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# Immigration in rural Newfoundland: Individual and community change

Willow Jackson Anderson

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**IMMIGRATION IN RURAL NEWFOUNDLAND:  
INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY CHANGE**

**BY**

**WILLOW JACKSON ANDERSON**

B.A. Political Science and History, Mount Allison University, 1996  
M.A. Conflict Resolution, University of Bradford, 1999

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
Communication**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**July, 2012**

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to two of my nieces, (my muses), Kaia and Madeline Jackson-Perez and their Uncle Dave.

Kaia and Madeline: Thank you for the fun sleepovers, dramatic dance routines, and loads of (fun) book reading. May you flourish and grow and always be confident in *your* place. Dave, I would not have survived this process unscathed without you. Thank you for taking on more than your fair share these last four years, for insisting we get a dog, and for your unwavering support and love.

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to learn about the cultural adaptation experiences of immigrants to rural Newfoundland and what, if any, changes the communities themselves have made. I am particularly interested in what role communication plays in these change processes. To investigate this topic I conducted interviews and focus groups with both immigrants and native-born Newfoundlanders in rural areas and then analyzed the resulting data with a rigorous thematic analysis.

To accomplish this purpose, I recruited and interviewed eight immigrants and 10 native-born Newfoundlanders in rural areas of the province. Then I conducted three focus groups with each of the two populations. In speaking to these 55 participants, I explored the substance and nature of their cultural adaptation and the communication that is helping and hindering it. The results reveal multiple dimensions that characterize the experience of immigrants to rural Newfoundland: struggle and loss; attributions of difference; interaction and connection; and responsibility to change.

In addition, participants reported tangible ways in which communication can help or hinder immigrant adaptation or community building, which resulted in six communicative approach themes: “leaving be,” “differentiating,” “acknowledging,” “opening,” “resisting,” and “bridging.” These approaches vary in what I call their

mindful engagement with difference, and represent the power and potential of communication to both reflect and build who a community is and what it wants to be.

Finally, results from this study point to the subtle ways immigration is affecting rural Newfoundland. Local people are getting more exposure to different cultures, immigrants are forming small ethnic groups in some communities, and locals are taking steps to address the needs of newcomers to their towns. In addition, results suggest that other non-immigration related changes in rural Newfoundland also influence the immigrant experience.

This investigation contributes to current scholarship by offering an in-depth look into the rarely studied area of rural immigration. It also offers specific communicative approaches that reflect and construct immigrant adaptation experience and community building. In addition, this qualitative work supplements significant quantitative research by adding rich, contextualized stories that touch on issues of loss, culture, identity, and change.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“In Newfoundland generally, you do not live in a town, you ‘belong to’ a place; you are not asked where you live, but rather, where you belong to.” (Pocius, 2000, p. 3)

“Community cannot feed for long on itself; it can only flourish where always the boundaries are giving way to the coming of others from beyond them — unknown and undiscovered brothers.” (Thurman, 1971, p. 104)

When you first meet someone in Newfoundland, after exchanging names, the next thing you will be asked is not what you do for a living, but where you are from, quickly followed by, “Now who’s *your* father?... Lewis from Holyrood... Now, is he the doctor or the principal?” Placing you in the large web of people they know is a game that Newfoundlanders, particularly those from smaller communities, love to play. Nothing cuts conversation short like saying your parents are not originally from Newfoundland—that your Jacksons are from Alberta, not from Jackson’s Arm. It is not that Newfoundlanders are unfriendly or lack curiosity about who you are. They just do not know what to do next. They do not know where to place you. They do not know to whom you are connected. They do not know where you “belong.” The scenario described above is one commonly experienced by mainlanders and CFAs<sup>1</sup> all over the province, but even Newfoundlanders, such as myself, whose parents are “from away” face similar

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<sup>1</sup> Mainlanders are all Canadians from provinces other than Newfoundland and Labrador (but particularly from provinces outside of Atlantic Canada). CFA stands for Come From Away and can refer to all people not from the province.

conversational challenges. So imagine, then, that you are from Germany or Bangladesh. If you get the question asked of you at all, the response to your answer would likely be a raised eyebrow, a deep breath in, a “yes, b’y,”<sup>2</sup> and a long silence: an admission that he or she has no idea what to do or say next.

Yet this is bound to happen with increasing frequency as immigration to the province increases. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador<sup>3</sup> currently attracts approximately 400 immigrants per year, a number it aims to more than double in years to come (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007). In order to meet this goal, the government is putting more time and resources into immigrant recruitment and retention. For example, the Province is participating in international immigration fairs around the world and is selecting immigrants who meet a particular need for an expedited federal immigration review process called the Provincial Nominee Program (Burke, 2008).

On the retention end, the Province has its work cut out for it. In the early 1980s, the province was retaining only 56% of its immigrants, and by 2006, that average was even down slightly (Murphy & de Finney, 2008a). However, in 2007, the provincial immigration strategy announced the Province’s intention to bring the retention rate up to 70% (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007). In order to meet this goal the Province has recruited “two settlement and integration consultants” (Burke, 2008, p. 32)

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<sup>2</sup> B’y is short for “boy,” and it is very common for Newfoundlanders to use it in conversation with people they do and do not know and with both women and men. *The Dictionary of Newfoundland English* describes it as “a frequent term of address; a marker of informality or intimacy” (Story, Kirwin, & Widdowson, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> The official name of the province is Newfoundland and Labrador. However, because of the vastness of the province and the fact that the contexts of Newfoundland and Labrador individually are different, this study will only explore the experience of people on the island part of the province: Newfoundland. My use of the word Newfoundland versus Newfoundland and Labrador is deliberate, and I hope will not confuse the reader. It is important to use the full name of the province when referring to the province as a political entity as well as studies that covered the whole province.

to work with federal immigration offices and a local settlement organization to ensure that the appropriate support mechanisms are in place to support new immigrants. As well, the Province is offering financial incentives of between \$1,000 and \$2,500 to some international students who studied in the province and are living and working in the province one year after getting permanent residency status (Human Resources, Labour, and Employment, 2010). These efforts are an important indication that this is an opportune time to study the experience of immigrants in the province.

In this study, I explore and illustrate the cultural adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland as well as those of native-born Newfoundlanders in order to understand how community is/has been built across cultural differences. I seek to learn what communicative strategies immigrants use to adapt to their new rural communities. I am also interested in how locals respond when faced with the challenges of not knowing the place immigrants come from or who their fathers are. Finally, I am curious to learn what changes communities have faced due to immigration.

### **Key Terms**

In order to adequately explore these questions, three key terms require definition: *immigrant*, *rural*, and *cultural adaptation*. For the purposes of this study, *immigrants* are persons “who are, or have ever been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities” (Statistics Canada, 2009a). By this definition, immigrants may be recent arrivals, or they may have been in the country for some time. They also may or may not be citizens of Canada. This broad definition allows me to speak to people of various

nationalities, levels of permanency in Canada, and years of adaptation experience in seeking to understand the immigrant experience.

I am particularly interested in the adaptation experience of immigrants in *rural* areas. There is disagreement, however, in research circles as to what constitutes a rural population. Some argue that rural life is represented by geographic boundaries, others argue for social boundaries, and still others presume cultural boundaries. For the purposes of this study, I will be defining rural Newfoundland as all areas outside of the most populated area of the province, the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of St. John's. According to Statistics Canada, a CMA is an "area consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a census metropolitan area, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000" (Statistics Canada, 2002). St. John's and surrounding is the only CMA in the province, and so this study is focused on all communities outside of that area.

I chose this definition of rural for two primary reasons. First, it is important to recognize that the "distance from an urban area" (du Plessis, Beshiri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2001, p. 4) likely shapes the settlement experiences of those who live within an easy commute of an urban setting, which is bound to be different from those without such access. According to Statistics Canada, "commuting flows are highly, although not perfectly, correlated with other measures of integration" (du Plessis, et al., 2001, p. 12) such as access to health services, shopping, and, I would add, a greater variety of international foods and multicultural events. Secondly, by this definition, approximately 62% of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians live in rural towns (Statistics Canada, 2012); other definitions (such as that of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and

Development or OECD) offer percentages that do not appear to accurately represent the distribution of people throughout the province (ranging from Census Canada's 43.3% to the OECD's 68.6%) (du Plessis et al., 2001).

Although the above definitions have political roots, I return to the field of communication to define *cultural adaptation*. Adaptation is one of the most discussed areas within the field of intercultural communication (Kim, 2001). For the purposes of this study, cultural adaptation is "the entirety of the evolutionary process an individual undergoes vis-à-vis a new and unfamiliar environment" (Kim, 2005, p. 379). Because communities also change with the arrival of immigrants (Berry, 2001, 2005), I extend this definition of cultural adaptation in this study to include the cultural changes and adaptations that occur in communities as a result of immigration. For example, schools may broaden their cultural and linguistic programs to include their diversifying student population, and hospital cafeterias may start offering vegetarian choices for their Hindu staff members. The inclusion of community change due to immigration is just one of the ways that this study can extend current research on cultural adaptation.

### **Deficiencies**

Existing models of cultural adaptation research (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Kalin & Berry, 1996; Kim, 1987, 2001, 2005; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988) focus on the change processes that unfold "as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry, 2005, p. 698). Berry (2007) is particularly interested in how acculturation happens, the strategies people choose, and whether there is a relationship between the strategies they choose and their psychological and social success. His model offers four

acculturation strategies for immigrants and four strategies for the larger society. In contrast Kim assumes that everyone who interacts with his or her environment does adapt, so her theory focuses on the how and why—on the factors that might affect the speed at which people adapt (2005).

As important as the aforementioned research is, this study serves to add to these research efforts by illuminating the experiences of immigrants in rural settings and of immigrant-receiving communities as well as offering concrete ways that communication plays a part in these adaptation processes. Currently, there is little to no communication research that focuses on the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural settings. This is not surprising, given that most immigrants to North America settle in urban areas. In the case of Canada, 89% of immigrants live in urban areas (Beshiri, 2004). Despite these numbers, the experience of the remaining 11% is important for two reasons. The adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural areas may be vastly different from their urban counterparts. We know, for example, that urban parts of Canada are more ethnically diverse than rural areas (Aizlewood & Pendakur, 2005), so immigrants in rural areas are less likely to interact with people of their ethnicity or race. In addition, urban areas have support services for newcomers; rural Newfoundland, on the other hand, has very few settlement services, and the ones that are available are offered via distance. The second reason understanding the rural immigrant experience is important is that “although the numbers are small, there has been an increase in the ‘rurality’ of recently arrived immigrants compared to the overall immigrant population” (Akbari, Lynch, McDonald, & Rankaduwa, 2005, p. 23). Government is keen to have this trend continue,

leading scholars to call for more research in the area of rural immigrant life (Akbari et al.).

A second way this study serves to add to communication research is by recognizing the experience of immigrant-receiving communities. If it is true that “immigrant-receiving societies and their native-born populations have been massively transformed in the past decades” (Berry, 2001, p. 616), knowing exactly how they have changed is important. What kinds of accommodations might locals be willing to make for newcomers (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 52), and what social dynamics are at play in that interaction (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010)? Unfortunately, research about immigration and adaptation thus far has tended to ignore or gloss over these interactions and the changes that happen in the receiving communities’ cultures (Berry, 2001). This study aims to change that.

Finally, existing cultural adaptation research has offered engaging models and suggested important influencing factors and adaptation strategies (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Kalin & Berry, 1996; Kim, 1987, 2001, 2005; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988). This research has, however, failed to offer concrete ways that communication is being used in adaptation processes and “how people manage cultural differences in everyday life” (Collie, Kindon, Liu, & Podsiadlowski, 2010, p. 209). This study seeks to address the call for more qualitative work on immigration (Keshishian, 2000) and contribute to literature on the substance and nature of communication in cultural adaptation. How is language being used in adaptation processes by immigrants and their host communities? What communicative

strategies are successfully creating community across cultural difference? These are essential questions I address.

## **Rationale**

A number of demographic and political changes and an ethical imperative make this study particularly timely and important. In the last couple of decades, the four Atlantic Canadian provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador) have experienced big demographic and labor-market shifts. The local population is aging; birth rates are declining; and people are out-migrating, particularly youth. Much of this can be attributed to hard economic times; however, to some extent, that is now changing. Once the poorest province in Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador has a burgeoning oil and gas industry and is now what the country calls a “have” province.<sup>4</sup> It is “poised for unprecedented economic growth” (Burke, 2008, p. 30). However, there is a looming human resource skills shortage in many areas, including medicine, oil and gas, and academia (Burke, 2008). The provincial and federal governments have taken note of these demographic and labor-market trends and “the recruitment and retention of more immigrants, while only one element in an overall population strategy, is seen as key to the economic health and social well-being of the Atlantic region” (Murphy & de Finney, 2008b, p. 3).

Increasing immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador, however, will not be easy. There is a strong trend for immigrants to move to Canada’s largest cities. In fact, 73% of immigrants to Canada move to Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal (Abu-Laban &

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<sup>4</sup> To help distribute wealth among the provinces, the Government of Canada facilitates transfer payments from the richest provinces (“have” provinces) to the poorest provinces (“have not”s). In recent years, Newfoundland and Labrador has been a “have” province for the first time since it joined Canada in 1949.

Garber, 2005). However, the federal government is interested in spreading immigration more evenly across the country (Abu-Laban & Garber, 2005), and there are a number of federal and provincial initiatives that aim to do exactly that.

In 2007, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador established the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism with six million dollars committed over three years (Foster, 2008). This office created the Provincial Immigration Strategy (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007) and has led to the recruitment and retention strategies mentioned earlier. In addition, the federal government has created the Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres, a resource that specifically seeks to help less populous areas recruit and retain immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). Assuming that some or all of these initiatives are successful, there should be an increase in immigration to rural areas and, therefore, an increased importance to understand the adaptation experiences of these immigrants.

Given the efforts to recruit immigrants, there is also an ethical imperative to study the adaptation experiences of immigrants. Immigrants can face tremendous hurdles on arrival in a new country: culture shock, language struggles, lack of credential recognition, discrimination, and racism. These hurdles can be even greater when the community in which they settle is a rural area or a small town. We know from recent census data that most new immigrants to Canada are visible minorities or non-Caucasian. In fact, between 1996 and 2001, 73% of those who immigrated were visible minorities (Beshiri, 2004). What is more, in rural areas, immigrants are “markedly more educated than the Canadian-born” (Beshiri, 2004, p. 9), which might make the experience of immigration all the more isolating.

In 2006, immigrants made up 19.8% of Canada's total population (Statistics Canada, 2006). However, we still know very little about how this population might use communication to navigate the successes and trials involved in adapting to a new culture. Knowing more about this might help immigrants approach their experience with new understanding and hope and help members of rural communities become more cognizant of the communication strategies that help build connections with immigrants.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to learn about the cultural adaptation experiences of immigrants to rural Newfoundland and what has facilitated and hindered this adaptation. I explored whether the communities themselves have changed, whether there has been community building across cultural difference and, if so, what has helped and hindered it. Finally, I sought to discover what communicative approaches have been employed in the immigration adaptation process.

To accomplish this purpose, I recruited and interviewed eight immigrants and 10 native-born Newfoundlanders in rural areas of the province. Then I conducted three focus groups with each of the two populations. During these steps, I explored the substance and nature of the communication used in cultural adaptation on the part of both the immigrants and their new communities.

The research questions that guided this study are:

RQ1: What dimensions characterize the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland? That is, what are the multiple dimensions, or layered experiences, that characterize the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland.

RQ2: What communicative approaches have helped and hindered immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference?

RQ3: What changes have rural communities experienced due to the arrival of immigrants?

Keeping these questions in mind, the proceeding chapters will outline what relevant literature has said about immigration, cultural adaptation, and community. I then explore the specific context of Newfoundland and describe the methods of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study explores three major themes: immigration, cultural adaptation, and community. Each of these themes, to varying degrees, has been explored within the discipline of communication. In order to situate my study within the realms of what already has been researched as well as where I might contribute, this chapter summarizes relevant literature on immigration, cultural adaptation, and community.

I begin my exploration into immigration research with a review of literature that comments on both the challenges and benefits of immigration. I then explore cultural adaptation, scholarly models that seek to explain it, and research that contests these models. Finally, I discuss how community has been theorized within communication, suggesting ample room for investigation into cross-cultural community building in rural contexts.

### **Immigration**

The global migration of peoples is a symptom of the increasingly globalized world. Following these demographic shifts and their implications, scholars have studied both the challenges and the opportunities brought about by immigration. The largest proportion of the research has focused on the potential challenges to both receiving nations and their communities; fewer studies have explored the benefits of immigration, such as a perceived link between increases in immigration and dramatic drops in violent crime (Wadsworth, 2010). One of the largest themes within immigration research in the communication discipline and the social sciences in general is the exploration into attitudes towards immigrants and the related area of ethnocentrism.

**Challenges of immigration.** Research that explores attitudes, social distance, and ethnocentrism as it relates to immigrants has yielded interesting results that suggest that factors such as level of control of an interaction, type of reward one might receive, and ethnicity may be important factors in an individual's acceptance or liking of an immigrant. For example, a Canadian study conducted in the late 1950s explored how "locals" felt about immigrants and what factors might be at play in those attitudes. The authors found that "attitude direction is associated with the control of interaction" (Jones & Lambert, 1959, p. 546). That is, if locals were interacting with immigrants at work (a setting where they may have less control), they felt less positively about immigrants than they did if they interacted with them in different social environments, such as at church. They also found that the more locals interacted with immigrants, the more positive their attitude was towards them.

Another important concept that emerged from this work was that of reward objects and facilities objects. Jones and Lambert (1959) suggest that native Canadians who tended to "regard immigrants as useful or valuable to the development of natural resources" (p. 546), such as meeting a skills shortage, may have had positive attitudes about immigrants, but they conceptualized these newcomers as *facilities objects*. They argue that these positive attitudes would have more stability and strength if those same immigrants were viewed as offering rewards as friends and co-workers (*reward objects*) rather than as individuals filling an employment gap.

Setting, control of the interaction, amount of interaction, and perceived immigrant roles may all be important factors in attitudes towards immigrants then, but what about ethnicity? Does it influence what locals think of immigrants or how close they may feel

to them? Research tells us that the answer is a resounding “yes” (Berry, 2006; Jerabek & de Man, 1994; Kalin & Berry, 1996; Pagnini & Morgan, 1990; Parrillo & Donoghue, 2005). For example, in the 1970s, Berry (2006) conducted a national survey that asked Canadians how they would describe people of various ethnicities based on evaluative adjectives such as “clean” or “important.” In a second survey, Berry asked people about their comfort level with people of various ethnicities and races (Berry, 2006). The results of both national surveys showed significant ethnocentrism, suggesting that “groups holds more positive evaluations of their own group than of other groups” (Berry, 2006, p. 7). His results also showed that some immigrants’ backgrounds were more accepted than others, and that some ethnic groups in Canada focused more strongly on their in-group than other ethnic groups did.

Jerabek and de Man (1994) wanted to explore the social distance between Caucasian Canadians and three recently arrived immigrant groups (Asian, Latin-American, and Eastern European). They found results similar to that mentioned above. Their first important finding was that some ethnic groups were more likely to report overall social distance between themselves and other ethnic groups. For example, Asian Canadians reported more social distance than any of the other groups surveyed. Secondly, the “ethnic character of the target groups affected the overall perceived social distance” (p. 300). That is, each ethnic group (with the exception of Caucasian Canadians) reported quite different social distance between their group and each of the other ethnic groups. For example, the Latin-American immigrants reported the least social distance between Caucasian Canadians and themselves, followed by Eastern Europeans and finally Asians. Across all the groups they studied, however, Caucasian Canadians were the most

“preferred” across all the ethnic groups. This echoes findings from other Canadian research that showed that there is a hierarchy in terms of the levels of acceptance for immigrant groups; British immigrants are the most accepted, and Sikhs are the least accepted (Kalin & Berry, 1996). We know, then, that there are multiple factors that challenge how much both minority ethnic groups and the dominant culture might like and appreciate immigrants. But what benefits does immigration bring?

**Benefits of immigration.** Unfortunately, within academia, there has been a dearth of exploration into the benefits—cultural, social, and economic—that immigrants can bring. This absence of the positive may be due, if only in part, to the problem-focused character of much social science scholarship. That said, recent research is beginning to address the social and economic benefits that immigration may offer.

In a recent study, sociologist Wadsworth (2010) sought to learn if cities with a greater foreign-born and new immigrant population experienced higher or lower rates of violent crime, and if there might be any connection between immigration trends and a huge drop in violent crime between 1990 and 2000. Wadsworth admits that “the relationships are not straightforward” (p. 548), but his results show that increases in new immigrants and foreign-born people in a city seem to decrease some kinds of crime (such as robbery and homicide), and cities that had a larger influx of immigrants and foreign-born people in that decade experienced larger drops in violent crime.

Moving to research on Atlantic Canada, scholars have sought to understand what role immigrants play in the economy and which government services they access. They have learned that immigrants participate more in the labor force, have lower unemployment rates, depend less on government-income support systems, have higher

levels of formal education, and have higher incomes than locally born individuals (Akbari et al., 2005; Murphy & de Finney, 2008b). Recent immigrants have had more difficulty in the labor market than more established immigrants. However, even their rates of employment are still better than those born in the region (Akbari et al., 2005). It is clear, then, that immigrants in Atlantic Canada are not “a drain on the public purse” (Akbari et al., 2005, p. 31).

Not only are immigrants not a drain on the public purse, in Newfoundland and Labrador, they have fulfilled a variety of important roles within the province. In fact, 87% of highly skilled immigrants work in professional positions in sectors such as health care, social services, education, and science and technology (Murphy & de Finney, 2008a, p. 54), and 46% of the province’s physicians are foreign born (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007, p. 1). Rural areas in particular have depended on these internationally trained physicians because Canadian-trained physicians often prefer to work in more urban areas (Vardy, Ryan, & Audas, 2008). As much as research has tended to focus on the challenges presented by immigration, the above research brings to light ways that immigrants have meaningfully contributed to their new settings.

Some key ideas emerge out of the aforementioned immigration research. First, it is important to recognize that ethnocentrism and social distance continue to play a role in how people live their everyday lives in diverse societies. People continue to prefer their own ethnic groups, and when they do reach beyond the boundaries of their own ethnicities, some people have the privilege of being preferred above all other ethnic groups. This hierarchy of ethnicities is something I keep in mind when exploring immigrant adaptation experiences in Newfoundland.

