French-speaking high schools in the city. Additionally, there are also several religiously-affiliated private elementary and middle schools, including several Islamic schools connected to local mosques. An exploration of young immigrants' migration and settlement experiences who attend these schools would add significant richness, depth, and insight to the findings presented in this study.

Ngo (2009) notes in his study of services targeting immigrant and refugee youth that the “voices of children of immigrant families and their input into the development of programs and services are notably lacking” (p. 95). He advocates for the engagement of young immigrants and refugees in the planning, development, and evaluation of services designed for them. This dissertation study highlighted aspects of how young immigrants and refugees experience the programs and services designed for their best interests (especially schools). There seemed to be little opportunity for immigrant and refugee youth to have formal impact on issues and processes that directly impact their lives. Future research could examine their participation in terms of these programs, initiatives, and policies, as well as consider ways of ensuring their participatory involvement.

Gender and race/ethnicity emerged as important factors shaping young immigrants' migration and settlement experiences and these factors were highlighted throughout the

dissertation. Although this study did draw on the notions of intersectionality, complexity, and heterogeneity to make sense of young immigrant lives, it did not provide a detailed gender or race analysis. There is fruitful theoretical potential in subjecting interview and focus group data to more detailed gender and race analyses. How, for example, does gender and/or racialization shape how young immigrants' make sense of their migration, experience schooling and education, peer groups, and community life? These important questions deserve heightened attention in future research activities.

There is also significant research potential in expanding the scope of this study by exploring comparatively young immigrants' settlement and social inclusion experiences across several cities in Canada. A comparative, place-based analysis provides the potential to better understand how local conditions, viewed as so important to shaping young lives, shape and inform young immigrants' settlement and belonging. Such a project would require building research partnerships with university colleagues and immigrant settlement practitioners across Canada interested in similar questions. This would be a complex endeavor, but the theoretical and practical insights would be significant. As I have mentioned previously, the insights presented in this study represent one moment in an unfolding process of settlement and belonging. Most of those who participated in this study had lived in Canada for five or less years. But a question ultimately arises: how will these young immigrants' life orientations, sense of belonging, and aspirations shift and change as they encounter new experiences, especially after completing high school and post-secondary education? A qualitative longitudinal analysis mapping young immigrants' shifting sense of belonging would contribute significantly to questions about young immigrants, belonging, and social inclusion/exclusion in Canadian society.

Concluding remarks

This dissertation research has explored the unique nexus of what it means to be young, migrate, settle, and come of age in Canada at this particular time in history. It has sought to document young immigrants' and refugee's aspirations and social concerns in ways that foreground the complex and multidimensional factors that shape how they live their life and with whom. Immigrant and refugee youth are active social actors who in their own ways attempt to craft a life for themselves and their family, and they do so within the contexts often complex institutionally-structured opportunities, constraints, inclusions, and exclusions. In the processes of migration and settlement, young immigrants and refugees negotiate the vulnerabilities and possibilities produced by the immigrant and youth condition. Through their everyday lives, young immigrants and refugees forge complex identifications and experience ambivalent and differential feelings of belonging and social inclusion.

This study is in no way a definitive representation of the depth and complexity of being a young immigrant in Canadian society. However, I hope that the stories and analyses presented here have provoked its readers to think a little bit more about the lives of young people and our relationship to them as adults. Sociology teaches us that human life is the bundle of our relationships with others. With this insight in mind, I hope that the reader has gained, as I have throughout the process of my research, some degree of "sympathetic penetration" (Waller, 1934, p. 288) into the complexities, ambivalences, pressure, and puzzles characterizing young immigrant lives.

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