Second, research conducted in Atlantic Canada reminds us of the important roles that immigrants can play in their economies. However, as Jones and Lambert (1959) have suggested, we take a risk when we frame immigrants purely as facilities objects that simply fulfill an economic need. They argue that when immigrants are viewed this way, local people's positive attitudes and impressions of them may be more fragile.

Gilad (1990) suggests that in Newfoundland and Labrador, "there is a history of importing immigrants in order to 'precipitate the formation of an industrial base for the impoverished province'" (Gilad, 1990, p. 166), but these policies have been designed to address economic issues and have "nothing to do with any desire to broaden the cultural range of Newfoundland society" (p. 166). Given that Newfoundland and Labrador is largely increasing its immigrant recruitment in order to meet demographic and economic challenges, this differentiation between facilities and reward objects—and the social implications of these perceived roles—are very important to my study.

Building on this existing research, there are three main ways that my study can add to the literature. First, I explore the experience of immigrants in rural areas, a part of the immigration experience that remains untold within communication. Second, I recognize the positive role that immigration can have in communities, and so my study explores, among other things, how immigrants are participating in community building across cultural difference. Finally, there is a need for more qualitative approaches to immigration research (Keshishian, 2000) in order to "help us more vividly see the complexities and subtleties of acculturation" (Keshishian, 2000, p. 94). This study can help fill that void.

## **Cultural Adaptation**

Within communication, much of the research on immigration overlaps with studies that explore the experience an immigrant goes through once s/he has arrived in his or her new environment in terms of cultural adaptation. In this section, I review two major adaptation theories; their theoretical differences; and the individual, group, and receiving-society factors they recognize as playing a role in the adaptation process. I continue by discussing what these theorists feel are adaptation's ultimate results and end by exploring contestations of these two major theories.

As suggested above, there are two main models of cultural adaptation that have been adopted by intercultural communication scholars: Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory and Berry's acculturation theory. Despite their use of different terms, both models speak "to a uniquely human plasticity to adapt to the increasingly intercultural environment" (Kim, 2009, p. 247).

Kim's (1987, 2001, 2005, 2009) cross-cultural adaptation theory is influenced by an open systems approach that she describes as "interactive and integrative" (2005, p. 378). Part and parcel of her theory are both a process model, which seeks to describe the experience of adaptation, and a structural model that represents the factors that influence adaptation. I survey the factors affecting adaptation (as described by Kim and Berry) later in the chapter, but for now let me introduce Kim's conceptualization of the adaptation process.

Adaptation, for Kim (2009), is a "natural human tendency to struggle to regain an internal equilibrium in the face of adversarial environmental conditions" (p. 243). This adaptation process, Kim (2005) argues, is pan-human and inevitable if the individual

engages with the local environment, particularly through communication. Since adaptation is inevitable Kim's (1987, 2001, 2005, 2009) primary concerns focus on the nature of this process and the reasons people seek to adapt.

Stress is also an essential component in Kim's model (2005, 2009). It is a "kind of identity conflict rooted in the desire to retain the habitual mind, on one hand, and the necessity to seek congruence with the new milieu on the other" (Kim, 2009, p. 244), resulting in negative emotions such as depression and anxiety. Kim argues, however, that because of that emotional low, an individual becomes more self-aware, an awareness that can spur personal change and cultural adaptation. This process is circular but ever advancing, and over long periods of time, the lows become less low and the cultural adaptation greater. "What emerges from successful, long-term, and cumulative experiences of managing the stress-adaptation dialectic is a subtle and often imperceptible psychological *growth*" (Kim, 2009, p. 244).

Cross-cultural adaptation theory is the most detailed adaptation theory within communication; therefore, many scholars have engaged it in their work. They have used it, for example, to explore what kind of communication and contact Americans have had with locals while living in Korea and what influence this has had on their well being (Kim, 2008). In another study, scholars explored how well women from Southeast Asia and mainland China who marry Taiwanese men adapt to their new life in Taiwan (Sandel & Chung-Hui, 2010).

Although Berry's (2001, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010) acculturation theory emerges from cross-cultural psychology, it is also referenced frequently within intercultural communication circles. Berry differentiates between the terms *acculturation*

and *adaptation* and chooses to use the former. However, for the sake of simplicity, I will use these two terms interchangeably for this section of the chapter.

The two overriding questions in Berry's (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010) scholarship are how do individuals adapt, and what specific strategies might they use in the adaptation process. Do they seek to hold on to their culture, learn about their host culture, or do they attempt to balance both? In answering these questions, Berry (2005) argues that acculturation is relational, and "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (p. 698). Berry's (2007) acculturation-strategies framework outlines four strategies that are based on two orientation axes: level of maintenance of original culture and amount that relationships are sought between cultural groups. The visual representation of these strategies is a circle with four quadrants. This part of the model, Berry explains, represents the questions immigrants may be asking themselves: "How shall we deal with these two issues?" (Berry & Sabatier, 2010, p. 193)? That is, what choices might an immigrant make when faced with holding on to one's original culture (or not) and developing relationships with locals (or not). The four strategies that result from these questions are: separation (close to original culture, far from host culture), assimilation (close to host, far from original), integration (close to host, close to original), and marginalization (far from original, far from host) (Berry, 2007).

One of the most intriguing parts of Berry's visual model, however, is that he includes a second circle that represents the attitudes of the larger society. This circle is meant to represent the result of the dominant culture's preferences for how immigrants

should adapt (Berry & Sabatier, 2010). That is, should immigrants be able to keep their own cultures? Should they keep to themselves, or should they interact with locals? As he and a colleague explain:

The acceptance of integration along with cultural diversity and equitable participation by the larger society defines the attitude of mutual accommodation now widely called multiculturalism (Berry, 1984). When assimilation is preferred or sought by the dominant group, it can be termed the melting pot. When separation is enforced by the dominant group, it is segregation. When marginalisation is imposed by the dominant group, it is a form of exclusion. (Berry & Sabatier, 2010, p. 193)

These additional four strategies (multiculturalism, melting pot, exclusion, and segregation) are meant to describe the larger environment's realities as a result of local attitudes towards immigrant adaptation.

However, in one article, Berry (2005) extends this idea of the dominant group's influence by saying that each of the immigrant strategies (separation, assimilation, integration, and marginalization) could be conceptualized as having two distinct parts: the individual immigrant's preference for how things might be and what that person's actual behavior is. He suggests that if there are differences between these two, it is due to the constraints put on immigrants by the dominant group. Other scholars, such as Kim, have suggested that the dominant group's attitude towards immigrants may influence how they adapt. However, Berry's model appears to be the only one to actually integrate it into a visual model.

Berry's acculturation theory has been employed to help explain adaptation in a variety of contexts. Trebbe (2007) sought to understand whether the level of integration of Turkish immigrant youth into German society would have a relationship to the amount and type of media they accessed in both Turkish and German. Another study explored whether Chinese Americans changed their level of identification with American culture over time and whether their acculturation meant they changed communication traits such as self-disclosure, willingness to communicate, and argumentativeness (Hsu, 2010). Both studies employed Berry's theory as a means to better understand immigrant adaptation.

Both of the aforementioned theories seek to explain the adaptation process of immigrants. However, the terms they use, the way they envision how adaptation will unfold, and the strategies they believe are preferred differ. These theories may have more differences than similarities.

**Theoretical differences.** At a superficial level, the first difference one notices between the theories of Berry (Berry, 2001, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010) and Kim (1987, 2001, 2005, 2009) are the terms they use. The process of "cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups" (Berry, 2005, p. 698) is called *acculturation*. It is the overarching concept Berry uses for a variety of processes that may take place during and after intercultural contact. For Kim, however, acculturation is the process of acquiring "some, but not all, aspects of the host cultural elements" (2005, p. 380). The overarching term that Kim prefers is *adaptation*, which she believes is the "unfolding of a natural human tendency for an internal equilibrium in the face of often adversarial environmental conditions" (2005, p. 378). Perhaps not surprisingly, Berry disagrees. When he uses the word *adaptation*, he

does not assume it means well adapted (as Kim does), but that when one adapts one might also separate oneself from the larger host environment (2005). Vocabulary aside, there still remains several fundamental differences in how Berry and Kim conceptualize this change process.

As suggested in the terms they use, Berry and Kim have different ideas on how adaptation unfolds. Berry believes there are “two forms of adaptation: psychological well-being and sociocultural competence” that he feels are “conceptually and empirically distinct” (Berry & Sabatier, 2010, p. 206). This adaptation happens when people begin to manage the difficult choices between keeping one’s culture and developing relationships with those outside one’s cultural group. Berry’s theory offers four strategies for an individual who might deal with these questions. However, Kim’s (2009) model suggests that adaptation happens in only one way: interaction with the local environment through communication. Her theory, then, is more interested in what factors may speed up or slow down that inevitable process.

These theories also disagree on what, for lack of a better word, the end product of cultural adaptation might or could look like. Berry (2005) asserts that there is a “positive multicultural” (p. 703) identity that is possible, a merging of “new” and “old” cultures. Kim asserts, however that deculturation, or the unlearning of parts of one’s “old” culture, must happen. She quotes Burke in her explanation—there can be “no construction without destruction” (Kim, 2005, p. 382). Although Kim says that individuals can develop an intercultural identity, she also adds that assimilation is the “ultimate theoretical directionality of adaptive change” (2005, p. 383), and that some people strive for it most of their lives. Interestingly, in that same essay, Kim claims she does not want

to advocate for any particular ideological position; she also argues, however, that the “divergent ideological premises of assimilationism and pluralism need to be recognized” (2005, p. 377). That is, there are those who believe that assimilation is the ultimate end of adaptation, and there are those that believe a multicultural identity is possible and preferable; both are both working from an ideological stance.

I agree fully with Kim that these differences are largely ideological, but what I find fascinating about this debate is the fact that they are also culturally bound. Before the recent “salad bowl” metaphor, which the United States has embraced, there was the idea of the U.S. as a “melting pot.” That is, that despite their differences once in the U.S., immigrants would blend with locals and become Americanized. As early as 1914, Robert Park, one of “the best known of the melting pot theorists” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 36), developed a three-part model to describe the adaptation of newcomers to the United States: contact, accommodation, and assimilation. Park believed that ultimately, immigrants “learned to accommodate the dominant group, a process of cultural assimilation ensued culminating in intermarriage and amalgamation” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 36).

In contrast, Canadians pride themselves in being a cultural “mosaic” rather than a “melting pot” a “distinction that today includes a core belief in multiculturalism, and by extension immigration, as a defining characteristic of Canadian society” (Abu-Laban & Garber, 2005, p. 526). In fact, the word *assimilation* has very negative connotations in Canada to the point that even government documents explain that it is a term that is “not favoured” because “assimilation is essentially a one-way process that requires newcomers to adapt to life in Canada but does not encourage Canadians to challenge their

own customs and beliefs, or explore and celebrate other cultures” (National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2007). As Abu-Laban and Garber (2005) suggest, this discomfort with assimilation probably finds its roots in Canada’s multiculturalism policy. Introduced in 1988, the Multiculturalism Act formally acknowledges “the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage” (Conrick & Donovan, 2010, p. 341).

Both Kim and Berry are rooted in particular ideologies and hold specific cultural values that influence their beliefs on whether and why immigrants and their receiving societies should change. I say “receiving societies” as both scholars acknowledge the influence of the host cultural environment, but their theories are still primarily focused on the experience of the individual. In this next section, I explore the factors that influence an individual’s adaptation and the potential results before continuing to discuss the assumptions of these two major theories and how they have been contested by other scholars.

**Factors affecting adaptation.** Throughout cultural adaptation literature, a plethora of factors have been recognized as influencing the adaptation process of immigrants. I have endeavored to consolidate these factors into three groups: factors related to the individual, group factors (such as families, cultures, and ethnicities), and factors that originate from the receiving society. These categories are porous, and any number of factors might seep into other categories; bracketing the factors in this way emerges from the need to organize the ideas more than anything else.

***Individual factors.*** In seeking to understand the adaptation process, scholars have hypothesized that any number of demographic, cultural, economic, and personal

characteristics may influence how immigrants adapt (Michalowski, 1987). In this section I bring attention to three in particular: length of time in the new country, age at time of arrival, and the disposition and personality of the immigrant.

Time is cited perhaps more than any other one single factor in adaptation literature. Scholars have recognized that acculturation takes time (Hsu, 2010; Kim, 2005; Michalowski, 1987; Richmond, Kalbach, & Verma, 1980). Some have even acknowledged that adaptation can be a process that lasts a whole lifetime (Kim, 2005) or even for a couple of generations (Richmond et al., 1980). A related factor that gets some attention is the age of the immigrant when s/he arrives (Hsu, 2010; Michalowski, 1987; Padilla & Perez, 2003). As Hsu (2010) explains, “younger immigrants are more likely to accept new cultural norms and change their communication traits because their personality traits are more malleable than older ones” (p. 416). If you arrive in a new country at a younger age, not only do you have less socialization in your country of origin, but you also have more time to adapt in your adopted country.

An immigrant’s personality and disposition also can play a role in the adaptation process (Kim, 2009; Padilla & Perez, 2003). Kim (2009) calls attention to what she calls “host communication competence” (p. 385), or those abilities related to how well an immigrant can communicate with those in the new setting. She points out that having knowledge of the local language, history, and culture is useful as is the capacity to live in the new environment, be ready for the cultural change, and have the ability to act and speak appropriately (Kim, 2009).

How immigrants adapt, then, is influenced by how long they have been in their new home, how old they were when they arrived, who they are as a person, and whether

they have the skills necessary to connect with the local culture. However, immigrants do not always immigrate alone, nor do they live in isolation once they arrive in their new country, so what group factors may be at play?

***Group factors.*** Group characteristics, strength, and behavior also influence how immigrants adapt to their new environments. For example, familial structures and roles play a factor in immigrant adaptation (Padilla & Perez, 2003; Sandel & Chung-Hui, 2010). In some cases, in fact, family members may take specific steps to prevent other family members from learning the local culture and language. A study in Taiwan, for example, found that some non-Taiwanese wives were strongly discouraged from taking language classes because their new husbands or in-laws were worried that in leaving the home, they might be negatively influenced by other women they met, or that they might run away (Sandel & Chung-Hui, 2010). These sorts of familial constraints no doubt lead to great feelings of disembeddedness and isolation.

One of the ways immigrants can continue to feel connected to their ethnic groups and to the receiving society, however, is through interpersonal and mass communication (Kim, 2001, 2009). Interpersonal communication offers a chance to try out one's developing intercultural communication skills, whereas communication with those within your ethnic group can offer support and (I would add) comfort in knowing you are understood. Similarly, mass communication originating from the receiving society can offer inroads into understand the local context, while ethnic mass communication can help one feel tied to home. Kim (2009) has warned, however, "that heavy and prolonged reliance on ethnic social communication activities tends to help maintain strangers' original cultural habits and limit their opportunities to participate in the local

environment” (p. 245), suggesting that balance in communication with the familiar and unfamiliar is important.

In terms of balance, Kim (2009) also has argued that an immigrant’s group strength may be a hindrance to an individual’s adaptation process:

*Ethnic group strength...tends to discourage the cross-cultural adaptation process of individual members...Although such an ethnic support system can aid newcomers’ initial cross-cultural adaption, it also tends to exert a level of social pressure to maintain the ethnic practices and discourage an active participation in the host social communication activities. (p. 245)*

If one is getting all one needs from within one’s community, is there a perceived need to extend beyond it?

Finally, as suggested in the immigration literature mentioned earlier in this chapter, ethnic proximity is also an important factor in immigrant adaptation (Kim, 2005; Michalowski, 1987; Padilla & Perez, 2003; van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010). Kim (2005) suggests that there are two facets to this proximity: extrinsic and intrinsic “ethnic markers” (p. 389). Extrinsic markers are those external symbols such as food, clothing, and race that “often distinguish many immigrants from the host country’s culture” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 39). Intrinsic markers are things such as beliefs and values that are not easily identifiable from the outside. Iranian Bahá’í immigrants to the province of New Brunswick, for example, were welcomed with open arms because of their intrinsic markers. Local Bahá’ís immediately felt a connection to these newcomers because, in addition to sharing a faith, the newcomers were arriving from the birthplace of their shared religion (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010). Group factors

such as familial structures, interpersonal and mass communication, group strength, and extrinsic and intrinsic markers, then, can both help and hinder an immigrant's adaptation process.

***Receiving society factors.*** The final group of factors important to my study consists of those that originate from the receiving society. Historically, scholars have not given this area much attention. This is beginning to change. Factors that have been mentioned in this recent literature include host receptivity, support for cultural maintenance/pressure to conform, government policy, and discrimination.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, how receptive the receiving society is to immigrants (or immigrants of a particular background) influences how immigrants want or are able to adapt. As mentioned earlier, Berry's (Berry, 2001, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010) acculturation theory recognizes the dominant culture's attitudes towards immigrant adaptation. Kim's (2001, 2005, 2009) cross-cultural adaptation theory also mentions what she labels "host receptivity" (2009, p. 245), which recognizes that some groups of newcomers may be more welcome than others.

In addition, if the larger society exerts pressure on immigrants to conform, it may no doubt influence their adaptation processes (Berry, 2005; Croucher, 2009; Kim, 2009; Yagmur, 2004). One might assume that pressure from the dominant group to change might lead immigrants to buckle under the pressure and move toward the dominant culture. Research done within the Muslim population in France, however, has suggested that the greater the pressure immigrants feel to change their culture or language, the more they will resent the dominant culture and resist adapting to it (Croucher, 2009). In studying Turkish immigrants in Germany, Yagmur (2004) found, for example, that

“sometimes, negative attitudes of the majority towards the minority might bolster language maintenance and ethnolinguistic vitality” (p. 139). Berry (2005) also agrees that adaptation can be reactive and lead an immigrant away from the influence of the dominant society.

Sometimes the restrictions placed on immigrant groups take the form of government policies and discrimination. Berry and Sabatier (2010) found that the more there is government policy support for cultural diversity (such as diversity-promoting institutions and a multiculturalism policy, etc.), the more immigrant youth will use integration and assimilation strategies. As they put it: “it is more difficult to adapt well when one’s ethnicity is being questioned” (p. 205).

This leads to the related factor of discrimination. How might discrimination influence the adaptation strategies that immigrants use? Results from a study done in both Paris, France, and Montréal, Canada, suggested that in France, a person is more likely to be discriminated against if s/he tries to hold on to his/her original culture. This was not the case with the Canadian sample, and the authors suggest that the reason may be that France has an assimilationist policy while Canada has a multicultural one: “Cultural and identity maintenance are considered to be valuable in Canada, whereas in France these are in many ways more or less discouraged, the maintenance of culture is seen as an obstacle to equality of chance” (Berry & Sabatier, 2010, pp. 204-205). This suggests that there is no universal preference among receiving societies for immigrant-adaptation strategies. Recent studies, such as the above, have made good headway in recognizing that a receiving society’s receptivity, pressure to conform, government policies, and discrimination can all have huge influence on how or if an immigrant adapts.

**Adaptation's results.** Having outlined the individual, group, and receiving society factors at play in immigrant adaptation, I now turn to what these change processes might look like. Although it is generally accepted that cultural adaptation is a long process that in some cases may take a person's whole life, some scholars have suggested there may be an "end product" to this lengthy and complex process. Four positions in particular stand out: assimilation, integration, "intercultural transformation" (Kim, 2009, p. 246), and a continued "field of tension" (Hermans, 2001, p. 271).

For many decades, assimilation was seen as the only viable choice for immigrant adaptation. As Michalowski (1987) puts it, "the process of immigrant adaptation *de facto* has been treated as assimilation to the new society, with the expectation that the adaptation process will be complete when ethnic differences between the two subpopulations disappear" (p. 24). Although few modern day scholars would argue that ethnic differences are likely to ever disappear completely, some scholars do believe that assimilation is the "ultimate theoretical directionality of adaptive change" (Kim, 2005, p. 383). That is, even if one never attains it, seeking to assimilate is the immigrant's ultimate goal. Kim (2005) argues, in fact, that those that seek to assimilate are more likely to try to interact with the larger dominant society "than those with a pluralist orientation" (p. 385). Since she believes that communication is the means by which immigrants adapt, she suggests, therefore, that assimilation is a more successful adaptation strategy.

Several scholars (Berry in particular) have argued that assimilation should not be equated with success. Berry's (Berry, 2001, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010) work,

in fact, largely focuses on psychological and sociocultural success and whether there is any relationship to the type of adaptation an individual chooses. He argues:

Identifying more with one's ethnic group is not conceptually, nor empirically, opposed to identifying with one's national society. The unidimensional approach, where individuals must choose between the two poles of acculturation strategies and cultural identities, does not capture the complexity of how youth work out their new lives in their new societies. (Berry & Sabatier, 2010, p. 206)

In saying this, Berry makes an argument for the integration strategy that allows for immigrants to be close to both their ethnic and national communities.

In a study of immigrant youth, Berry (2007) sampled 5000 plus immigrant youth and more than 2300 immigrant parents from 13 different societies; he learned that not only is integration the preferred strategy for immigrant youth and their parents, but that those who choose integration have the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes. The latter is a result he has found in other studies as well (Berry & Sabatier, 2010).

That brings me to a third potential "conclusion" to cultural adaptation. Although Kim's (1987, 2001, 2005, 2009) earlier work focused more on the goal of assimilation and the ideology "of fitting in" (2005), in recent publications she also has given time to the idea of *intercultural transformation*. Intercultural transformation, she posits, is comprised of "(1) *functional fitness*, (2) *psychological health*, and (3) the emergence of an *intercultural identity*" (2009, p. 246). Kim (2009) explains that an intercultural identity means that "as individuals advance in the cross-cultural adaptation process, their identity orientations undergo a gradual and largely unconscious transformation toward

less categorical and more complex ones” (p. 246). This newer exploration of adaptation’s end suggests that Kim may be softening her assumptions regarding acculturation, deculturation, and assimilation.

Finally, I would like to add one further conceptualization of an outcome of adaptation. Dutch psychologist Hubert Hermans (2001) challenges scholars to think about cultural adaptation less as “developmental end-states (like ‘integration’ or ‘competence’)” and more as a “process-oriented notion of acculturation that can account for situated, negotiated and often contested developmental trajectories” (p.272). Given the complexities brought on by the multitudes of factors and settings mentioned earlier in this chapter, recognizing adaptation as a “field of tension” in which “the person is somewhere between new chances and dangers” (p.272) may offer possibility for the development of a more layered and realistic conceptualization of adaptation. A *field of tension* is an interesting alternative to the finality of assimilation, integration, and even intercultural transformation.

**Theoretical assumptions and related contestations.** Not unlike other theoretical arenas, cultural adaptation research has a number of theoretical assumptions on which it is based; not surprisingly, scholars have responded by contesting said assumptions. In this section, I outline the largest theoretical assumptions made by major cultural adaptation theorists and then describe how other scholars have suggested adaptation theories be modified and extended.

Perhaps the foremost assumption within traditional models of cultural adaptation is the belief that immigrants have the power to decide how they adapt in their new settings. Berry acknowledges that dominant society’s expectations of immigrant

adaptation have an effect and, in fact, he admits that there may be a difference between the adaptation attitudes an immigrant has and how s/he behaves (believing dominant society to be the reason for any discrepancy between the two) (Berry, 2005, 2007). That said, his theory ultimately supports the idea that immigrants have a great degree of agency. Kim's (1987, 2001, 2005, 2009) stress-adaptation-growth model assumes that stress and adaptation are on opposite ends of a spectrum, and that adaptation over time is inevitable. Her process-focused model mentions factors that might hinder adaptation, but once again, there is an assumption that the immigrant can and will adapt with continued interaction with the host society.

This leads me to the next assumption within these theories—that of how adaptive change happens. Most scholars agree that interaction and participation with the host society are the main mediums of change. However, communication scholars such as Kim (2009) and Croucher (2009) specify communication as “a vital aspect of the assimilation—cultural adaptation process” (Croucher, 2009, p. 303). Kim (2009) goes as far as to say, in fact, that immigrants regularly must communicate with their new environments in order to adapt.

These assumptions of agency and of how cultural change happens have led some scholars to wonder if “the psychological models of acculturation are of limited value because they rest too heavily on...a belief that acculturation is more or less a uniform process across all newcomer groups” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 50). Such scholars have argued that cultural adaptation theories—as they currently stand—suggest that immigrants must choose between the “old” or the “new,” that this adaptation choice is permanent, and that immigrants go through this process as individuals. Most frequently,

perhaps, scholars have argued that the majority of cultural adaptation research thus far has neglected to acknowledge contextual factors such as an immigrant's motives for migration, government policies, history, and constraints such as power, control, and discrimination.

As intimated earlier, even between established cultural adaptation theorists, there is disagreement regarding whether immigrants must choose between their "old" and "new" cultures. Kim's (2005) theory in particular puts what some might call a false burden of choice on the immigrant. Many believe that people can gain competence in a second culture (*enculturate*, in Kim's terms) without having to lose one's original culture (*deculturate*) (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Kim & Hubbard, 2007; Sandel & Chung-Hui, 2010). Bennett (1993), for example, has talked about *constructive marginals*: "people who are able to construct context intentionally and consciously create their own identity" (found in Kim & Hubbard, 2007, p. 229). Kim's approach, however, has been called *assimilationist* (Kim & Hubbard, 2007, p. 228), "ethnocentric, nationalistic, and hegemonic" (Sandel & Chung-Hui, 2010, p. 252), and many scholars hope that future research will "move beyond discussions of how cultures assimilate to include how other cultures interact in a host culture to sustain multiple cultural identities" (Kim & Hubbard, 2007, p. 223).

In choosing a strategy—whether it incorporates parts of one's "new" and "old" cultures or not—does an immigrant stick to that strategy for the whole adaptation process? That is what is suggested by current theories. However, in talking to Assyrian women in New Zealand, Collie, Kindon, Liu, and Podsiadlowski (2010) found that "the young women indicated a preference for one or other of these strategies according to the

particular situation at hand, rather than expressing a dominant preference for one approach” (p. 216). These women felt a pressure to be accepted in their Assyrian community but also to get along with local New Zealanders, so this attempt “to attain optimal inclusion in these in-groups” (p. 208) led the women to use different strategies in different contexts.

Learning that people might choose different strategies among different groups also highlights another weakness in existing cultural adaptation theory: an over-emphasis on individual processes. Berry (2007) argues that acculturation should focus on the social unit; his scholarship does mention the experience of families and groups, and half of his visual model represents the host society’s attitude towards immigrant adaptation. However, despite good intentions, Berry’s theory still recognizes the experience of an individual’s adaptation.

Kim and Hubbard (2007) argue that this over-emphasis on individuals in intercultural communication does not recognize how interdependent we are as humans:

Even within the highly individualistic Western culture, most people are still much less self-reliant, self-contained, or self-sufficient than the prevailing cultural ideology suggests that they should be. Perhaps Western models of the self are considerably at odds with actual individual social behavior, and should be reformulated to reflect the substantial interdependence that characterizes even Western “individualists.” (p. 227)

Cultural adaptation is a social process, and the theories that seek to represent it should adequately reflect this reality (Padilla & Perez, 2003).

Finally, although traditional models of adaptation are beginning to acknowledge factors such as the receptiveness of the host culture and the dominant culture's support for cultural maintenance, many communication scholars still feel there is a long way to go before adaptation theories acknowledge the plethora of contextual factors at play. As Croucher (2009) suggests, "the historical and current scholarship generally addresses cultural adaptation as if it takes place in a vacuum" (p. 305). In particular, there is a feeling that the motives for migration, government policies, and historical context should be given more attention.

Berry (2005, 2007) himself points out that scholars need to study what immigrants were facing in their home countries "as a basis for understanding the degree of voluntariness in the migration motivation of acculturating individuals" (2005, p. 703). One can imagine that if you were forced out of your country because of religious persecution, for example, your interest to learn about and adapt to your host country may be far different from an individual who voluntarily left their home country in order to pursue economic opportunity. This variability of experience has not been adequately explored to date.

There is also room for scholarship to explore the influence of government on immigrant-adaptation processes. Berry acknowledges the potential influence of politics (2005) and government policy in interpreting his results (Berry & Sabatier, 2010).

Further, other scholars argue that

There has not been a systematic attempt to provide a theoretical explanation for communication behaviors that take place during the cultural adaptation process

when that process is influenced by exogenous variables such as governmental laws against the free expression of language. (Croucher, 2009, p. 305)

Research completed by Croucher (2009) and Yagmur (2004) in France, Germany, and Australia, respectively, are a start in the right direction.

The final contextual element I would like to mention is that of historical context. Traditional models do not recognize that “many social and environmental conditions or constraints exist that can largely determine the strategies available to individuals or groups” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 39). Some of these constraints may be the result of colonialism (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Hermans, 2001). Therefore, how can a theory purport: that the psychological processes are similar for individuals who migrate from Western European countries such as England or Germany and for individuals who migrate from previously colonized countries such as India and Kenya. Such an assumption can be seriously questioned on the basis of the consideration that these different groups originate from different historical backgrounds, a consideration that cannot be acknowledged by any model that starts from a universalist perspective. (Hermans, 2001, p. 270)

Other social conditions that can determine the strategies available to new immigrants include issues related to power, control, and discrimination. In both Berry and Kim’s models, there is an ontological assumption that the environment is not constraining, that individuals can choose how to adapt, and that they have considerable agency. Kim and Hubbard (2007) argue that intercultural theorists are reluctant to acknowledge power, but the reality is that “as outsiders, immigrants have less political power and influence and are frequently stigmatized in negative ways by the dominant

group” (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 50). In order to more accurately describe the adaptation experiences of immigrants, intercultural theorists must wrestle with the constraining factors that newcomers face.

In fact, as the aforementioned scholars point out, there are any number of factors, issues, and elements with which theorists must grapple when studying cultural adaptation. They call us to open our minds to the possibility of more pluralistic cultural identities, to the fact that immigrant-adaptation strategies can shift and change over time and contexts, and that adaptation is not solely the purview of the individual. Finally, cultural adaptation research must be extended so that it can recognize the multitude of contextual factors that are inevitably at play.

In reviewing the extensive communication literature written about cultural adaptation, three points in particular emerge that are important to my study; linked to each are avenues where my work might contribute. First, the assumption that adaptation happens through communication (Croucher, 2009; Kim, 2005, 2009) is foundational to my study. Where I might add to this is specific communicative elements and strategies that both immigrants and other community members are using in cultural adaptation and community building across difference. These areas have yet to be explored within communication.

Second, scholars have pointed out that the receiving society and its preferences for immigrant adaptation influences how immigrants can and do adapt (Berry, 2005; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Croucher, 2009; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Yagmur, 2004). By asking locals about immigrant adaptation, I can unearth their assumptions about how the process should happen, but also what communicative elements and strategies they feel

are both aiding and blocking that process. Collecting data from both immigrants and their fellow community members helps add the context that so many scholars (Croucher, 2009; Kim & Hubbard, 2007; Padilla & Perez, 2003) have argued is largely missing from much communication-adaptation research.

Finally, intercultural scholars often assume that North Americans are always “self-reliant, self-contained, or self-sufficient” (Kim & Hubbard, 2007, p. 227). However, North Americans living in rural communities known for strong ties and networks in particular are likely to respond to challenges and changes in ways that are as collectivistic and interdependent as they are individualistic and independent. By looking at cultural adaptation at both the individual and community levels, my study can counter the assumption that all North Americans are individualistic in all contexts and situations.

## **Community**

As Underwood and Frey (2007) suggest, “the study of communication and community is alive and well in the communication discipline” (p. 391). This section explores how community has been conceptualized, its presumed fundamental elements and influencing factors, how it might be built, and finally, the challenges to studying it.

**Conceptualizations of community.** Social scientists have studied community from a variety of angles: interpersonal, organizational, health, and intercultural for a start (Parker et al., 2001). Underwood and Frey (2007) suggest that the term *community* has been used profusely, and that “in part, the extensive use of this term reflects questions, issues, and concerns about the relationship between the individual and the collective grappled with by philosophers (especially Western philosophers) over the centuries” (p. 370). Perhaps it is the wrestling with this relationship that is partially to blame for the

multitude of definitions of community, definitions which encompass common geographic area, identity, experience, sentiment, and/or bond (Tracy, 2009).

In 2007, Underwood and Frey published an extensive review of how communication researchers have explored the concept of community. They found that communication research has focused on community from four different angles: as a physical site, as an emotional bond, as an influence, or as “meaning-making attributes” (p. 380), such as “common beliefs, values, attitudes, and identities” (p. 384).

Despite these different conceptualizations of community, however, one of the most common ways to discuss community is to explore the idea of *sense of community*. Some describe sense of community as one of several constructs that relate to communities (Parker et al., 2001), and others view it as an umbrella term that houses many distinct but interrelated concepts (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Assuming for the moment that the latter is more accurate, I begin by describing how sense of community has been defined and then move on to explore the various concepts and factors that have been linked to it.

**Sense of community.** “Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). This bond within communities means that individuals within the group wish only good fortune for the community, but should hard times come, the individual also feels the effects (Regis, 1989). We know from earlier research that a sense of community can have beneficial effects. For example, Parker and her colleagues (2001) found that there is a positive relationship between a person’s perception of his/her

health and their sense of community, and Glynn (1981) found that as a sense of community increases, so does one's belief in how successfully one could function within it (Parker et al., 2001).

We know, then, that a sense of community can be beneficial, but of what is it comprised, and how do these different elements function? McMillan and Chavis (1986) argue that sense of community has four parts: membership, influence, needs fulfillment, and emotional connection. I explore these four elements below and supplement that exploration with the addition of the concept of *social capital*.

**Membership.** Membership is “a feeling of belonging” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9) to the group. This membership has five features: “boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, and a common symbol system” (p. 10). Membership and its features make clear what the group has in common and where the community's boundaries are drawn (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In fact, “it is part of the definition of community that the collective commitment is somehow bounded...the critical question is whether the boundary has a welcome. Does it have a door, or is it an impenetrable wall?” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 375).

This is a particularly important question when considering the experiences that new immigrants face when moving to a new country. Recent research conducted in Canada found that 65% of immigrants feel a very strong sense of belonging in their new country with an additional 21% indicating a strong sense of belonging (Pearce, 2008); however, given that a great majority of immigrants live in urban areas in Canada, generalizing that experience to include immigrants in rural areas may be misleading. For example, although a Statistics Canada (2003) study found that almost double the number

of Canadians living in rural areas report a strong sense of belonging as compared to those in urban areas, a study that focused on the immigrant experience was unable to find any connection between the size of one's community and a sense of belonging (Pearce, 2008).

***Influence.*** A sense of belonging suggests a unidirectional emotional experience; however, the idea of *influence* embraces the idea that the individual influences the community just as the community influences the individual. McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggest that in a really close community, both of these forces will be happening simultaneously, and the more cohesive the community the more pressure on the individual to local community norms. This suggests that if immigrants move into a community with a particularly strong sense of community, they may feel more pressure to assimilate. However, according to this description of influence, the individual also has opportunity to influence the community through activities, such as getting politically involved and volunteering (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This leads to the idea of social capital, one of the most discussed components of community-related research.

***Social capital.*** The concept of social capital, which originated in the disciplines of sociology and political science, has spread into many academic disciplines. According to Putnam:

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—“social capital” refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. (Putnam, 1995, p. 67)

Social capital is meant to help explain “how citizens within certain communities cooperate with each other to overcome the dilemmas of collective action” (Lochner, Kawachi, & Kennedy, 1999, p. 259).

The concept of social capital has proved very helpful in solving such dilemmas; it has been credited with helping individuals have confidence in public institutions and participate more in social and political activities (Aizlewood & Pendakur, 2005). Communities with greater social capital also have stronger civic engagement, which can build “norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust (Putnam, 1995, p. 95). Putnam also suggests that these community networks “probably broaden the participants’ sense of self, developing the ‘I’ into the ‘we,’ or (in the language of rational-choice theorists) enhancing the participants’ ‘taste’ for collective benefits” (Putnam, 1995, p. 67).

However, in the mid 1990s, Putnam (1995) warned that the United States was experiencing huge drops in civic engagement. Voter turnout was down, fewer people were attending political rallies, fewer people trusted government, and perhaps “the most whimsical yet discomfoting bit of evidence of social disengagement” (Putnam, p. 70) was that bowling leagues had dramatically dropped in the previous decade, despite the fact that more Americans were bowling than ever before. The growing trend to be involved with a hobby or an organization that requires less social time worries sociologists such as Putnam (1995) because “members of associations are much more likely than non-members to participate in politics, to spend time with neighbors, to express social trust, and so on” (p. 73).

So why the dramatic drop in social capital? In his 1995 article, “Bowling Alone,” Putnam mused over whether it might be related to women entering the workforce in greater numbers (which might understandably reduce their opportunities to volunteer), whether a more mobile culture might lead to a less rooted way of life, and whether demographic or technological changes might be leading us to spend more time at home. However, in his later book by the same name, Putnam (2001) argues that his extensive research had found that cultural diversity was one of the greatest reasons for declines in societal trust. Putnam found, if only for the first generation, that communities with greater cultural diversity were characterized by neighbors spending less time together and by lower rates of civic engagement. These results led some scholars to wonder whether some cultural groups are less civically engaged than others or whether communities newly faced with cultural change might be reacting by changing their social behavior (Aizlewood & Pendakur, 2005).

Putnam’s (1995, 2001) findings have led some Canadian scholars to explore whether the same effect might be happening in Canada (Aizlewood & Pendakur, 2005; Pearce, 2008). In one of these articles, Aizlewood and Pendakur (2005) reported that their results were significantly different from Putnam’s. They found that an individual’s ethnocultural background did not affect their social capital significantly, and that visible minorities and immigrants trust government more than other Canadians. Particularly important to this study, however, was their finding that larger communities have less interpersonal trust than smaller communities, and that this results in urbanites joining organizations less and spending less time with friends. As a result, the authors wondered whether “in Canada, where community size, diversity, wealth, and education are so

closely and positively correlated, an urban lifestyle, or ‘city effect’ may be a more accurate predictor of civic attitudes and behaviours” (p. 3). That is, the size of the city, not its cultural diversity, may be to blame for lower levels of trust, social interaction, and civic engagement.

A second Canadian study explored particularized trust and generalized trust and what relationships they might have to an immigrant’s sense of belonging (Pearce, 2008). What emerged was that particularized trust (when a person trusts people within their own group, but does not necessarily extend that trust to the larger population) was positively linked to a sense of belonging to Canada. As the author explains, “the more immigrants feel their neighbours can be trusted, the greater their sense of belonging to Canada” (p. 26). Immediate trustful relationships and smaller communities, then, may aid stronger social capital and a sense of belonging (at least within the Canadian context).

***Fulfillment of needs.*** The fourth component of community is the “integration and fulfillment of needs” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Community members should feel like they are receiving benefits as part of community membership and believe that it helps, if only partially, fulfill them. Some of those needs might indeed be problems that require attending to; academics such as Parker et al. (2001) refer to the idea of community capacity as the ability of a community to both recognize and adequately respond to challenges. This defence in challenging situations may no doubt fulfill important community needs.

***Emotional connection.*** The fifth and final community element links nicely with the idea of needs fulfillment—the concept of emotional connection. McMillan and Chavis (1986) argue that community members should feel an emotional connection to

their communities. That connection may find its roots in a shared history, the intensity of shared events (such as disasters which might bring people together), how much time a person has invested in the community, and the quantity and quality of contact with others (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Interestingly, the small town often is painted as the place where one might develop these sorts of connections. Cities, we are sometimes told, are emotionally cold, fast-paced, and impersonal (George, 2008), but “in contrast, the small town is discursively situated as an ‘authentic’ lifestyle, located in a tranquil, clean environment where individuals may easily establish rewarding relationships in which they are ‘known’” (George, 2008, p. 828). The self-images of small and rural towns, then, often assume that the community is fulfilling community members’ needs, and that the inhabitants have an emotional connection to the place. This may or may not be the case as it relates to the immigrant experience.

So communities can be beneficial to those that live in them, but is sense of community inherent to a community’s existence, or is it something that must be created and fostered? In his article that explored communication within English-speaking Caribbean immigrant groups, Regis (1989) posited that:

All perspectives of the sense of community assume that there is a point at which it is not present, and that its development is fostered by connections between individuals and the group toward which they develop the sense of community, but different perspectives emphasize different connections as fostering the development of this sense of community. (p. 61)

***Other community elements.*** Many of the elements or “contributing connections” (Regis, 1989, p. 62) that help foster a sense of community have been referenced above, but let me take a moment now to add to that list. Some sociologists argue that shared public spaces are “crucial for building relationships and knowledge” (Pigg, 2001, p. 523), but much of the literature on community building (at least within communication circles) has focused on individual effort and psychological processes. Individuals, we are told, should make the effort to reach beyond their normal, and perhaps more comfortable, activities to welcome people new to their community (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010), help a neighbor with their tax return (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010), or visit a group that helps immigrants (Regis, 1989). Immigrants themselves, Regis (1989) reminds us, may develop networks between themselves because they depend “on the group for a sense of identity” (p. 61), or because they have the common experience of adjusting, of wanting to get ahead in the local society, or because locals may tend to lump them together as a group anyway.

**Challenges to conceptualizing community.** Building community is not simple or easy, but neither, it turns out, is trying to conceptualize it. Scholarship on community, in my opinion, is plagued with two seemingly contradictory issues. On the one hand, the term *community* is overused and over simplified. On the other hand, scholars have operationalized community and its presumed components in so many fashions that it becomes difficult to sort out all of the relevant characteristics of community. Underwood and Frey (2007) admit that the far-reaching use of the word *community* has turned it into what Hayakawa (1949) called a *purr word*—a “word that sounds nice (like a cat purring) and conveys pleasant connotative thoughts but is a word that has virtually lost its

substantive denotative meaning because of the many different conceptions that people have of it” (p. 371). One of those conceptual differences, it appears to me, is the false equation of sense of community to community. Denotatively speaking, a *sense of community* refers to a feeling or perhaps an atmosphere, whereas *community* should refer to an entity (how geographically ethereal or specific it might be).

Perhaps another casualty of the purr-word phenomenon is the assumption that a sense of community is always a positive thing. As McMillan and Chavis (1986) admit, a “sense of community is a powerful force” (p. 20), but this force may not always be used for good. They point out that it may lead to the creation of entities such as gated communities and organizations like the KKK. Putnam (1995) points out that as much as the small town life of the 1950s may have had stronger social capital, “recent decades have witnessed a substantial decline in intolerance and probably also in overt discrimination, and those beneficent trends may be related in complex ways to the erosion of traditional social capital” (p. 76).

As I mentioned earlier, however, the concept of community has been simultaneously made complex by some as it has been oversimplified by others. Quantitative scholars in particular have been trying to find an accurate way to operationalize community and its elements. What seems to have resulted, however, is confusion on which elements are pertinent, contention over which measures to use (Chavis & Pretty, 1999), and an overlap in some measures of social capital and community (Lochner et al., 1999). For example, some studies suggest that collective efficacy, sense of community, neighborhood cohesion, and community competence are all part of social capital (Lochner et al., 1999), where others refer primarily to trust and

engagement (Putnam, 1995). Still others name participation, trust, and interaction as the key social capital elements (Aizlewood & Pendakur, 2005).

In an effort to parse out the various theoretical elements of “community social dynamics” (Parker et al., 2001, p. 463) Parker et al. conducted a study that found that “the constructs of sense of community, perceived neighborhood control, neighborhood social interaction, neighbors intervening, and neighborhood participation are distinctive and are measuring discrete aspects of individuals’ perceptions of their community and its environment” (p. 479). However, the authors admit that one of the limitations of their study was that their sample was not diverse. Ninety-seven percent of respondents were African American women of lower socio-economic status living in one American city; therefore, generalizing their results to a greater population may not be advisable. In concluding their article, the authors took the issue further still by admitting that some “researchers question whether standardized measures can capture accurately the unique manifestation of community social dynamics in all communities given cultural and ethnic differences” (p. 482).

However we choose to study it, communication research into community shows no sign of slowing down. Luckily for community-focused scholars, “sense of community is not a static feeling” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 19). It is influenced by changes in government policy, employment, environmental shifts, not to mention demographic changes such as immigration. Cultural changes in community composition offer fascinating opportunities for us to learn how locals respond to these shifts, if it affects their sense of community and how they engage with that community and its new membership.

Having reviewed scholars' extensive research on community, for the purposes of this research, I define *community* as a group of people who live in the same geographic area, but with the assumption that this group is not wholly effective as a community unless a sense of community—or a caring and connection for and between fellow community members—is present. Three key ideas emerge from the aforementioned literature that are particularly pertinent to my study of community: membership, fulfillment of needs, and the discursive construction of small towns. We know that sense of community has beneficial effects (Parker et al., 2001), but can community membership exist to the exclusion of others? Community membership, by its very definition, has boundaries and scholars such as Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) rightly question whether those boundaries have openings. By studying community building through the eyes of locals and immigrants, my study seeks to understand the relational and communicative dynamics that are at play when the addition of new community members threatens to stretch or alter community boundaries.

Also key to a sense of community is a community's ability to fulfill the needs of its citizens. Since humans are relational beings, presumably one of the ways a community might fulfill people's needs is by providing appropriate social networks. We know, however, that many immigrants to Newfoundland leave because they lack these social networks (Vardy et al., 2008). This study explores the ideas of community building from the perspective of two key groups and seeks to understand what communication strategies have both helped and hindered building such social networks.

Finally, while working on this study, I kept in mind George's (2008) points regarding the discursive construction of the small town as friendly and pure. This

construction is one that is employed extensively in regional tourism campaigns (George, 2008) and appears to have become integral to how rural Newfoundland communities in particular see themselves. The belief that Newfoundlanders are friendly and welcoming has deep roots in the province's identity, and my study explores these beliefs as they relate to immigration, giving voice to the experience of locals and newcomers alike. Since this study is situated in a specific geographic area, the next chapter will introduce Newfoundland and, more specifically, the context of its rural communities.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THE SITE - NEWFOUNDLAND**

This study of immigrant cultural adaptation in rural communities is embedded in a context that is unique. In the following pages, I give a short overview of Newfoundland history, describe a few of the key elements of its dominant culture, explore the region's feeling of marginalization within Canada, explain the history of out-migration, illustrate the strong sense of place and ingroup identity that marks Newfoundlanders, and finally, end with a brief exploration into the history and prospects for immigration to the province.

### **A Short History**

The island of Newfoundland was colonized by the British in the 1600s and became an independent British territory (Pocius, 2000). A couple of hundred years later, in 1832, Newfoundland achieved self-government. Newfoundlanders to this day are very proud that the province was once its own country (the only province in Canada that can boast that). However, this government was short lived. Just over a hundred years after Newfoundland became its own country, the colony was bankrupt, and Britain took over both the finances and the governance of Newfoundland once again (Pocius, 2000; Webb, 2004). Half of the members of this new Commission of Government were British, and Newfoundland fell "back to colonial status dependent upon London" (MacLeod, 1994, p. 21).

Except for a very small elite group in the capital city of St. John's, Newfoundlanders lived in poverty and faced great hardships in the centuries before it joined Canada. The colony's economy was almost solely based on the fishery, and it was a cashless mercantile system. Poor fishermen "sold" their fish to rich merchants who

gave them credit toward food and fishing gear (Bassler, 1992); it was a life not unlike the lot of indentured servants.

So, in 1948, Newfoundland voted to join Canada by a very slim majority of just 52% (MacLeod, 1994). The common explanation for this turn towards confederation was the welfare support that Canada could offer (family allowances, unemployment insurance, etc.) (MacLeod, 1994). These services were “the final ingredient or attraction that was apparently essential to make the idea of union palatable enough to be sold to a bare majority in Newfoundland” (MacLeod, 1994, p. 26). The fact that the province joined Canada just over 60 years ago means that many Newfoundlanders were born just that—Newfoundlanders and not Canadians. This is an important factor to keep in mind when exploring the province’s unique culture and strong identity.

### **Newfoundland Culture**

Summarizing any culture in a few pages is difficult, but I hope to highlight a couple of important aspects: Newfoundland’s traditional way of life, unique dialects, and the urban/rural split. One of the hallmarks of Newfoundland culture is the fact that it has strong ties to more traditional ways of life. One reason for this might be the province’s reliance on primary industries. As was mentioned earlier, the fishery was the province’s major industry for the majority of its history, but mining and forestry also are important (MacLeod, 1994). In their time off, traditionally Newfoundlanders have spent their time either in the outdoors (berry picking, hunting, riding snowmobiles) or indoors, making their own entertainment by telling stories, playing fiddles and accordions, and dancing traditional dances that originated in England and Ireland. Many of these traditions live on today. As ethnographer Gerald Pocius (2000) points out, “even today, many

Newfoundland communities seem to have those characteristics often considered typical of traditional cultures: they are usually based on kinship ties, free access to resources, little social differentiation and specialization, and high degree of social equality” (p. 15).

Another essential element to Newfoundland culture is its unique language and dialect (Best, 2007; King & Clarke, 2002; King & Wicks, 2009). The majority of the European settlers to Newfoundland were from southeastern Ireland and West Country England (King & Clarke, 2002; Widdowson, 1968), and for most of the province’s history it has been relatively isolated both geographically and culturally, which academics have identified as the main reason so many unique dialects remain today (Evans, 1930; Strong, 1931). Linguists that visited the province in the early 20th century were struck by the local dialects of both Labrador and the island of Newfoundland. One argued that “the particular idiom of the Newfoundland fishermen and seal hunters is even richer and less understandable to the outsider than that used in Labrador” (Strong, 1931, p. 290). So much of that dialect lived on to the end of that century that a very extensive *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* was published in 1999 (Story, Kirwin, & Widdowson, 1999).

Unfortunately, the province’s accents and dialects often have been ridiculed by other Canadians (King & Wicks, 2009) and stereotyped as “associated with laziness and stupidity” (King & Clarke, 2002, p. 538). Despite, or perhaps partially because of, this ridicule Newfoundlanders often express pride in their accents (King & Wicks, 2009) and engage it to express their Newfoundland patriotism (Hiller & Franz, 2004) and authenticity as “real” Newfoundlanders (Hiller & Franz, 2004; King & Wicks, 2009).

Two terms in Newfoundland English that are particularly important to this study are *baymen* and *townies*. Traditionally, a *baymen* referred to a person who grew up in the small fishing communities locally called outports (Hiller & Franz, 2004); however, now it has been extended to include all Newfoundlanders who grew up in smaller towns. Townies are people who grew up in the capital city of St. John's (King & Wicks, 2009). There is sometimes tension between townies and baymen (Best, 2007), and it is reflected in the connotations of both terms. Townies, it is assumed, are snobby and do not know (or maybe do not care) about rural Newfoundland. The stereotype of a baymen is someone who is old fashioned, coarse, and lacks refinement.

Despite this tension between those from St. John's and those from smaller communities, rural Newfoundland remains an important part of the province's identity. Most Newfoundlanders can trace their families back to one of the thousands of rural communities around the province, and "belonging" to someplace rural is important. The importance and appeal of rural Newfoundland been reified by the province's tourism campaigns that present "a romantic picture of an isolated, traditional culture...a coastal view with, in the foreground, rickety, old clotheslines lined with handmade quilts, being hung by an elderly, smiling woman" (King & Wicks, 2009, p. 276). These ads market the province as "a place lost in time, some place 'different' where life is somehow more 'real'" (King & Wicks, 2009, p. 277; see also George, 2008 for a discussion of authenticity and rural life in tourism campaigns). George (2008) pointed out, however, that:

The "small town" notion instilled by tourism actively provides a sense of identity only for those individuals who fit in with the essentialist understandings of

supposedly “naturally occurring categories,” legitimizing the preservation of their architecture, linguistic style and monuments to victory. (Dann 1996, p. 835)

Although George (2008) is referring in her article to tourism campaigns from the other Atlantic Canadian provinces, this hyper focus on European ancestry is prolific in Newfoundland’s approach to tourism as well. This focus on European roots is “surprisingly, even situated within an era that claims to recognize and value a plurality of cultures,” but the approach “exclude[s] many ethnicities” (George, 2008, p. 835).

Despite efforts to increase revenues to rural areas through such tourism campaigns, the sad reality, however, is that rural Newfoundland is in crisis. In 1992, the federal government announced the cod moratorium, which put a halt to a fishery that had been a mainstay of the province’s economy (King & Clarke, 2002; Pocius, 2000). Since then, there has been a “drastic reduction in reliance on water resources as the main source of livelihood” (Pocius, 2000, p. xi), and huge numbers of rural Newfoundlanders have left the province to find employment (King & Clarke, 2002). There has been a turn toward tourism (Pocius, 2000), oil, and gas (King & Wicks, 2009) as employers of local inhabitants. However, the effects are mostly felt in the capital city and in surrounding communities (King & Wicks, 2009). Rural Newfoundland is still hurting, and its survival has become a “sacred cow” (Marland & Kerby, 2010). In their study of talk radio in the province, Marland and Kerby (2010) speculated that “once off-air, callers or a guest may regard ‘sacred cows’ such as the fishery or rural Newfoundland as dying, but publicly accepting this as a consequence of rational market behaviour would invite public rebuke” (p. 1010). Immigration, then, if framed as a way to save rural Newfoundland, may be more likely to receive public support.

## Perceived Marginalization

A more traditional way of life, unique dialects, and the urban/rural split are all elements of the province's dominant culture. Generally speaking, however, "Newfoundland culture often is thought to be geographically and economically marginal" (Pocius, 2000, p. 11), and "there is a clear sense of isolation from the Canadian mainstream" (King & Clarke, 2002, p. 538). Newfoundlanders' sense of distance from the rest of Canada and a feeling being marginal is only strengthened by the belief of some Canadians that Newfoundlanders are burdens on the country, a belief that was reiterated by a former premier of Alberta when he called Newfoundlanders "welfare bums" during his time as the mayor of Calgary (King & Clarke, 2002).

Another element that adds to the feeling of marginalization for many is the prevalence and popularity of *Newfie* jokes. *Newfie*—which at its most basic is a nickname for Newfoundlanders—is a term that was first used by foreign military personnel stationed in Newfoundland in the 1930s and 40s (King & Clarke, 2002). King and Clarke (2002) point out that "as an outgroup-invented rather than self-generated ethnic label, *Newfie* seems to have been resented from its inception by a not inconsiderable segment of the Newfoundland population" (p. 540).

Unfortunately, after the province joined Canada in 1949, *Newfie* jokes began to emerge. These jokes paint Newfoundlanders as stupid, naive, inept, but constantly happy (King & Clarke, 2002). The jokes are extremely prevalent and wide-spread even today—as are souvenirs that play on the same theme. For example, in St. John's, one can buy a "Newfie rolling pin" that is square and unable to roll (King & Clarke, 2002), and a comedian on the show *Ellen* in 1997 said "it's true. Those Newfies are stupid" (King &

Clarke, 2002, p. 542). Unfortunately, the term has even been translated into Canadian French, where the term has been expanded to include all people who might act stupidly (King & Clarke, 2002).

Despite all this, however, the term *Newfie* continues to be contested by those from the province (Hiller & Franz, 2004; King & Clarke, 2002). Studies have found that Newfoundlanders' attitudes toward the term can be divided into three distinct groups—those who are proud to be called *Newfie*, those who say it depends on who is saying it and the context, and those who feel it is an ethnic slur (Hiller & Franz, 2004; King & Clarke, 2002). Interestingly, it seems that the “staunchest defenders of *Newfie* are expatriates” (King & Clarke, 2002, p. 548). King and Clarke (2002) suggest that:

Declaring that a slur is actually harmless, and a term of endearment at that, may be viewed as a survival strategy, not only in Newfoundland but also in the minority context in which working-class Newfoundland expatriates find themselves in mainland Canada. (King & Clarke, 2002, p. 551)

And these expatriates are plentiful. Because of poor economic conditions, Newfoundlanders have been migrating to other parts of North America since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (MacLeod, 1994), and the cod moratorium in the 1990s only worsened matters. In the next section, I talk briefly about migration out of the province and how a sense of belonging has survived in spite of or perhaps because of out migration.

### **Out-Migration**

The migration of Newfoundlanders to work in other parts of Canada is not new. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that it was happening as early as the 1880s; by 1930-31, the censuses of Canada and the United States showed that about 18% of the

population of the region was living in those two countries (MacLeod, 1994). In the last couple of decades, out migration was fueled by the cod moratorium, and thousands of Newfoundlanders left to seek work in the oil and gas sector of Alberta (King & Wicks, 2009). King and Wicks (2009) note that “the pattern of outmigration has become so intense that the province lost 10 percent of its population between 1991 and 2001” (King & Wicks, 2009, p. 265). Others still keep their houses and families in the province and commute across the country every several weeks (King & Wicks, 2009).

Regardless of where they are in the world, Newfoundlanders are known to be quite tied to home (Hiller & Franz, 2004). Hiller and Franz (2004) studied how this strong sense of place and identity was enacted in computer-mediated communication. They found that those who recently had migrated, in particular, had a “backward gaze” (p. 740) and used online forums both to keep in touch with home, but also to build a new support system with fellow Newfoundlanders living in other parts of Canada.

The authors found that Newfoundlanders on these sites used several different strategies to express their common culture. For example, visitors to the site used a system of identity verification to be able to “place” each other. The authors found that this verification was “accomplished through a series of questions eliciting information that a person would know only if they had come from Newfoundland and its specific communities” (Hiller & Franz, 2004, p. 744). These questions probed things such as who their parents are and other people they might know in common. People also used local dialect and references to traditional food to express their common identity, their authenticity as Newfoundlanders, and their pride of being from the province (Hiller & Franz, 2004).

So, despite a long history of migration, Newfoundland identity remains strong (Hiller & Franz, 2004). In the proceeding pages I explore this strong identity and sense of place and how this ingroup sensibility may work to the detriment of newcomer inclusion.

### **One of the Family: Strong Ties and In-group Sensibility**

As was noted earlier, Newfoundlanders have a very strong identity (Hiller & Franz, 2004; King & Clarke, 2002)—one strongly linked to place (Pocius, 2000). Not so long ago, most Newfoundlanders “lived in a community where every special detail was known and shared” (Pocius, 2000, p. 18). Even today, Newfoundlanders will establish their authenticity and authority by sharing the details of their kinship, birthplace, and knowledge of local geography (Hiller & Franz, 2004; King & Wicks, 2009). Once that link is made you are part of an international network of people who look out for each other. As one Newfoundlander put it in an online forum:

When you are of Newfoundland descent, you are born into a very large geographical family that goes from one end of the island to the other. You never have to worry about meeting a stranger or of being alone. You only have to say you are from Newfoundland and you will immediately be contacted by Newfies everywhere to ask how they can help you and will be treated as one of the family because in the eyes of the true Newfoundlander, we are all family no matter where we may roam. Newfoundlanders never think of people as strangers, but as friends they haven't met. It is a great feeling to know that you are never alone and that there's a whole island and world of Newfs out there waiting to talk to you a total stranger as if you were family. It's hard to explain because it's a feeling and people just react to the feeling. (Hiller & Franz, 2004, p. 748)

As expressed in the above quote, that feeling is very important to Newfoundlanders, but could that same feeling that pulls Newfoundlanders together around the globe also be to the detriment of inclusion of newcomers within the province? Is it true that “a *close society* cannot help being a *closed society*” (Baldacchino, 2006, p. 53)? Recent research into perceived cultural barriers between immigrants and native-born Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and popular local terms suggest that Newfoundland and Labrador’s close society, if not closed, is at least somewhat resistant to including and/or understanding the perspectives and efforts of people from outside the province.

A survey I conducted in the spring of 2010 asked if respondents believed that major cultural barriers exist between Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and immigrants (Anderson, 2010). Thirty-nine percent said that it depends on where the immigrant is from, which is consistent with previous research in the Canadian context (Jerabek & de Man, 1994; Kalin & Berry, 1996). Kalin and Berry (1996), for example, found that British immigrants were the most accepted in Canada and Sikhs the least. In my study, 32 percent reported that there are no cultural barriers, and 29% said that there are (Anderson, 2010). When asked what those barriers are, almost a quarter reiterated that they do not believe the barriers exist, but 30.6% said norms and values, 29.4% said language is the number one barrier, and 11.8% answered “other” (Anderson, 2010). When prompted, this final group suggested barriers such as racism, prejudice, bigotry, distrust, fear, and Newfoundlanders’ and Labradorians’ limited exposure to other cultures (Anderson, 2010).

Popular terms such as *Come-From-Away* (CFA) and *mainlander* also suggest a distance between those born in the province and those who are not. As mentioned earlier,

CFA (and/or mainlander) is a person who is not from Newfoundland and Labrador (Bassler, 1992; Gilad, 1990; King & Wicks, 2009), and the connotation is that CFAs cannot understand what it is to be a Newfoundlander and/or what the province wants or needs. CFA is frequently the “them” when compared with the “us”—a term used sometimes in humor and sometimes in anger. In their respective books on immigrants and refugees in the province, Bassler (1992) and Gilad (1990) argue that immigrants are the ultimate CFAs, and that they “will never be considered to be ‘from Newfoundland’” (Gilad, 1990, p. 167); they are assumed to be “incapable of identifying with their country or province of adoption” (Bassler, 1992, p. xii).

Another study by Marland and Kerby (2010) suggests that some Newfoundlanders question the loyalty of CFAs living in the province. They studied the province’s talk-radio culture and found that callers to the radio station “are quick to dismiss someone who blames the province for their troubles as ‘not being a Newfoundlander’”(p. 1010). Callers’ reactions suggest two things: that the opinions of CFAs are less legitimate than those of Newfoundlanders, and that a “real Newfoundlander” would not blame the province for any of its woes.

Newfoundland’s strong community networks may be hesitant to include or trust the perspectives of Canadians from outside the province, but has that been the case for immigrants? In the next section, I briefly overview the province’s history with immigration, where immigration and domestic diversity stands in the province, and describe the settlement services that are available to assist immigrants who move to rural areas.

## **Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador**

Much of Newfoundland and Labrador's history of immigration policy is one of exclusion. It was influenced by the neighboring policies of Canada and the United States and was supported by the province's leading elite (Bassler, 1992). Immigration to the region was so exclusive, in fact, that some suggest it was almost impossible for anyone of non-British stock to immigrate to the area (Gilad, 1990).

However, some non-British immigrants did get in and, although few in number, some early immigrants hailed from countries such as Syria, Libya, and China (Bassler, 1992; Gilad, 1990). The early Chinese immigrants to Newfoundland found their economic niche by opening laundries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but they were affected by many restrictions (Sparrow, 2010): only men were able to become residents (of which there was only one exception before confederation with Canada<sup>5</sup>) (Bassler, 1992; Gilad, 1990; Sparrow, 2010); a maximum of 250 Chinese nationals that could live in the area at one time (Bassler, 1992); and from 1906 to 1949, a \$300 head tax was imposed on any Chinese migrant wanting to enter the province (Bassler, 1992; Sparrow, 2010). Jews trying to escape Nazi Germany also were negatively affected by exclusionary policies, and in the 1930s, despite urges by the local Jewish community, a number of refugees were refused entry (Bassler, 1992; Gilad, 1990).

Interestingly, Bassler (1992) suggests that "the outports did not seem to share the urban prejudices against refugees, but rather, in some instances, even welcomed the services and employment opportunities refugees would have provided" (1992, p. 227). He argues that it was the colonial elite who so adamantly opposed immigration, because

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<sup>5</sup> Au Kim Lee arrived in 1899, and he became a naturalized citizen in 1905. He was permitted to bring his wife to Newfoundland in 1927, but she returned to China after becoming pregnant (Sparrow, 2010).

they feared it would lead to change and “an erosion of its foundations of power” (p. 54). People living in more rural areas were as suspicious of the St. John’s elite as they were any outsiders (Bassler, 1992).

When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949, it adopted Canadian immigration policies and so was affected by the huge overhaul of immigration policies in the late 60s and early 70s. The new immigration system was (and still is) based on points that reflect an applicant’s level of skill, language ability, age, and education (Bloemraad, 2006), but “quotas and ethnicity were abolished from the application process” (Sparrow, 2010, p. 344). As well, in 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau announced a new policy of multiculturalism that stated that all Canadians were encouraged to keep their original culture as well as explore “native” Canadian culture, and this policy was to be fostered by the federal government. As the Prime Minister explained “we are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively” (Trudeau in Bloemraad, 2006, p. 123).

Immigration issues as they relate to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador have changed considerably since the early days. Now, 46% of the province’s physicians are foreign-born (Office of Multiculturalism and Immigration, 2007), and the provincial government is actively recruiting immigrants to move to the province, particularly to those more rural areas outside the greater St. John’s area (Everts, 2008). The next section pursues what immigrants report on the perceived benefits and drawbacks of living in these rural areas.

**Immigrant life in rural Newfoundland.** Recent research suggests that immigrants appreciate the safety, security, and low crime rate of Newfoundland’s small

towns (Everts, 2008). Many immigrants feel that they have a good quality of life, and that the clean and expansive outdoors provide lots of fun activities and room to breathe (Everts, 2008). Others report that they find the local people friendly, and that they found welcoming communities in their workplaces and churches (Everts, 2008).

Several negative attributes of these same rural communities, however, may temper the positive. Immigrants have worries about employment; have difficulty obtaining the all-important landed immigrant status; and can feel geographically, culturally, and socially isolated (Everts, 2008). Each of these concerns emerged from a study conducted by Lee Everts (2008) for the Association for New Canadians (the only immigrant settlement organization in the province), which looked into the experience of immigrants in rural areas.

Immigrants interviewed in this study reported that they had a difficult time getting their credentials recognized, and as a result, some had to leave their smaller communities to move to the capital city (Everts, 2008). Even foreign-trained doctors in smaller communities felt they had a lack of employment security and argued that their Canadian counterparts had more opportunities for training and therefore for advancement (Everts, 2008). Immigrants are also aware that salaries are much higher in mainland Canada (Gilad, 1990), which can be a major point against the province. Although not related specifically to life in rural Canada, many immigrants expressed a frustration with getting their landed immigrant status (Everts, 2008)—a fact that could easily influence their appreciation of everyday life.

Then there is the issue of isolation. To get off the island, one must either take a long and expensive ferry or fly, and the costs are very prohibitive. Even traveling from

one larger center to another within the province by air can cost hundreds of dollars.

Several immigrants whom Everts (2008) interviewed referred to how these extra costs are a problem.

Also difficult is the cultural and social isolation that immigrants can experience. This can range from a seemingly minor issue (a lack of availability of particular foods) to the major (difficulty in integrating into the local community) (Everts, 2008). Unlike more urban areas of Canada, in rural Newfoundland there are not enough immigrants to have enclaves of specific groups, so many immigrants feel isolated from their own ethnic communities (Everts, 2008). This isolation can pull immigrants to the “mainland” where they have greater access to people from their ethnic communities (Everts, 2008; Gilad, 1990; Vardy et al., 2008). A dissatisfaction with social networks, in fact, is the second most reason why immigrants leave Newfoundland (Vardy et al., 2008).

Dissatisfaction with social networks also might be influenced by the marked differences between immigrants and locals. One of the most obvious differences is that of race. Immigrants to the province since the 1990s are primarily from China and India, which suggests that they are visible minorities. Newfoundland and Labrador, however, has the lowest rate of visible minorities of any province in Canada at a rate of approximately 1.1% as compared to the 16% national average (Statistics Canada, 2009b). As a result, white Newfoundlanders have little exposure to other races and cultures. Immigrants in the province have higher levels of formal education, make more money, and experience less unemployment (Murphy & de Finney, 2008a), which also sets them apart from Newfoundlanders:

Newfoundlanders thus meet people of colour at the upper rungs of the class structure—one would be hard-pressed to find a Pakistani window washer in St. John's. Under such conditions, racist assumptions on the basis of intellectual inferiority may be difficult to come by. (Gilad, 1990, p. 168)

Even if that were the case this socioeconomic gap might increase the isolation immigrants feel as locals might question whether they have enough in common to be close friends or colleagues.

**Building welcoming communities.** Two major ways that the provincial and federal governments seek to increase the satisfaction, and therefore retention, of new immigrants to the province is through offering settlement services and fostering the creation of a more welcoming atmosphere. In Canada, it is the purview of both major levels of government to assist immigrants in their adaptation and integration in their new home (Bloemraad, 2006). Funded by both the province and the federal government, the Association for New Canadians (ANC) is the only settlement organization in the province; it offers free services to immigrants, such as meeting families at the airport, finding them temporary accommodation, giving career advice and employment assistance, and linking immigrants to native-born Canadians through friendship programs.

As it currently stands, however, the ANC only has offices in St. John's, and the services they currently offer newcomers outside of the capital city, although very important, are few and are primarily conducted via distance. As their executive director points out, "if immigration is to help address the rural question, then we must expand services throughout the province" (Foster, 2008, p. 71). The provincial government,

however, is working with municipalities “to ensure a ‘welcoming’ society for immigrants” (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007, p. 3). They point out, however, that being welcoming

goes beyond being friendly or hospitable. It means welcoming immigrants into our communities, our workplaces, our homes, and our lives. This will involve awareness building throughout the province of the contributions immigrants make and the value of a more diverse society. (Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, 2007, p. 3)

By exploring the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland, as well as their surrounding communities, this project is well positioned to contribute at a time very important to the province’s economy and culture.

## CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

Embedded in the context that is rural Newfoundland, this study used qualitative methods to explore the cultural adaptation experiences of immigrants and the cultural changes their communities are facing. In this chapter, I outline my methods, describe my participants and sampling, discuss issues that affected the study, lay out the data-collection process and the role of the researcher, and, finally, describe the method of data analysis used. As noted in the introduction chapter, the research questions that guided this study are:

RQ1: What dimensions characterize the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland?

RQ2: What communicative approaches have helped and hindered immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference?

RQ3: What changes have rural communities experienced due to the arrival of immigrants?

The purpose of this study was to learn about the cultural adaptation experiences of immigrants to rural Newfoundland and what, if any, changes the communities themselves had made. I was particularly interested in learning what role communication has played in these change processes.

### **Justification of Methods**

I chose a qualitative approach because it aligns with my standpoint as a researcher and meets the needs of my study. First, I believe that reality is largely constructed by individuals, and qualitative research allowed me to explore different realities (my interpretations as the researcher, but also participant realities) (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Second, epistemologically speaking, the researcher and researched are related (Creswell, 1998; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), and objectivity is not attainable, or in some cases, desired (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Instead, it is important to be honest about how my experience, values, and identity might have influenced the process (Mason, 2002). Finally, I approached this study through inductive methods in order to explore how the immigrants and other community members experienced and constructed their social worlds through communication. I was interested in exploring situated, contextually rich understanding and meaning making; as such, generalization was not one of my goals. A qualitative approach, then, was appropriate for this study for all of these reasons.

As mentioned earlier, my purpose in this study was to better understand the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural areas, their communities, and the communicative strategies and elements that are at work. A qualitative approach was appropriate to answering these sorts of questions for two primary reasons. First, qualitative methods allowed me to use talk as the “raw material of analysis” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 18), helping me to get at, among other things, those communicative approaches that were core to one of my research questions. Second, my research questions asked how communication may be helping or hindering immigrant adaptation and community building. This question could have been difficult for participants to answer: “Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 24). An important part of my role as a qualitative scholar was to get beneath or between the stories and accounts that participants shared in order to better understand what is actually at work.

Different methods offer different kinds of data. In the case of this study, interviews and focus groups were used. Interviews can reveal participants' personal perspectives and experiences, they can elicit stories, they can allow people to share things they might not want to in a group, and they offer the researcher an opportunity to learn local terms and language forms (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Interviewing was also in harmony with my ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions; I believe that through interviews, we have the opportunity to access people's socially constructed realities. As I mentioned earlier, I prefer to do my research inductively, looking for categories and themes to emerge from the data (Creswell, 1998), and interviews allowed for that process. Interviews were appropriate for my study, as well, because in small towns, participants may be uncomfortable in sharing difficult or divergent opinions in front of a group. A one-on-one interview allowed them the privacy and confidentiality they may have needed to open up.

Interviews offer a depth and wholeness of understanding; however, focus groups offer a different kind of social interaction and a method that complements interviews (Mason, 2002). As a process that brings together small groups of people to discuss a common topic, focus groups are particularly important when the researcher wants to explore the interaction itself or the results of group dynamics (Creswell, 1998; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). For example, one might want to see if there is consensus or disagreement on a topic, story, or worldview (Creswell, 1998; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In addition, Krueger and Casey (2000) and Lindlof and Taylor (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) point out that the dynamics in the group environment can lead to data that might not otherwise

emerge. Finally, utilizing focus groups can be useful when time is at a premium (Creswell, 1998).

Focus groups were an important component of my study for two reasons. First, discussing matters that reflect the whole community required a larger sample of the community to generate meaningful data. Within that sample, I felt it was important to seek representation from “ordinary” Newfoundlanders but also those from many sectors: education, municipal government, health, religious organizations. Diverse groups were able to brainstorm and generate responses that were both similar to and unique from those that emerged from individual interviews. Secondly, focus groups were an opportunity to confirm, complicate, or disregard themes that emerged from the interviews and/or my interpretation of that data.

Finally, interviews and focus groups were fitting for my research questions because in addition to asking people to share their stories and experiences, I also sought to understand how communication is functioning to help and hinder two different change processes: cultural adaptation and community building. In order to understand communication’s role in these processes, I needed to document it—for lack of a better word—in action.

### **Description and Selection of Participants**

In planning who and how many individuals I would speak to, I made conscious and strategic decisions in line with my research questions. In this section, I describe my participants, my sampling strategy, and what protective measures I employed to ensure that my research was ethical and minimized potential harm to participants.

**Participants.** The interviews and focus groups represented a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds. I conducted eight interviews with immigrants and nine<sup>6</sup> interviews with native-born Newfoundlanders. Following advice from Mason (2002), I utilized a system of quotas or targets in order to make my intentions tangible. Of these eight interviews, I reached the following quotas: a minimum of three who immigrated directly to the province, a minimum of three women, at least two who have families in the province, at least three who are not in the health-care field, a minimum of four visible minorities, a minimum of three people who have been in the country less than five years, and four people who do not live on the Avalon Peninsula (which is the region closest to the capital city). I set up specific dates in my calendar in order to periodically assess whether my quotas had been fulfilled (Mason, 2002). For the interviews with locals, my quotas were: a minimum of two men; a minimum of three people who have not lived outside of the province for any substantial length of time; and at least four people who do not work for the municipal, provincial, or federal governments.

My quota choices were based on several factors. The immigrant quotas allowed me to hear from those who have larger local support systems and those who did not and possibly those who had differing degrees of commitment and investment in the province (time in province, job and family in province). In regards to the “locals,” it was important to talk to those have not lived outside of the province for any length of time because their experiences reflects many of the people of the province and may reflect a unique sense of identity and place. Further, I wanted to avoid interviewing all government officials as I worried that, even in an unofficial capacity, they may have felt the need to be politically

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<sup>6</sup>Although I conducted nine local interviews, I had 10 local interview participants as Mercedes spontaneously joined an interview with Sasha.

correct and to “tow the party line” regarding immigration, rather than giving me their frank opinion on how things are going.

In line with Krueger and Casey’s (2000) recommendation that researchers have three or four focus groups per type of group, I organized three groups each of immigrants and native-born individuals (six focus groups in total). It was important to keep these groups separate: I wanted immigrants to feel comfortable sharing both their positive and negative experiences of adaptation to life in rural Newfoundland. With “locals” present, immigrant participants might have worried that they would be offending or insulting people and might therefore resist sharing important feelings and information. Similarly, native-born locals might not have wanted to share their frustrations or confusion about immigrant adaptation in their communities if newcomers were present.

The quota system for my focus groups largely followed the categories already established for my interviews. I had a total of 16 immigrant participants.<sup>7</sup> Of those, a minimum of three immigrated directly to the province, a minimum of five were women, at least five had families in the province, seven or more were not in the health care field, a minimum of seven were visible minorities, a minimum of five had been in the province for less than five years, and at least half (eight) do not live on the Avalon Peninsula. Of the 21 locals, a minimum of five were men, a minimum of five have not lived outside the province for any lengthy period of time, and five people did not work for the municipal, provincial, or federal governments. Full lists of all those that participated in the study are included as Tables 1 and 2.

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<sup>7</sup> Two of the focus group participants had earlier been interviewees. They were integral to bringing their respective focus groups together and so they attended them, but they let the other focus group participants take the lead in discussion.

Although I had this sampling strategy, also important was that throughout the process, I occasionally asked myself if I had enough data. In fact, Mason (2002) suggests that a researcher specify times on the calendar when one will ask the all-important questions: Am I still surprised by what I am learning? Am I really confident in what I have collected? Have I reached the point of saturation? This was a technique that I utilized.

Table 1: Immigrant Participant Descriptives

Participant ID <sup>8</sup>	Sex	Time in Canada <sup>9</sup>
Ahmed	Male	< 3 years
Alejandro	Male	10 - 29 years
Amor	Female	< 3 years
Ana Maria	Female	< 3 years
Douglas	Male	< 3 years
Feeroz	Male	4 - 9 years
Francine	Female	10 - 29 years
Frank	Male	30+ years
Juanita	Female	10 - 29 years
Lorne	Male	< 3 years
Manjeet	Male	< 3 years
Mercy	Female	30+ years
Miles	Male	< 3 years
Nagesh	Male	< 3 years
Peggy	Female	10 - 29 years
Raju	Male	< 3 years
Ram	Male	< 3 years
René	Male	30+ years
Rosanna	Female	4 - 9 years
Sam	Male	4 - 9 years
Yuen-Mei	Female	30+ years

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<sup>8</sup>There was one immigrant focus-group participant who did not speak; therefore, she was not given a pseudonym and is not included on this table. She has been in the country between 4-9 years.

<sup>9</sup>Immigrants' countries of birth: China, Croatia, England, France, India, Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

Table 2: Local Participant Descriptives

Participant ID <sup>10</sup>	Sex	Participant ID	Sex
Ann	Female	Peter	Male
Beverley	Female	Phoebe	Female
Bill	Male	Samantha	Female
Brad	Male	Sasha	Female
Bride	Female	Scott	Male
Carol	Female		
Darla	Female		
David	Male		
Diane	Female		
Frances	Female		
Grace	Female		
Heather	Female		
Hope	Female		
Jane	Female		
Jeannine	Female		
John	Male		
Josephine	Female		
Laura	Female		
Leah	Female		
Leon	Male		
Leslie	Female		
Mabel	Female		
Margaret	Female		
Mary	Female		
Michelle	Female		

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<sup>10</sup> One local focus-group member did not speak; therefore, she was not given a pseudonym and is not included in this table.

**Sampling.** After I defended my prospectus, I moved back to Newfoundland and started my dissertation research. I sought out people who represented both target groups and asked to meet with them. These informant interviews were important because the informants knew a lot about the world I planned to study, were willing to chat, and were able to provide insights into things I could not see (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Stake, 1995). For example, they advised on my plan, my interview, and focus-group protocols (Krueger & Casey, 2000) and made recommendations on key players I need to contact and on appropriate locations for these discussions (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Lipson & Meleis, 1989).

After I gathered information from these interviews I was in a far better position to know where and how I could best recruit for interviews and focus groups. I used purposive and snowball sampling to reach participants and continued to collect data through my methods until I reached the point of saturation. There were a number of ways that I knew I had reached saturation. First, I was no longer surprised by what was learning, and I was really confident in what I had collected (Mason, 2002). In addition, my results were confirmed by member check, and they also rang true with key informants (Bowen, 2008).

**Protection.** The sampling strategy described above led people to contact me, the researcher, with a desire to participate. I explained the goals of the research, what their level of involvement would be, and how the data would be used. On their arrival for the focus group or the interview I had them sign a consent form that explained the procedures for confidentiality, privacy, and the secured storage of the data. I also reminded them that they could withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, in the focus groups

specifically, I let participants know that as much as I could keep confidentiality I could not promise that all focus-groups members would do the same. That said, I pointed out that there was a clause in the consent form that asked all participants to keep the identities and immigration statuses of participants and the content of the focus group confidential.

**Gaining access.** Participants' perceptions of researchers are particularly important in the process of gaining access (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003). As Feldman, Bell and Berger (2003) note, gaining access and developing rapport once you are "in" is a relational process. These relationships are influenced by the identity and presumed similarities and differences between the researcher and participants. As intimated earlier, I had points for and against me as it related to presumed similarity and trust; interestingly, some of the points for me in some contexts may have been points against me in others. For example, locals may have been somewhat disappointed that my parents are CFAs, while immigrants may have appreciated that fact as I have ties to places outside the immediate area like themselves. I had to balance the different parts of my identity as they came into conflict in the research process. For example, I needed to tone down my more formal, scholarly persona in these communities as they largely embrace down-to-earth, informal approaches, and I embraced the "metacommunicative repertoire" of the people I was studying (Briggs, 1986).

There are both opportunities and challenges to studying in one's own backyard (Creswell, 1998). In this case, however, I believe the opportunities outweighed the challenges. I had knowledge of the local area and its dialects and have connections with multicultural non-profits, settlement organizations, and government agencies. All of these

elements aided me in the process of gaining access, developing rapport, and collecting and analyzing data.

### **Methodological and Conceptual Issues**

**Working with participants.** Working with immigrants can bring challenges that might not exist with other populations, but in addition, Newfoundland cultural norms added a level of complexity that I had not always anticipated. In terms of methodological issues, I found, as many academics have, that it was difficult to recruit immigrants (Bender, Harbour, Thorp, & Morris, 2001; Everts, 2008; Jaya & Porter, 2008; Ogan, 2007). This may have been because they have had a negative history with interviews (Lipson & Meleis, 1989), or because they equate interviews with military recruitment and coercion (Pernice, 1994). Regardless of the reason, there was sometimes a mistrust or apprehension that made it harder to build trust and gain access. To counteract this, however, I relied on the goodwill of gatekeepers and participants to recommend that their friends and colleagues participate. These personal recommendations went a long way. As well, there were times when immigrant participants seemed to initially answer my questions in ways that they felt would please me or perhaps also save them face (Lipson & Meleis, 1989; Pernice, 1994); however, I reminded them that I was interested in both good and bad adaptation experiences, and that I would not be offended if they had something negative to say about Newfoundland or Newfoundlanders.

There were a few conceptual issues as well. Like other researchers (Lipson & Meleis, 1989; Pernice, 1994), I found getting interviewees to sign a consent form did not always go smoothly. In a couple of instances, immigrant participants did not read the consent form details, and it appeared as though they did not want to insult my integrity

(Lipson & Meleis, 1989). That is, they may have worried that reading the consent form word by word would suggest that I was not trustworthy. In other instances, during an interview or focus group another person would drop in unexpectedly to visit a friend and then join the conversation. This spontaneous joining of the conversation happened with both locals and immigrants. Finally, many local participants in particular did not understand how important it was that I keep participants' identities and community names confidential, and they often asked where I was going next and to whom I would be speaking.

To address these issues, when participants did not read the consent form, I gave them a short synopsis of the consent form and asked if they had any questions. In the second, I took the first opportunity to briefly interrupt the conversation to tell the new potential participant what we were talking about, what the study was, and invited them to join the study if they were interested (in both cases they joined). Finally, when participants probed into what communities I was going to and to whom I was speaking, I was initially purposively vague about location and subjects ("oh, I hope to speak to someone else in the area, but that's not confirmed yet"), but if they pressed I had to admit that I could not tell them for reasons of confidentiality. However short, this was a difficult conversation to have given that in rural Newfoundland communities, people are very curious and expect that people will be willing to share information that in other locales may be considered "none of your business." They often wanted to help me recruit, however, and did not know where to start if I could not tell them who I had already reached.

**Role of researcher.** Trustworthy qualitative scholars start the process of reflexivity early in the research process (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Mason, 2002). Reflexivity forces us to answer why we are interested in a particular topic, but also to explore who we are as researchers and how that influences our research choices, not to mention how our identity might impact the research process (Mason, 2002). I explore these issues here because I feel it is important to be honest with my readers, and I value authenticity and sincerity. In outlining what she feels are eight criteria for quality qualitative research, Tracy (2010) explains that sincerity is not

a single (authentic, genuine) reality or truth. Sincerity means that the research is marked by honesty and transparency about the researcher's biases, goals, and foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys, and mistakes of the research. (p. 841)

So, in the spirit of sincerity I would like to first explain why I was interested in this topic. On reflection, two things in particular jumped to mind. First, I grew up in Labrador, a more northern and isolated part of the province. Labrador, unlike Newfoundland, has a large aboriginal population and, in addition, the town I grew up in was immediately adjacent to a NATO-training base. The military presence in our area had several effects. On the positive side, I grew up with kids from many different countries and cultures. On the down side, with that military presence came conflict in many forms. One was the constant reminder of the Cold War (we were an important training ground for low level fighter jets). The other was the regular conflict between the military, locals who worked for the military, and an aboriginal group who wanted the low level training to end. Two things from this environment stick with me today. First, the

cultural conflict in that town was palpable. Secondly, the area was extremely culturally diverse, something I did not realize until we moved to St. John's. I remember walking the halls of my high school and thinking that something was very different. Finally it came to me: "They are all so white!" If I, a white woman, felt discomfort in this homogenous community, what must immigrants of color feel?

This experience leads me to a second major reason why I was interested in this topic. I have volunteered for and worked with international student societies and immigrant settlement organizations for more than a decade of my life—and in three different provinces. In the last several years, however, the immigrant experience has come closer to home as two of my three siblings have married people who were not born in Canada (but in England and the Philippines), and I married a first-generation Canadian whose parents emigrated from England. So, while most of my family lives in a fairly homogenous society, my family life is fairly multicultural. It was my hope that this research can help give voice to different cultural perspectives and approaches.

As scholars we have to recognize that we have identities that go beyond our profession (Feldman et al., 2003). Our identities are also influenced by our race, gender, age, geographic affiliations, former professions, and even hobbies (Feldman et al., 2003). All these facets influence who we are, and therefore, the research process. It was (and is) important that I recognized, therefore, that I am a white, Canadian woman in her 30s who is completing her PhD. I grew up within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, but I was born to CFA parents in central Labrador. As a result, I can play the "name game" I referenced in the introduction, to some extent, but I do not have a Newfoundland accent nor can I trace my lineage to one of the numerous bays around the province. That said, I

am proud to be from Newfoundland and Labrador and it plays an essential part of who I am and the way I see the world.

All of these parts of my identity influenced how I approached my research, what I deemed important, and, finally, how I was perceived by participants. That said, through continual self-reflexivity I remained aware of my influence while striving to bring out the voices, experiences, and perspectives of my participants.

### **Data Collection**

**Procedures.** The process and procedures used for both focus groups and interviews are important for the success of the interaction and the accuracy of the data. For both methods of collection, I ensured that I met my participants in locations that were quiet and free of distractions. When the participants arrived, I did what was possible to put them at ease, answer any questions they might have, and be honest about why they had been contacted and the goals of the study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Before the more formal part of the sessions began, I was sure to talk about something local that was happening to assure the participant(s) that I'm not just a townie who knows nothing about their area and/or made a comment about the weather (this is a favorite local past time). Through this informal chat, I was able to tell them things such as where I am from, where my parents were from, and sometimes ask something innocuous about the person or community to develop rapport (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Once the participant was at ease, I gave them time to read and sign the consent form and reminded them that they can end the interview at any time or decide not to answer any of my questions. I also made sure that they were comfortable with me recording the interview. Since recording sometimes can make participants feel

uncomfortable, I followed Lindlof and Taylor's (2002) recommendation that I mention the recording matter of factly and not bring attention to the machine by fiddling with it. The recording of the interviews and focus groups was important for later noting the specifics of the conversation, but it also allowed me to keep eye contact with the participants while taking note of nonverbals that seemed particularly important in understanding the data later (Creswell, 1998) (such as participants rubbing their fingers together instead of saying that something costs a lot of money). Throughout the interviews, I listened carefully, jotted down just a few notes, and asked for clarification when necessary (Stake, 1995).

**Protocol.** The interviews in this study were in-depth and semi-structured and, as Mason (2002) recommends, I let the conversation build naturally. That said, I did have the interview protocol in front of me to help guide the conversation, but I let the conversation jump back and forth while ensuring that we covered all the major topics. I was careful to only glance down at the protocol once in a while as I found that any sustained look at the protocol seemed to make participants nervous. This approach allowed me to keep track of topics while letting the conversation progress naturally.

In developing interview and focus-group questions, several principles were important. First, each question had to be easily linked to at least one research question. Second, it was important to verify that the line of questioning was appropriate to the local culture (Briggs, 1986). For these reasons, I showed my protocol to a couple of people for feedback; one of these was an immigrant, and two others were locals. The interviews were conducted in English.

I started with questions that put the participant at ease, moved to broad non-directional questions (grand tour questions), then directed questions such as compare and contrast, and then ended with closing questions that were more open ended, such as “Is there anything else that you’d like to add?” (Creswell, 1998). An important part of my role as the researcher in this process was to make the person feel comfortable (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) and to ask questions in a manner that was consistent with the local approach (Briggs, 1986). The complete protocols for both the interviews and the focus groups is located in Appendix A.

As mentioned earlier, it is important that participants feel at ease in the interview, so the first couple of questions of the immigrant interview protocol (“Tell me what the community is like,” and “what do people like to do in their spare time?”) were mainly to put the participant at ease and to help develop rapport. Asking about the activities of the town, however, gave me some indication about how at home the immigrant feels in the town (i.e., do they know what locals do in their spare time?). “Do many immigrants move here?” and “What has been your experience thus far?” are broad questions; however, the former gave them an opportunity to talk about whether they know others going through a similar process of adaptation, and the later allowed them to open up and tell their own stories. It also transitioned the conversation into more in-depth questions and questions that might have required more thought. The protocol was built so that the easiest questions were at the beginning and then progressed to harder questions.

To explore the dimensions of immigrant adaptation through RQ1, I asked several questions. “Do you tend to do the same sorts of things in your spare time as locals do?” gave them, as well as me, a point of reference for part of their adaptation experience

without being too threatening. Later, I asked if they have had to make changes due to their immigration/immigration into their community. This was broader and more direct, but led to interesting data about communicative approaches that either help or hinder adaptation and community building (RQ2). Two other questions also were designed to get at helpful or difficult adaptation experiences: “If you had to compare how locals see *community* and how immigrants see *community* how is it the same or different?” and “What other differences and similarities do you think there are between locals and immigrants?” Finally, the question, “As time passes, do you think the people who live here who were born in other countries will...” allowed them to talk about their perceptions both of whether immigrants want or can adapt to be part of the local culture, but also whether they think locals will ever accept them as such.

RQ3, concerned with community changes, only one specific question linked to it (“Has the community changed as people from different cultures settle here?”). However, I believe the questions linked to RQ2 will also aid in addressing this research question. For example, to understand what communicative approaches are helping or hindering community building across difference, I asked what sorts of projects immigrants and locals work on together and how cultural difference has been manifested in events or stories around town (“Can you think of any times when something happened that showed just how similar or different immigrants are from those that grew up here?”). The prompts that followed this question gave the participants opportunities to express their support or distain with how the issue was dealt with and, hopefully, the communication that was employed.

Other questions that got at community building are those that asked about whether people of different cultures around town are learning about each other. In addition, asking them what could be done got at their hopes and aspirations for the sort of community they want as it relates to immigration. In addition, the question that asked for advice for a new immigrant offered inroads into how their adaptation experience has been and whether specific approaches (theirs and others) helped or hindered this process.

I closed the interview with a non-threatening and easy question. “Is there anything I missed? Anything you want to add?,” which gave participant an opportunity to add things they may have not thought of before (and/or feel comfortable mentioning) and to clarify something they said earlier. As well, I made sure to keep the recorder going after the ‘formal’ part of the conversation was over as many people shared important musings and stories after the questions had ended.

Turning to the focus groups, ten questions are appropriate for focus groups, so this was what I planned for my focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The protocol started with opening questions (“Obviously, I’m not from *community or region name here*; tell me what it’s like...”), I then moved to introductory questions (“What do people like to do in their spare time?”), then to transition questions (“What is the first thing that comes to mind when I say immigration to rural Newfoundland...”), to between two to five key questions (the questions regarding immigrants moving in and settling in their community), and finally to ending questions (“What more do you think could be done...?”). Once again, this protocol was meant to start with easy questions, move to more difficult ones, and end by summarizing the issues as I had heard them and asking if I had misunderstood or left out anything.

## Data Analysis

In the data-analysis process, a scholar wants to make progress in three different areas: data management, data reduction, and conceptual development (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The method of data analysis that I used for this process was a six-step rigorous thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this section I explain my approach to analysis, why this approach was appropriate to my study, the six steps of thematic analysis: familiarization, initial coding, theme creation, theme review, theme naming, and production of the final product (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that although thematic analysis is used frequently and widely within qualitative work, the term is sometimes misinterpreted and misused, and there is little agreement on how to define it and execute it. For the purposes of this study, however, I define *thematic analysis* as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) and will adopt the analytical steps recommended by the aforementioned scholars.

Thematic analysis was appropriate to my study first, because there has been little written on the topic of immigrant adaptation in rural areas and the community changes that might occur. Using thematic analysis helped ensure that the process is grounded in the data and that the themes that were identified are data-driven. Secondly, thematic analysis is a flexible process that can “provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5); this offered the opportunity for me to better describe and interpret the experiences and meaning construction of the participants. Finally, as a social constructionist, I was interested in analyzing data beyond the semantic or explicit meanings presented by participants, and thematic analysis let me to explore information

and insights on a latent level so that underlying meanings and assumptions could emerge (Boyatzis, 1998 in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13). In this way, it was compatible with social construction as it “examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 9). My study sought to understand how communication was being used in cultural adaptation and community change; getting at that information required such an examination of discourse’s influence. For all these reasons, thematic analysis was appropriate for this study.

**Familiarization.** As mentioned earlier the thematic analysis I undertook has six specific steps. First, before heading deeper into the analytical process, it was essential that I become fully familiar with and even immersed in my data. My first opportunity to do that was in checking the accuracy of the 666 pages of transcription work that had been done for me. There were corrections that had to be made to local expressions (which had been misunderstood by the ‘mainland’ transcription service) and place name spellings. Local expressions were important for both meaning accuracy, but also in order to offer a taste of local dialects (Owen, 1984) . Even during this first step, it was useful to take notes on what seemed interesting or important—notes I later returned to. Although this review of the transcriptions was a time-consuming process, it was important for accuracy, was very informative and helped me better understand the data.

**Initial coding.** The second step built off the initial list of ideas about the data and moved to the creation of initial coding. The code is “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998: 3, in Braun & Clarke, 2006), and as the researcher, I read

through the data, “tagging” explicit or implicit features that seem somehow related to the research questions of the study. I used the software program NVivo to work systematically through the transcripts to mark and name pieces of text. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that at this step a researcher should not restrict the number of codes they create, because it is hard to know which codes might be particularly important at a later time. As a result, at the end of this initial coding phase, I had 368 codes. Also following Braun and Clarke’s recommendation, I was careful not to lose sight of the surrounding data (as the context could have been important) and remembered that the same piece of text could be coded for multiple different “themes.”

**Theme creation.** In this third step, I was able to take the long list of codes that were generated in the last step and look through them carefully to see which codes might be related and which codes seemed to be part of a larger theme. In deciding what constituted a theme, I drew on Owen’s (1984) assertion that there are three clues that can help win the attention of a researcher: recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness. Recurrence is when something occurs at least two times within one research unit (such as an interview or focus group) and has the “same thread of meaning” (Owen, 1984, p. 275), even if different words are used to describe it. The related idea of repetition refers to when specific phrases or key words occur more than once. I should hasten to note that in qualitative research, more occurrences of an idea or concept do not necessarily make it more important; however, repetition and recurrence of ideas or words should at least warrant a second look (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, forcefulness “refers to vocal inflection, volume or dramatic pauses which serve to stress and subordinate some utterance” (Owen, 1984, p. 275). Again, recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness do not

necessarily mark all themes; however, their existence may signal something worthy of the researcher's time.

As a visual person, in looking over my codes and seeking themes between them, I thought it would be helpful for me to put this process into some physical form (Anderson & Felsenfeld, 2003), so I cut the names of the codes into little strips of paper and arranged and rearranged them on a large flat surface. This step allowed me to analyze the relationships among the codes, their themes, and the hierarchies of which they are a part. Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that at this stage, the researcher probably has a good idea of what themes are important, but it remains critical not to remove any coding just yet. I followed their recommendation, and at the end of this stage I had seven themes answering RQ1: difference, reception, responsibility to change, belonging and connection, challenges, struggle, and loss, interaction, and drive; Eight themes corresponded to RQ2: acknowledgment, bridging, letting be, distinction, pushing, engagement, offering, and rejection; Five themes corresponded to RQ3 on community change: thoughts on community change, community conflict, locals addressing change, social changes, increased exposure, and other socio-economic changes influencing rural Newfoundland.

**Theme review.** Step four saw the return to existing themes to see if they might need some revision. This process required a full review of the coded material that comprised each of the themes and also a review of the themes themselves, how they related to each other, and whether each of them accurately portrayed what was happening in the interviews and/or focus groups. Since the themes appeared to accurately portray what had been heard in data collection, no themes were removed or merged at this stage.

Since there was no need to return to coding I moved on to the step of “defining and naming themes” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 22).

**Theme naming.** When my thematic map seemed accurate, I went back to the data to identify the general idea of theme and decide which part of the data each theme best describes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step required an analysis of each theme, so that I was very clear on what the themes included and what they did not, whether there were subthemes, and the like. This step ensured that I had interesting and pertinent examples for each of the themes, and that each theme an interesting name.

**Production of the final product.** Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that the final step in thematic data analysis is the writing of the final product. In putting the results to paper, themes required reworking, and they were merged and refined to take the form they are in this final document. RQ1 was addressed with four themes: struggle and loss, attributions of difference, interaction and connection, and responsibility to change. The content of RQ2’s themes morphed to become six themes. The labels for the themes (“leaving be,” “differentiating,” “acknowledging,” “opening,” “resisting,” “bridging”) were chosen to reflect the content of the communicative approaches they represented, but also the action or effect of these approaches. RQ3’s themes became: no community change, community change, and other community changes affecting rural Newfoundland. In writing the dissertation, I sought to explain the complexity of the research; make it interesting; and bring the data “alive” with compelling excerpts and with enough detail that the study is credible, dependable, and transferable (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

While in the process of writing the final chapters of the dissertation, I sought out both interested immigrants and locals to assist with member check. That is, I either gave people excerpts of my dissertation to ask if they felt my interpretation was accurate or spoke with them one on one to explore the same (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Several people agreed to help in this way, and they confirmed that the results were accurate, believable, and therefore credible. This was important for triangulation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), but is also good practice before exiting the field (Feldman et al., 2003). Finally, in honestly describing the limitations of this research, I also hope that the results seem dependable. By giving thick, rich description, I hope the results can be transferable to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have outlined the methods I used to collect data, the participants I was able to reach, and my sampling strategy. I have discussed the issues that affected the feasibility of the study, laid out the data collection process, explored my role as the researcher and, finally, described the method of data analysis that was used.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

The results of this study are presented below in response to each of the three research questions that guided this exploration. Each section includes themes and subthemes that describe, explain, and interpret the experience of immigration to rural Newfoundland and its impacts on local communities.

### **RQ1: What dimensions characterize the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland?**

When speaking to participants, four large and complex themes emerged that address the multiple dimensions, or layered experiences, that play an important part of immigrant adaptation in rural Newfoundland: (a) Struggle and loss; (b) Attributions of difference; (c) Interaction and connection; and (d) Responsibility to change. The following table outlines these four themes and their corresponding sub-themes. What follows is a description of the character of these themes and subthemes, drawing on the rich exemplars from participant's stories and perspectives, paying particular attention to immigrant experiences while acknowledging the local contexts that may influence them.

Table 3: RQ1 Results

**Struggle and Loss**

- Urban-rural adaptation
- Geographic isolation
- Employment and financial struggles
- Culture shock and loss
- Emotional struggles
- Drive to overcome challenges
  - Risk-taking, determination and drive
  - Move to rural as strategic choice
  - Motivation, internal and external

**Attributions of Difference**

- Perceptions of difference
  - Homogeneity of locals
  - Values and behavior
  - Education and profession
  - Self-sufficiency and the outdoors
- Local context of perceptions towards immigrants
- Issues of reception
  - Professionals are welcome
  - Social identity dynamics
    - Cultural and racial differences may present challenges
    - Fear of difference
    - Jealousy and competition

**Interaction and Connection**

- Connection to the local community
  - Newfoundland as home
  - Challenges that differences create
    - Lack of understanding of immigrant experience
    - Power distance
    - Social isolation and the paradox of visibility
    - Apprehension and social drive
  - Opportunities to connect
    - Workplace
    - Community involvement
    - Children as connectors
  - Intimate interaction rare
    - Interaction as educational and/or entertaining event
    - Benefits of intimate interaction
- Connection with fellow immigrants

Table 3: RQ1 Results (cont.)

**Responsibility to change**

Immigrant has more responsibility to change

Choice

Over-accommodation

Numbers

Communities and immigrants both have responsibility to change

Contribution

Retention

## **Struggle and Loss**

Starting a new life in a country totally distinct from what one is accustomed to can be challenging in many ways. This section describes six areas of challenge, struggle, and loss that immigrants in rural Newfoundland face. First, immigrants experience the struggle of adapting to small communities with limited amenities. Having lived in well-equipped cosmopolitan cities, they often feel isolated due to geographic and climatic conditions. In addition, some immigrants' credentials are not recognized, and they work at fast-food restaurants while struggling to pay for their schooling and licensing upgrades. Finally, immigrants face the possible loss of their cultures, in themselves and in their families, and all of these challenges, struggles and losses place a great stress and strain on an immigrant's mental health. That said, participants in this study showed a huge amount of drive in working to address these challenges.

**Urban-rural adaptation.** One of the themes that expresses some of the challenges immigrants face in adapting to life in rural Newfoundland reflects the difficulty of moving from an urban to a rural environment. Participants talked about a lack of food options and things to do. They shared that some regular activities and events are considered common knowledge so are never announced; as a result, immigrants either do not know about them or learn about them at the very last minute. Finally, some participants talked about how difficult it has been to adapt to the lack of privacy that can accompany life in rural areas.

Many of the immigrant participants who volunteered for this study either grew up in urban areas or had spent a significant amount of time there while they did their professional studies. Local and immigrant participants alike talked about immigrants

moving from huge cities like Cairo, Manila, and Hong Kong to communities of less than 20,000 or even 300, and this adjustment is challenging. In one focus group, participants talked about a woman from a major Asian city who moved to Toronto and, as David explained, “she said she didn’t like Toronto. She thought it was a village compared to [home]. And she went from village Toronto to [here].... She had a hard time.”

One of the ways that immigrants have found rural Newfoundland life challenging is the lack of food choices—both in the grocery selection but also in the restaurant selection. Some communities where immigrants live only have a handful of restaurants to choose from, and the majority do not have any restaurants outside of fast-food places and perhaps one Chinese-Canadian restaurant. The limitations of places to eat out were raised often as was the lack of spices and produce selection. Some immigrants drive more than two hours one way to get the ingredients they need for the cuisine from their home; others have friends fly in their spices from half way across the world.

A second urban-rural adjustment that immigrants have faced is a lack of things to do. Being from larger cities, immigrants are accustomed to a plethora of choice in terms of places to go and things to see and do; rural areas often do not offer that. When asked, in one immigrant focus group, what things first came to mind when they heard the words *rural Newfoundland*, participants responded “nowhere to go,” “boring,” and “totally nothing here.” Feeroz described the extreme boredom and loneliness he felt before he met some people from his home country:

there was a time before I met these people like Fridays I used to be in tears like “what do I do?!” I can’t go and see a movie—there’s nothing, no recreation,

nothing, and I'm not into moose hunting and other things you know. Like not everybody can be into hunting and skidooning.

Amor also pointed out "I'm from a tropical country, so doing all these winter activities does not entice me much. So what options are left for me?"

Local people pointed out that they thought there were many things to do in rural Newfoundland, but that they thought some immigrants may not feel the same way. Scott explained it like this:

if you're the type of person who can entertain yourself, if you don't need to have a horse-and-pony show coming to your door every day, you don't need Cirque du Soleil, you know, if you don't need that, and if the cup of tea in the kitchen is as good as the Starbucks to you...you'll love it, but if not, if your tastes are a little different...and you're more urban...you would find it boring.

A couple of participants, however, made an important point about the collective knowledge people have in rural Newfoundland and the assumption that everyone has it. For example, organizers frequently do not bother to advertise when an event is happening or when registration opens or closes for children's sports teams. Everyone (read: locals) knows these events always happens at a certain time of year. Francis talked about this assumed knowledge and how it relates to how tight knit Newfoundland communities can be:

My wife and I joke about that all the time. It's like well, "Why would we need to advertise because everybody knows." It's like people will not indicate to turn or something, and it's, "Well why would I need to indicate? Everybody knows I turn right on Friday at 4.00 pm.... Just ask Bob down the road. He knows."

Participants also talked about how streets sometimes do not have street signs, but even when they do, they may not be the name that locals use for them. When one asks for directions to the post office, you might get an answer like, “It’s up the hill from the school.” “Where’s the school?” “Well, that’s on past the church.” Although it may not be intentional, not advertising events or posting street signs can place immigrants at a disadvantage in getting to know their communities or feeling like they are being included. As Miles explained, “That’s what I mean about the circles, like you know, you’re trying to break into a circle. When you break into that circle, of course you know Bob...turns right, but you don’t know that until then.”

The final challenge that indicates a particular experience more common in rural areas is a lack of privacy. Several local participants suggested that everyone knowing everyone helps build a safer community, and there are times when immigrants appreciate this as well. However, there are other instances when immigrants miss the anonymity of the big city. Francine, for example, talked about a very stressful time in her life that she linked directly to living in a rural Newfoundland area. She had had surgery, was having a hard time recovering, and was in a shared hospital room. When people visiting others recognized her, they would come over and chat, and she shared that:

it was for me excruciating at the hospital because it was a time where I was not feeling well at all, where I really needed privacy, and every evening I had people who wanted to be kind to me. and where they are asking me about stuff I didn’t want to talk about.

Francine recognized that this attention was coming from a good place, but at the time, the lack of anonymity and privacy was “excruciating.”

**Geographic isolation.** The nature of an island is that it is cut off from the mainland and is surrounded by water. In the case of Newfoundland, this means that one must spend at least a couple of hours (e.g., three to Toronto) and several hundred dollars in airfare to get to Canada's major cities (Lepawsky, Phan, & Greenwood, 2010). The only other option is to drive, taking one of two ferries to a neighboring province. One ferry takes from four to six hours to get to Nova Scotia; the other takes 14 to 15 hours, and depending where you live in the province, you could spend nearly that amount of time again driving to the ferry. Even travelling within the province is not easy. Many communities are spread out, and to drive from one end of the island to another takes thirteen hours. To drive between the province's two most populated areas takes eight hours (Lepawsky et al., 2010). All of these factors, no doubt, play a part in why immigrants report that they feel isolated. Some of the isolation that immigrants experience is geographic, and some of it is climatic.

A few immigrant participants, particularly those who are fairly new to the province, described it as cold, remote, and desolate. Even those who painted less dreary pictures had to admit that there was a feeling of geographic isolation. One participant shared that her brother uses an expression

that I found a bit offensive but that express [*sic*] the reality in some sense. "Le bout du monde," okay [translation: "the end of the earth"]. We are not on a path, we are at the end of the path; we're at the end of the side road, and some time, I have this feeling. We're on an island.

Miles, a recent immigrant, agreed. He was amazed when he noticed that if the ferries do not run for a couple of days, the supermarkets start running out of items. Realizing that

the island can be cut off in that way pointed out to him that “there’s much more of an insular feeling being here.”

The isolation of being on a fairly remote island and one with vast distances (and long winters), makes it difficult for immigrants to get together. Where Yuen-Mei now lives, she admitted that her immigrant friends and she “really don’t see each other that much. In St. John’s, we have an organization, but they get together once a year and that’s about it. We’re so distant.” These geographic limitations not only mean that people may be distant from friends, but it also means that there is not enough concentration of cultural diversity in order to make multiculturalism a priority in rural areas. As Amor explained, “Here, geographically, obviously we also have quite a lot of limitations. We’re not really that widely represented. You only talk about multiculturalism in St. John’s but after St. John’s where are we? Nothing really.” Amor’s comment also speaks to the loss of culture for immigrants, a point I expand upon in a subsequent section.

The climate can also add another layer to the experience of isolation. Few immigrants had lived anywhere that had such harsh winters or at least as much snow. For many, the snow was a thrill at first. Sam thought back to when he first arrived, “I can still remember the first thing that I experienced was to see the snow because where we came from we don’t have snow, and I was so fascinated, and it wore off after a week [laughs]. The fascination is gone.” Other participants were not as fascinated with the snow. Miles and his family arrived in the middle of the winter and were overwhelmed by eight-foot snow drifts and having to brush the snow off the car each day. They have learned to adapt to and even enjoy the winter, but that first winter he wondered, “Oh why have we moved here?!”

**Employment and financial struggles.** One of the many challenges that immigrants can face in their new countries is that of employment and financial struggles. Unfortunately, the credentials of many professionals are not recognized, and these immigrants frequently struggle to get reaccruited or choose to take work for which they are overqualified. Other immigrants are lucky enough to find work but may struggle to adapt to their new work environment. In addition, immigrating to another country can be a financial burden, and that burden can be long term. Each of these struggles may be unknown to locals that have not experienced these challenges themselves.

There are many professions for which foreign training is not recognized by Canadian institutions. (Reitz, 2005). Ironically, these professions may have given immigrants extra points in their immigration application, but they are unable to practice this profession without significant further training or examination (Reitz, 2005). That was the case several decades ago when René's father immigrated and became a teacher (after practicing law in his country); as René said, "we're still bad that way." Nagesh feels very lucky that Canada accepts his training but recognizes that such is not the case for other professions. "If you are an engineer you cannot work here as an engineer because the things that you have studied is everything different from the country...it's everything different...and they [immigrants] work in, you know, the small jobs, restaurants." Amor knows some immigrants in this situation, and her advice to them is to work and study hard so that they can get back to their old profession. The sooner they get their accreditation, she explained, the faster they get the job they want "and the sense of self that you need to regain." She knows doctors who come here and work as nurses and

nurses who work as caregivers, “I mean, come on. I’m pretty sure part of your self-esteem is taken away from you.”

Another struggle pertaining to the workplace is the struggle to adapt to a new work environment. Ana Maria said that when she arrived at her workplace, her colleagues did not understand that some of the procedures were different for her, and that she needed time to learn and adjust. She feels they were shocked when she did things incorrectly and then assumed that she did not know anything at all. In her case, she was instructed to go back to school and do more training, when she feels that with more time and in-house instruction, she would have adjusted in the months after her arrival.

Whether it is because of the costs of relocating, of retraining, or of supporting family back home, immigration often involves a significant financial investment. Participants talked about the challenge that financial costs of immigration can pose in their lives. For example, one group of friends slept five to a room to share on rent and got donations of rice from church friends when times were tough. Another had to push a cart full of groceries through snow for a half hour to get home. Feeroz explained his situation:

We had to spend a lot of money, we had to go through many examination [*sic*], many ... they scrutinized you from everything, we had to undergo scrutinization, all those screening tests. It was really difficult for us to get here and many examinations, many you know....It was really, really, really difficult and money consuming. We had to spend a lot of money to get here.

What frustrates him is he feels that “nobody sees that,” sees how difficult the process has been for him. Locals see him in a good profession making good money, and they assume, he feels, that it came easily. The truth is that the challenges of finding and

keeping gainful employment are real, but as difficult as the challenges can be, Amor likes to encourage other immigrants to strive hard for what they want. “Some people would want to come here and start big and be big. That’s not how it works.” However, she adds, “If you know what you want, then it’s possible.”<sup>11</sup>

**Culture shock and loss.** The fourth subtheme that describes the struggles and losses that immigrants in rural Newfoundland face is that of culture loss. Immigration frequently means a loss of traditions and an experience of culture shock, and many immigrants respond to this cultural threat with a steadfastness to maintain their culture, both for themselves and their children. That said, participants admitted that the culture of the community at large inevitably will influence their children, so they must help them find a balance between the two.

Newer immigrant participants in particular talked about the experience of cultural loss and shock they have felt by being, as Ana Maria explained, “pulled out of [their] culture” and dropped into another. This extreme cultural shift means that sometimes immigrants feel loss at not being surrounded by the values, beliefs, and cultural events they know and understand. At the same time, they are not yet a part of the surrounding Newfoundland culture. Amor talked about this loss and the challenge it creates:

One thing that I miss, being in Newfoundland rural, here in [this area] specifically they have that root which I don’t have. They have that connection which I don’t have.... They always have these occasions, traditions that we are just building. It’s for them engrained, and they’re really enjoying. We are starting to build. That is what I miss, I guess.

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<sup>11</sup> On reading this section during member check, Amor added “Even if we know what we want but the system keeps blocking us from gaining access and direction, sometimes it feels easier to just give up.”

Ana Maria, however, spoke about the anxiety of trying to figure out the appropriate behavior in the new setting. In the beginning, she constantly asked herself how she should interact with someone, if she was talking too much or too little, what should she say versus what would be offensive. For about eight months, she felt quite cautious about what she said and did.

As much as immigrant participants talked about how they had adapted and were adapting to the local culture. Several also emphasized the importance of maintaining their cultures, values, and beliefs. Those who raised this issue did so in the context of their personal decision to maintain their beliefs and behaviors, but also in the context of concern for their children or future children. A few participants in particular were passionate about teaching their children “right” from “wrong.” Amor, for example, knows immigrants from her country who are interested in becoming more like local people (e.g., taking on the local accent, focusing on getting a big house, being “permissive”), but she feels she immigrated at a time in her life when who she is was already clearly defined, “I can be myself and hopefully still be accepted as me. I will always be different and will be proud to be different.” She likes to think she still has the “same orientation and values” that she had back home, and she is working to ensure that her daughter has those same values. She speaks to her in the language she grew up with and teaches her the “respectful way of treating people” and other things “she’s not going to get from outside.”

Other participants also referred to the “outside” and how they should prepare their families so that they can counter balance what their children might learn. Ana Maria worries that, “Away from our country, away from our culture, our children are going to

grow up in this country; they've taken the culture of this country....They will not have any idea about what our culture will be.” It is within the family unit, however, that she and her friends will be able to teach their children the differences between their own culture and the dominant culture and “teach them what is right, what is wrong.” Through this teaching, they can ensure that their children do not “get lost in a different world.” Ana Maria added that they want to be sure their children “should not be too rooted into this place.” From her perspective, being too rooted in the new country means that they could not later return to their country of origin, and “if they get too rooted to the place eventually they'll forget what we've got.”

Although maintaining one's culture and values begins in the home, participants also pointed to the importance of larger communities of people from their country. In larger centers, immigrant families can participate in their own celebrations and festivals, and some immigrants believe that they will need to move to the mainland in order to offer that for their children. Feeroz, for example, shared that he can imagine himself moving to either Ontario, Alberta, or British Columbia because the communities there are large enough in those cities so his child can “at least know a little bit about my own culture.” Ana Maria, however, hopes that perhaps she and her friends can build a community large enough in Newfoundland so that they can have that “advantage for our next generation coming up.” As much as immigrants like Ana Maria, Feeroz, and Amor talked about the importance of maintaining their cultures, they also admitted that their children will be influenced by the dominant culture, and they hope they can help their children develop “a balance of both the cultures in them.”

**Emotional struggles.** Given all the struggles mentioned above, not surprising is that immigrants talked about experiencing difficult emotions during their process of adapting to rural Newfoundland. Other sections already have touched on feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and stress, but homesickness, depression, and fear of racism also arose from interviews and focus groups. Although immigrants have made the choice to leave their home countries, many experience a longing for the place they left behind. That place may be less than ideal, Amor admits, “but it’s still my home. There’s always a part of you that twinges when you think of that home.” The way that Sam expressed this longing is by admitting that after a week in the province, “I was singing my national anthem [Interviewer: Homesick?]. Homesick.”

Homesickness may be coupled with feelings of sadness and sometimes depression. Ana Maria confessed that she felt depressed a lot during her first year in the country. Luckily, she received a lot of support from immigrants from her country, and she made it through to the other side. That difficult experience was made more complex, however, by differing cultural assumptions about what depression is and its implications. Local people she knew considered it “a psychological problem that is serious,” whereas she believed it involves “lot of hurt inside which you need to come out of,” a natural, temporary state. The tension between their beliefs in her mental health further brought home the fact that “the way we think is different.”

Another emotion that participants brought up in relation to adaptation to their new country was a fear of racism and discrimination. Some immigrants had heard before coming to Canada that local people could be racist, and others came via countries where they had experienced major discrimination themselves. Other immigrants feared that

current or future political events might incite the Canadian government or its citizens to turn against them. Ana Maria admitted that her group of friends has talked about the fact that they should prepare to have to go back to their country:

we cannot stay here all our lives—there can be a situation when we will have to go back to our own country. Thinking into the future you're like, okay, this is where the world is going. You hear about destruction and war and terrorism all over, and there can be a situation where all immigrants will have to go back to their own country. When we all sit together, this is what we talk about.

A local woman named Bride worked with a group of Muslim students who came to the province to further their training a few years after 9/11. Bride learned after they got to the province that they “had a fear of being mistaken for people from Al Qaeda and whatever, they had that fear, they told me that.” She added that they let go of that fear after they got to know the town more, but the fear of discrimination still lingered; they were very nervous about even changing planes in the United States on their flights home and were thrilled when they were instead routed through Vancouver.

Immigrating to a new country is not an easy process, and participants in this study talked about the many difficult emotions they felt, particularly in their first few years in the country. Loneliness, low self-esteem, stress, homesickness, depression, and fear are very real manifestations of the struggles and losses that immigrants can experience during the adaptation process.

Immigrating, then, can be a challenging venture. In this section, I have discussed how immigrants to rural Newfoundland struggle to adapt to rural settings, how they may face geographic isolation, how their professional and financial stability can be disrupted,

that there are possible losses to their culture, and how all this stress might have a detrimental effect on immigrants' mental health. The next section talks about immigrants' drive to overcome these challenges.

**Drive to overcome challenges.** Immigration, by its very nature, is a risk-taking venture. This theme will explore the sense of adventure that inspires some immigrants to take that risk, the centrality of work within that experience, and the strategy and ambition that influences this important part of the immigrant experience. Finally, this theme also examines some of the internal and external issues that motivate immigrants to work so hard.

*Risk-taking, determination and drive.* When immigrant Frank earned his education degree, he responded to an ad in the newspaper for a teacher. The school board responded with the names of three communities looking for teachers. "And so my wife and I looked at the map," he explained. "We'd never heard of [the area] before; we said 'we rather like the sound of that,' and that's the one we picked." When they arrived in the community, it had only recently been connected to the main island of Newfoundland, gotten paved roads, electricity, and phones. "It was an interesting time, I must say, and adventurous," Frank shared. Although communities in Newfoundland have now had several decades of the services Frank's community had only just received, moving to these communities, usually sight unseen, still required an adventurous spirit. Mercy explained that she feels it takes a special kind of person to be an immigrant: "if you are a very challenge [*sic*] and you want to adventure yourself, and you're here to survive I would tackle that." That is, being an immigrant, to Mercy, requires a personality that likes challenges, adventures, and a keen sense of survival.

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, immigrants' stories showed examples of this risk taking and of an incredible determination and drive to succeed. As mentioned earlier, Ana Maria had a very hard first couple of years in rural Newfoundland. However, she was steadfast in her determination to succeed, "God is going to help me, I'm not going to give up; there is a future. I came here; I'm going to get it." Central to this drive, for Ana Maria and others, is the importance of employment. In fact, Nagesh believes that immigrants can adjust to anything anywhere if they have a good job:

The thing is that just to get adjusted, it's a matter of getting employment. If you are well employed you can get adjusted to any worse condition imaginable....

Toronto is a wonderful place, I've heard that, it's a wonderful city....I can't imagine living there without a job. You cannot, right? So if you have a job you can live anywhere. It is about getting employment.

Several other immigrant participants echoed Nagesh's point that employment is central to an immigrant's success.

***Move to rural as strategic choice.*** The exemplar above resonates with immigrant participants on another level as well; there are benefits to moving to rural Newfoundland. In fact, immigrant participants talked about their move to rural Newfoundland as a strategic, conscious choice. There is a lower cost of living, a slower pace of life, and it is a safer environment in which to raise children. Amor admits that most immigrants from her country move to Vancouver or Toronto because they are familiar with an urban lifestyle, and they assume that bigger is better in regard to city size. But, she explained:

I always try to tell them “if you’re here and you have a job you’re better off than if you go to Toronto with all those nice places you can see, but you’re poor as a rat. Competition is hard.” That’s why I always say that bigger is not always better.

As much as many participants talked about the benefits of moving to rural Newfoundland, several talked about it within the frame of an “opportunity to move to Canada” (Manjeet) or a good place from which to start, and admitted that they project that one day they will move on to another part of Canada, either for their own career advancement or for more opportunities for their children.

***Motivation.*** So what motivates this drive to succeed? Participants talked about both internal and external motivations.

*Internal motivations.* Amor in particular talked about a number of internal motivations for her drive to succeed. She said she is never content with the status quo; she is comfortable with change, and she feels she has to work ten times harder than others in order to prove her worth as a woman of color. Even though she has been in the country less than five years, she is now working in a healthcare management position, has finished a graduate degree, has sponsored family members to immigrate to Canada, and is always on the lookout for better employment opportunities. She says a lot of the people around her do not understand why she is always taking on more things, is aiming for more, and is still not content. “What they don’t understand is if I sit here, and I don’t know what to do, I have nothing to do to pressure me, I’ll be lost.” She admits that she gets bored with routine and struggles with contentment. Status quo is not good enough; she always needs more.

Another thing that sets her apart from local people, she feels, is her comfort with change. She has noticed that local people's roots run deep, and they are not as willing to move for advancement as she is. Her willingness to move, however, is one of the reasons she has been able to advance in her career as quickly as she has.

The final motivator that Amor admitted drives her is a sense that she needs to prove her worth as a person of color. Although she claims this motivation is internally driven, she also admits that she experienced a significant amount of racism while working in another country. Regardless of whether she feels a need to prove herself for the outside world or for herself, Amor talked about this motivation as an integral part of why she works so hard. She explained "I find a lot of people here don't understand why I'm so quote 'driven'...a lot of them probably don't understand what's driving me, what is it like to try to settle, to try to prove yourself worthy, or equal to the people here." She explained that she feels that her countrymen have a "sense of oppression":

As a third world country, you see this in coming here, brown skin. We're not whites. We do have this sense of inferiority that whether you like it or not comes out in different ways.... Me, it comes out by always trying harder, always feeling like I have to work 10 times harder than my counterparts, because I have to prove my worth. Like you won't have that sense with you, would you? [Interviewer: Hmm mm... No.] No, but I have that, and nobody understands that.

A discomfort with the status quo, comfort with change, and a feeling of having to prove one's worth, then, are some motivators for an immigrant's drive to succeed.

*External motivations.* Some immigrants are also motivated by factors external to themselves, such as supporting family members back home. Amor and Ana Maria both

talked about how helping their family helped drive them to do more. As Amor explained, she wants to provide for her family what she did not have growing up, but is now experiencing, and when “you’re supporting your family back home, you can’t pull enough hours in just to advance.” Ana Maria pointed out that in her culture, the older siblings take care of the younger ones; although her dad says she is not her responsibility, Ana Maria wants to “take the burden off our parent’s hands” for her sister’s education. She feels this is only fair:

Our parents...have been slogging from the time they started working, right, and they take care of all us, meet all our needs, they don’t have a life of their own so once we reach a level of...we start working, we take up all the responsibilities away from our parents and we are like “you guys rest, we are going to take care now.”

So knowing that her sister wants to become a pilot, Ana Maria is more motivated than ever to get settled in Canada and make a good living. As she explained to her sister: “I need to pay so, wait, I need to start doing something before I can fund you.”

Immigrating to rural Newfoundland is a risk-taking venture, and immigrants make strategic choices to move to follow work opportunities. They face the difficulties they encounter in their new communities with determination and drive. They do so to prove their worth to themselves and the world, but also to help support the families they left behind.

### **Attributions of Difference**

The second theme that emerged in response to RQ1 was attributions of difference between immigrants and locals. Participants described the differences that they felt exist

between immigrants and locals, and within these discussions of difference lie issues that influence immigrant reception. The first reception-related subtheme—professionals are welcome—discusses the relationship between the respect that people have for professional roles and that of race. The second explores the social identity dynamics of cultural and racial distance, fear of difference, and jealousy and competition. A common thread running through each of these thematic topics is a suggestion that people in rural Newfoundland welcome the help that immigrants offer through their roles as professionals. However, locals face a continuum of feelings toward cultural difference; at one end of the spectrum many have a general unease with the cultural difference and change that this might bring; on the other end of the spectrum, some locals resent the professional and financial success that these immigrants are experiencing relative to their own situations.

**Perceptions of difference.** Often, the story of being an immigrant in rural Newfoundland is a story of being different. This section explores what participants perceive these differences to be. It outlines the homogeneity of the local population, different values and behaviors, different levels of formal education and profession, and different ways of spending one's leisure time.

***Homogeneity of locals.*** Newfoundlanders primarily are descended from Irish-Catholics or from West Country England Protestants, and even today, the population remains very homogeneous.<sup>12</sup> Coupled with the fact that the majority of immigrants to Canada are part of a visible minority group (Reitz, 2005), this means that immigrants to rural Newfoundland are highly visible within quite homogenous communities.

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, the 2006 Canadian census stated that the province has the lowest rate of visible minorities of any of the provinces or territories at 1.1% (<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>).

Participants raised this issue of homogeneity and what it might mean for the immigrant experience. As local John explained, “Anybody moving there [rural community] is likely going to stand out by the way their name sounds, by the way they look.” This standing out can make immigrants feel highly uncomfortable. David talked about his friend’s experience:<sup>13</sup> “I know that she has said that she finds it really uncomfortable going into a white crowd, and she feels everybody is watching her simply because she is so visibly not part of the community.”

Other participants confirmed this common assumption that people of color are not locals. Diane is a local woman who adopted two children from China. Her children lived in their birth country for less than a year, but in a somewhat frustrated tone, she admits that they will always been seen as “not local” by those that do not know the family. This assumption is sometimes extended to include the idea that people of color are not Canadian. For example, when comparing the level of immigration happening in rural Newfoundland to the suburbs of Toronto, Jane said that there “it’s almost hard to spot a Canadian in...most of those places, right.”

The homogeneity of rural Newfoundland, then, makes immigrants of color in particular very visible. This visibility can make immigrants feel uncomfortable and may also lead to broader assumptions that people of color are always “not from here” and, by extension, that they are not Canadian.

***Values and behavior.*** The second subtheme that emerged from this overarching theme of attributions of difference is that of differing values and behavior. In particular,

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<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, although immigrant participants talked about their race as it related to other aspects of their experience (their professional drive, their reception in the community), they didn’t speak specifically to how their visibility as a person of color felt.

participants talked about eating and drinking, differing ideas on women, the treatment of older people, and religion.

*Eating and drinking.* The fact that immigrants eat and drink different things than locals came up more than any other single behavioral difference. As immigrant René pointed out, “There’s certainly a difference in diet, what they eat; there are huge differences there between traditional Newfoundland food and what other people from away tend to have, right.” For example, René shared about eating jiggs dinner, seal, and turr<sup>14</sup> when he has been at local people’s homes.

Several immigrants also talked about how much drinking was part of the local culture, and some talked about how it clashed with their own values. Amor talked about this as it related to she and her husband making friends: “It’s not easy. They have their own, maybe Friday night drinking. We don’t drink. It’s not like we condemn people who drink. It’s just that it’s not us.” Some local participants recognized the potential of this cultural difference to impact how immigrants might be able to interact with community members and vice versa. Ann has been struck that locals in her community want new immigrants to join a service club called the Lions, but, as she explained, “when you look at the building, the first thing you see is the bar. A lot of these people don’t drink [laughter]. So there’s still that tussle of cultures in terms of that.”

*Differing ideas on women.* The perceived value/behavioral difference that emerged with second most frequency was differing ideas on women: appropriate behavior for women, including dating expectations, whether they should drink or smoke,

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<sup>14</sup> Jiggs dinner, or boiled dinner as some call it, is a Newfoundland traditional food that is usually made on Sundays. It is made by boiling various root vegetables in a pot with salt beef for several hours. Turr is a local seabird.

and ideas on women's roles in the family and home. One immigrant woman in particular talked about the culture shock she has experienced witnessing how young women, in particular, behave in Newfoundland. Ana Maria talked about being shocked, for example, when a woman she knew casually mentioned that her daughter was out at night, unsupervised, with her boyfriend. Where Ana Maria is from, when a young woman is seeing a man, they should never meet alone, and when sitting in the same room, they should be a safe distance apart. She had been told by her relatives living in North America that things here were very different: "But even though they told me, the first time when you see it, it's a bit of a shock. You're like, 'oh my God!'"

Several local participants also talked about differing views on women and their roles and how it has influenced both workplace procedures and interpersonal relationships. For example, Ann pointed out that some foreign-trained doctors in her community's hospital require an escort when they see a female patient, and Brad felt that it was partially his immigrant friend Samson's thoughts on women's roles that some people in the community found offensive. For example, Samson "viewed the role of women as homemaker and the lead parent who raised the children," while the man is the breadwinner and the key decision maker. This perspective offended people within the community, and Brad feels they used it as an excuse "not to be friends with him or to learn or to try."

*Treatment of older people.* Some immigrant participants talked about the great respect that older people are due in their cultures and how upset they are to see that so many older people are put in seniors' homes in Newfoundland. Ana Maria has learned that she cannot share this view with her co-workers because they will tell her that they do

not have time to take proper care of their parents, but she exclaimed in the interview: “they were there to change your diaper when you were small, now you don’t have time to change their diaper when they need you in their old age!... Okay, those are some of the things which are really difficult for us to digest.” Another interview participant, Raju, also made a point to mention that when parents age, their children “help them. We are not sending them to the other place, adult home. We always care food and medicine and everything. Yes, they stay with us.”

*Religion.* Several participants pointed out that immigrants moving to their communities are not Christian. They suggested this might have several effects. First, some immigrants will travel huge distances to St. John’s to practice in the province’s only mosque, Hindu temple, or Sikh gurdwara. As well, local participants originally from other provinces shared how important their churches had been to their adaptation. David mused that: “Churches are often...they’re an important means by which people can be accommodated or adjusted into a community, but.... If you’re Muslim, where do you worship? How do you worship?” Grace mused along similar lines when she shared that non-Christians would not have that same religious community to call on: “they don’t have that connection.”

Even Christian immigrants, however, reported that they had had difficulty adjusting to local people’s perception of their faith (or vice versa). In Amor’s small town, the local people go to an evangelical church, but she and her family go to another church in a nearby community. She heard through a friend that there was a rumor in town that her family was not Christian “because we don’t go to their church, we wear jeans, we are not Christians.” She credits that assumption for being one of the reasons they haven’t

been embraced by their community. In the case of Ana Maria, however, she is quite a devout Christian and has been shocked when her co-workers express how small a role religion plays in their lives.

***Education and profession.*** As referenced in the literature review, immigrants have higher levels of formal education, make more money, and are unemployed less than local people (Murphy & de Finney, 2008a). Some immigrant participants suggested that these differences might set them apart from some people in their communities. Frank explained that when he and his wife arrived several decades ago, most people in their area finished their schooling by grade eight in order to work and make money for their families, and so the “same depth of education” wasn’t there. That for them was “the single biggest thing that we really came up against.” Although young people go much further in their formal schooling than when Frank and his wife arrived, they are still struck sometimes by “how little knowledge there is of what the outside world actually is.”

Feeroz has found that when he interacts with people in his community who only completed high school, “after ten minutes even that person starts feeling awkward...because I can’t talk about hockey. I don’t know much about music. I don’t know about basketball, so there is no other common point to talk about.” A born and bred Newfoundlander shared a similar thought about immigrants who had come through his community. Their level of formal education, he thought, sets them apart and means that they do not necessarily have a lot in common with some in the community:

I got that impression from a lot of the really well educated folks who were coming through, that they may have been big fish in small pond...there’s only so much

times you can talk about the weather...now, me, I was quite happy to go down and talk to him [an immigrant doctor] or go down and talk to Aunt Molly down the road and have a cup of tea with her, and, you know, so it didn't really matter to me, but I can see that that would be an issue for some folks.

High levels of formal education and the professional status of immigrants may sometimes set them apart from the local people in their communities.

*Self-sufficiency and the outdoors.* The fourth area of perceived difference between immigrants and locals was the idea that immigrants and locals spend their leisure time differently. More specifically, participants talked about how locals love to do activities that make them more self-sufficient, and that they are very tied to the outdoors. In contrast, some people suggested that immigrants were not interested in local activities; it was not part of their culture, or they didn't have the skills. Some immigrant participants supported this notion, but others pointed out that they were interested in local activities, but didn't have the means to participate. One participant talked about how he had sought out local activities in order to engage with the local community.

Participants from both populations talked about how many people in rural Newfoundland spend a large part of their leisure time going out to the cabin, hunting, berry picking, fishing, snowmobiling, or building or repairing something that makes all of the aforementioned activities possible. Frank, a long-time immigrant, has found that men in his community are into "more hands-on type things rather than sitting around talking about things or whatever.... A lot of the men," he adds with amazement, "their idea of a good time is head out into the woods in winter and spending the day cutting down trees. And this is fun!" Frank made it clear in his interview that he was impressed

by Newfoundlander's self-sufficiency, but he had to admit, "I was never very good with wood." Local Jane suggested that if immigrants want to become more like Newfoundlanders, they would have to become more comfortable "at taking care of themselves and being self-sufficient...whereas I don't think a lot of people that come from away have those same skills."

Not unlike Frank, several immigrant participants shared that they were not really interested in spending time at a cabin or hunting and are more likely to stay close to home. Francine, for example, admits that she is amazed by people's need to "migrate to [*sic*] even more isolated and smaller place" in the summer or on the weekends. Having been raised in a large European city, Francine reports that sitting in her backyard "is isolated enough."

Some immigrants, however, are interested in "local" activities. Although she is interested, Amor has not had the chance because she does not have the connections or knowledge to make it work: "I don't have a boat, so I can't go boating with the rest. I don't know how to fish. Nobody's inviting me to fish. So how can you go?" Another immigrant participant, however, had thought very strategically about what he could do in his spare time in rural Newfoundland, and he sought out the courses and permits necessary to become a hunter. He realized that because there are not a lot of amenities in the area, he would have to seek out his own fun: "that's why I'm into all these things hunting, fishing. That makes me engaged." Through hunting he has learned about the local area and made several friends who have the same hobby.

Many Newfoundlanders in rural areas enjoy being in the outdoors and the self-sufficient activities that make it possible. There is a perception among many local people

that immigrants are not interested in these same activities, and although many immigrant participants agreed with this notion, there were also those that had taken on local hobbies and/or had expressed an interest but lacked the means.

**Local context of perceptions towards immigrants.** In order to better understand participants' understanding of differences between immigrants and locals, it is important to describe the related socio-economic context. As mentioned in Chapter Three, there has been a long history of outmigration in Newfoundland. Although the province's economy is stronger than it may ever have been due to oil exploration, "ironically, and cruelly for rural communities, oil and gas fields have been found primarily on the Grand Banks, closest to St. John's" (Lepawsky et al., 2010, p. 332). As a result, all but a "few select urban centres linked to St. John's along the TransCanada highway" are "experiencing dramatic population loss, a factor especially prevalent in the province's outport peripheries" (Lepawsky et al., 2010, p. 330). Some participants suggested that locals may be envious because immigrants are part of an opposite trend and are finding gainful employment in some of the areas they vacated. As one self-proclaimed CFA participant, David, put it:

far too many Newfoundlanders that we know have family elsewhere, because they've had to go elsewhere for work. For them, that's often a personal tragedy when the family gets split up or dispersed like that. And they look at us as being different because our whole job experience is different. We're coming to Newfoundland for work; they're going away from Newfoundland for work.

These opposing trends of rural Newfoundlanders leaving for work, and people “from away” (whether CFA or immigrant) moving in, may, at a minimum, help build envy within the Newfoundland population.

A second contextual theme that rang strong through local participants’ perspectives of immigration to rural Newfoundland is the idea that immigrants use the province as a stepping stone to another part of the country. Many local participants pointed to foreign-trained physicians’ need to get a Canadian license and talked about their time in rural Newfoundland as a time when “they’re studying and they’re anxious to move it along. So ‘the quicker I can get there, the quicker I can get on with the certification I need for better and greener pastures.’”(Grace). Peter also suggested that many immigrants in his area do not tend to stay long, and he feels they “see it as a stepping stone and a place you know to advance their career and maybe get their kids through some of their schooling and that’s about it. He suggested that those immigrants who do not plan to stay very long do not have the same kind of pride in the community that local people do.

In one local focus group, however, a couple of participants contested the assumption that immigrants see rural Newfoundland only as a stepping stone in their careers. Brad suggested that when government employees are starting their careers, they often volunteer to work in more remote and isolated areas in order to get their foot in the door. As a result, he feels that it is unfair for local people to suggest that only immigrants are using rural Newfoundland as a jumping off point for something “bigger and better.” Brad went on to say that whether rural Newfoundland is a stepping stone may depend on how welcoming the community is:

If they get a positive reaction, then it may not be a stepping stone whatsoever; they could be very content and may stay for a very, very long time....I think if they get a cold reaction then, yes, it becomes a stepping stone, and for us it may be a rationalization to say, “well they didn’t stay because they weren’t planning on staying anyway. It’s nothing about us.” We’d not dare say that “well, we didn’t do a good job in inviting them and helping them become good members of our community.” It was “well, they weren’t planning on staying anyway, they were only trying to get to St. John’s or Toronto or Vancouver” right. So we justify it. Although Brad and some of his focus group members question the framing of immigrants using rural Newfoundland as a stepping stone, the construct is quite ingrained in local people’s understanding of immigration to their communities. In addition to the phenomenon of a huge outmigration from rural Newfoundland, it contributes to the context within which immigrants are operating and adapting.

**Issues of reception.** During this study, participants talked about a variety of issues that influence how immigrants are received in rural Newfoundland. This section explores how immigrant professionals are welcomed into rural communities as well as how social identity boundaries are at play.

***Professionals are welcome.*** Immigrant and local participants alike addressed the important roles that immigrants are playing in rural communities and suggested that this high social status trumps racist behavior and perhaps even racist thought. This construction is what mathematicians would call a transitive relation (or transitive property). That is, if A equals B and Z equals B, therefore A must equal Z. In this case, if professionals equal respect, and people of color equal professionals, therefore people of

color equal respect (or at a minimum this respect for their important role will trump racist behavior). I now describe how this transitive relation plays out in this very specific context.

Immigrants and locals alike talked about how professionals, in particular health professionals, are treated with respect. One local woman, Diane, talked about how, when she was a kid, going to the doctor was a big event: “when I was growing up...anybody who you did meet that was of a different race was a professional, and in my family you treated professionals with respect. We got dressed up to go to the doctor’s office.”

Another local woman talked about how one of the few immigrants in her community (a man of color) “is like second to God here because he’s a doctor.” [her emphasis]

Time and time again, participants talked about how people of color in their communities generally are professionals. Immigrant participant Frank explained this exact point: “Anybody who looks different is probably, like I said, professional.” An immigrant of color herself, Amor admitted that this assumption has benefits: “when you see somebody of my color they would be thinking, maybe she’s a doctor, which is good for us.”

One of the benefits that some participants suggested might be at play is that this important role that people of color play in their communities (or in some cases, the role that people assume they are playing) prevents racist behavior. Francine explained how she felt this dynamic was at play. She pointed out that her community was unlike other larger Canadian cities in that “immigration of visible minority has been limited to doctors.” As a result, she suggested that if “you see black guys in the street, you don’t make any racist comment because this guy might save your life tomorrow in the ER.”

She continued: “Even after 9/11, okay, we have a number of Arabic doctor at the hospital, and everybody love [*sic*] them. Nobody blinked an eye you know, and because ‘he’s our doctor, he saved my grandmother last week.’”

Several other participants recognized that immigrants with professional positions are treated well, but only very occasionally would a participant wonder if this important role serves as the basis for the type of welcome an immigrant receives. However, David, a local participant, mused, “the medical professional draws a lot of folks from elsewhere, and I wonder, too, if that is because you’re providing a necessary service, they’re so happy to have you.”

*Social identity dynamics.* This section explores various social identity dynamics that participants suggested are at play in immigrants’ reception in rural Newfoundland. Social identity is “the assumed need for differentiation” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 84), which can lead to “social categorization-social identity-social comparison” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 84). In this case, some participants suggested that racial and cultural differences may present challenges; others said that there is a general unease with difference. Yet other participants talked about occasions when jealousy and competition influenced immigrant’s experiences in their community.

*Cultural and racial differences may present challenges.* Interestingly, it was white participants who spoke most about how race and ethnicity might influence an immigrant’s welcome. Miles and David, an immigrant and local, respectively, although interviewed separately, admitted that they wondered if the reception would be different depending on someone’s race. Miles mused:

I think I get treated probably a bit differently because I'm [nationality] and also possibly because I'm white. I don't know, because I have no experience of that but ... I'm not saying it would be different or it wouldn't be different, I'm saying I don't know, but that's a question I'm interested in.

Similarly, David thought out loud about the experience of a black African-born colleague of his. The larger and more cosmopolitan community where they both live, he assumes is more welcoming, but he wondered what her experience would be like in a smaller community: "I don't know what it would be like for [her].... She is, not only different, but really exotic."

At the other end of the spectrum of difference are those immigrants from England and Ireland, and participants talked about how the strong ties that Newfoundland continues to feel toward that part of the world would result in somebody from there getting a warmer reception. For "anybody outside of that," Carol admitted "it's got to be a real challenge."

*Fear of difference.* Some immigrants have felt rejected and feared by some in the community where they now live. In one case, a white, elderly patient refused to be treated by his immigrant medical professional (a person of color). In another focus group, participants felt they had been stereotyped and feared by young people (around 15 - 25 years old). "What we have realized," Nagesh explained:

is that they are really afraid of us sometime. Yeah, they are really afraid of us...they may think that we are terrorist [*sic*] [laughter from group], just kidding but, yeah. When I talked to some people out here...he said that "Are there lots of terrorism in [country of origin]?" I have never seen a terrorist ever in my lifetime!

I have never seen. So the information that they get about [country of origin] is sometimes wrong. They think that everybody is terrorist, and everybody have [sic] a gun you know.

Interestingly, the participants in that focus group agreed that it was this specific age group that was particularly intolerant and presumptive in their beliefs. Those that were younger and older than this age group, they argued, were far more accepting.

*Jealousy and competition.* The third social identity dynamic that is at play is the juxtaposition of jealousy and competition. Participants talked about how some local people may be jealous of immigrant success, and how situations may be described within a competitive framework. Carol, and others, suggested that this might be reflective of a “crab mentality”<sup>15</sup> that she feels exists in rural areas. She feels that sometimes when we see “somebody else move forward, then there’s that ‘well, why do they have that? Why do they deserve that?’” Feeroz feels that local people ask similar questions when they learn how successful he has been in the province. He feels they see his success without realizing the time, money, and effort it took:

He doesn’t see that I came to Canada four years back, I had to work my ass getting into a university over here. I studied for two years, and then I became a [health professional]....So nobody sees that, it’s like “oh man, he’s a new immigrant and he’s doing so well whereas we’ve been born, brought up, and we’re still ...”

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<sup>15</sup> The crab mentality refers to the folk belief that if you put a bunch of crabs in a bucket, you do not need to put a lid on it because as soon as one crab begins to escape (read: succeed) the other crabs will pull it down. Interestingly, in Philipsen’s (1976) study of Teamsterville, one of his participants “described the neighborhood as a big crawfish barrel from which everyone tries to crawl out and in which everyone resents those few who succeed in reaching the top” (p. 19).

This attitude not only frustrates Feeroz, but he suggests it negatively influences how local people interact with him.

Carol feels that this crab mentality was also a factor in something an immigrant friend of hers experienced. After being persuaded by government officials to move his successful business to the island, her friend built a successful business which employed several local people. However, after some time, things began to go wrong. A disease ravaged the animals his business depended on, and some local people accused him of introducing it to the province. Then the animals were released on a couple of occasions, and the family began to feel threatened by gunshots they heard nearby and by a knife left in a tire of their car. Eventually, the man lost his business and with it millions of dollars before leaving the province. His friend explained, however, that the money was secondary: “He would always say to me ‘one thing I always have is my integrity and respect. And I lost that here.’” Although this case is no doubt a rare one, it illustrates what can happen when a community frames immigration within a competitive frame and questions the right of someone to succeed in the place they call home.

### **Interaction and Connection**

The third dimension which characterizes the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland is that of interaction and connection with fellow immigrants and the larger community. This section starts by describing immigrants’ connections to the local community and the complexities that can involve. Some immigrants reported that Newfoundland is home, but the aforementioned differences can create challenges to interaction, and some immigrants feel socially isolated as a result. However, employment, involvement in the community, and children’s activities can help

connect immigrants to the larger community. That said, intimate interaction between local people and new immigrants in particular is fairly rare, and participants framed interaction between the groups as educational and entertaining events. After describing the immigrant-local community connection, I discuss an individual immigrants' connection to their fellow immigrants. Participants described their fellow countrymen in particular as their new family—as people who offered both tangible and intangible social support in ways that were invaluable and greatly assisted them in their adaptation.

**Connection to the local community.** How immigrant participants talked about their connection to the communities in which they lived varied greatly. Some felt it was the place in the world closest to their hearts; the place in which they would like to spend their last days. Others did not feel accepted by the community and described living a very socially isolated life. This section describes both of these lived experiences, the factors that may be at play, and the paradoxes it offers.

*Newfoundland as home.* Mercy and Frank both arrived in Newfoundland from their countries of origin over 30 years ago. Although the interview and focus group protocol did not broach the subject, they both made a point to mention that Newfoundland is now their home. In fact, they both identify not only with the province, but more specifically with one community. Mercy identifies with the community she first moved to (but hasn't lived in for 35 years), and Frank identifies with the small town he moved to after studying in St. John's. In fact, when Mercy compared her country of origin and the Newfoundland town where she now lives to the little community she arrived to all those decades ago, she said there is no contest where she would hope to

spend the rest of her days. “My home is in [small community]; that’s where my heart is” she explained.

Frank also talked about his connection to the town where he and his wife live and pointed out, “we’ve got no regrets about where we fetched up.” He talked extensively about how he feels part of the community, and how it has changed him. “I’m definitely not the same person; I’ve learnt a lot in the area,” he explained. He now feels comfortable spending time with locals as well as with people who are “from away.” However, if he is in a situation where he feels local culture or values are being questioned, “I would identify more with the local people in the area.” For example, when he hears tourists complain about the way things are in rural Newfoundland, he finds he defends:

what people here do as opposed to what they should do according to other people.

So in that sense, I will say that I’ll straddle. I’m on both sides of the fence. I must have very long legs now, but yeah, I think that’s where I’d put myself.

Later in that same interview, when asked if he had any advice for a hypothetical new immigrant on how they might adapt to the area, Frank returned to this idea that sometimes people “from away” will patronize locals by suggesting how things might be done better. He recommended: “don’t assume that just because you know more things, perhaps, that makes you any better than they are, or we are. I’m going to say than we are.” That intentional switch of pronouns makes clear which side of “the fence” Frank ultimately feels he fits best on.

***Challenges that differences create.*** The attributed differences between immigrants and locals that were laid out in the theme suggest two additional challenges that can influence an immigrant and his/her relationship with the local community. First,

the isolation of some locals means that there is a lack of understanding on what the immigrant experience might be like. Second, the roles that immigrants play in their communities (and the related power distance) appear to influence immigrant-community interactions.

*Lack of understanding of immigrant experience.* Although Newfoundlanders are more well travelled than in decades past, participants did talk about how some community members have little understanding of the world outside of the island, so they are, therefore, “more insular in their thinking” (René). Yuen-Mei, who came to the province several decades ago, is still surprised by the extreme isolation of some locals:

I find, funny thing...some people they are born here, live here, and they die here. They never leave the island. They don't know what airplanes are like. They don't know what a ferry's like. They didn't get the opportunity, I suppose. Or they got no reason to. They're born here, their life is fishing so they're fishing, and then they live and get old.

Not surprisingly, this cultural isolation means that many locals lack exposure to and information about other cultures and issues related to race. It also means that rural Newfoundlanders rarely have an understanding of what the experience of immigrating might be like: not speaking the dominant language, being a visible minority, experiencing culture shock. This lack of understanding frequently was raised by immigrants. Amor, for example, recounted a harrowing story of her first week in the province. She arrived in the province in the middle of a snow storm in January, “and it was, desolate...you can't even see the next building; it's full of snow.” Even though she had been recruited for a job, she noted, “I think the organization did not have much experience of other cultures because

they expected me to find my own way. So nobody picked me up.” Disappointed and maybe a little overwhelmed, she made her way to her hotel, but moved out shortly after into a basement apartment. There she was lent a blanket and an air mattress, but the person had forgotten to include the pump. Not wanting to appear needy and ungrateful, she did not say anything, and she slept on the floor in this strange, dark apartment and tried to ignore the sounds of her neighbors having sex in the apartment next door. In the week that followed, she lived on a package of noodles and cheap meat as she only had \$10 to her name while waiting to get paid. In retrospect, she realizes that she should have said something to her employers. As she explained, “I don’t think they know how to anticipate our needs; they just assume you’re here so you would know what it’s going to be like.”

*Power distance.* A second challenge that can influence an immigrant and his or her relationship with the local community is the influence of power distance. Power distance describes a situation where a person’s or group’s status (because of factors like their age or profession, for example) creates distance between them and others. Participants referred to power distance and its relation to professionals in their community (particularly doctors) indirectly but frequently. As mentioned earlier, Diane talked about how as a child she got dressed up to meet with the doctor, and Sasha said the doctors in her community were second only to God. Mercy, when referring to trying to get a multicultural group formed in her community, said:

It’s very difficult to assemble, to get people and especially that person [*sic*] they are up there, you know what I mean? [Interviewer: In the hierarchy, yes?] In the

hierarchy. There [*sic*] are just a little bit different to get together that way or to get their input or something like that.

Many of the immigrants in Mercy's community are doctors, and even as an immigrant herself, Mercy suggests there may be a social distance between her and the doctors.

Only one participant directly suggested how power distance might influence interaction between immigrants and their communities. Scott spoke about immigrant clergy who had moved into his community, and how they were very astute in their approaches to interacting with the community: "Whereas before you might never see—it was always a kind of social distance between doctors and lawyers and priests and the 'common people'—but these folks they kind of had that little bit of ability to interact." An immigrant's important role in the community, then, may mean that there is a perceived power distance between them and local people.

Two instances during the data-analysis period confirmed that power distance may be an important factor in immigrant-community interaction. First, at a diversity symposium I attended, a local man spoke up and mentioned that he would like local communities to be more welcoming, but that local people are not sure what to say or do with doctors. Second, during member check, a friend pointed out that a mutual friend (a white Anglophone Canadian woman, incidentally), who has worked as a doctor in rural Newfoundland, has found that locals were very friendly with her, but kept her at a distance. She felt it was because she was a doctor.

***Social isolation and the paradox of visibility.*** Many participants talked about social isolation. Immigrant participants talked about how they felt that many locals were "separate," and that they felt lonely; local participants recognized that many might feel

lonely and pointed particularly to the experience of the spouses of working professionals and their social isolation. Situations such as those of spouses point to the paradox of the visibility and invisibility of the immigrant experience.

Immigrant descriptions of the community where they live or their larger social environment often mentioned circles that they cannot get into—close-knit communities that have pre-established relationships and roles that do not easily include new immigrants. As Amor sees it in her community: “if you’re not a family member, you’re not childhood friends, they don’t have much time for you.” She has found this very “disheartening.” Alejandro even pointed out this division in reference to a friend of his: “Although she was friendly, and I’ve also noticed this with some other people I’ve interacted with, very friendly, but there is a sort of.... I have this feeling that Newfoundlanders feel this sort of separateness to them.” This separateness, and the social isolation that it helps create, was one of the first themes to clearly emerge during data collection. When asked what local people did in their spare time, some immigrants answered things such as, “I think I have no idea. I just do my thing, and they do theirs” (Yuen-Mei), and “I’m not sure” (Manjeet).

Amor used to live in a Newfoundland community where she had a great relationship with her neighbors, but in the community where she lives now, she feels like an outsider and does not really know what people do: “I can’t even tell you. They have a main church here. They go to church on Sundays. They probably have cooked dinner, a

jiggs dinner<sup>16</sup> on Sundays with family members. Aside from that, really nothing...I really don't know a lot about these people. It's sad.”

What results from this separateness and social isolation is a loss of social support and loneliness. Even an immigrant who married into a local family talked about how lonely she felt for the first few years she was in the province. In fact, she feels that because she was surrounded by family, she did not make greater efforts to make friends:

It took me a longer time to develop a network of friend [*sic*] than if I had been in a city with my husband with no relative, because being Newfoundland, my husband is from a family of 15.... And everybody knew me because I was the [nationality] girl, I didn't know anybody because there's 500 of [family] here. So it was scary in that sense and lonely in that sense.

She added that she does not think the loneliness “would have been easier anywhere else,” and that it was part of the experience of adapting to life in Canada.

Local participants raised the issue of the loneliness that immigrants may be feeling as well. They wondered if immigrants had a hard time meeting people and mixing in, and one woman suggested that a small town may be the worst place to be lonely: “I mean if you're going to be in a place like [small community], that is one of the things you shouldn't be is lonely, really. I mean if you're going to be lonely, go to [larger community] or St. John's, and do more things. At least you've got things to do.”

If there was one group of people that locals are aware might be lonely, it is the spouses of working physicians. Many participants raised this issue, and in one focus

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<sup>16</sup>As referenced earlier, jiggs dinner, or boiled dinner as some call it, is a Newfoundland traditional food that is usually made on Sundays. It is made by boiling various root vegetables in a pot with salt beef for several hours.

group, a participant had a direct link to someone in that exact situation. Grace had been hired to visit a woman and teach her English, and she admitted it was “kind of sad to be in that spot.” The woman was always really reluctant to have her tutor leave, and Grace found it “difficult to explain why you couldn’t come more often...an eye opener in that sense because we don’t know that stuff .... I don’t think we realize really what it’s like, and they feel very intimidated.” Ann had a similarly eye-opening experience when she met some spouses of physicians at a social function: “they didn’t know anybody, and just to have that exposure to them and to sort of start talking with them and learn how things were different for them as opposed to me as a spouse was really interesting, and I thought ‘b’y, I have a lot to learn here.’”

The social isolation of some immigrants in rural Newfoundland offers a strange paradox of sorts. In many ways, they are highly visible in their community through their race but also through their public roles as doctors, nurses, teachers, and company executives. However, some are also often invisible within their communities. Many locals reported how surprised they were to see cultural and racial diversity in their communities at annual events, and some expressed surprise and amazement, as Sasha did, that in their small communities “we don’t see them very often.” Mercedes, for example, recounted a time when she had a doctor’s appointment, and met a doctor she hadn’t met before. When he said he had been in the town of less than 3,000 for a full year, she was blown away: “My goodness he’s been here a year! I hadn’t even seen him anywhere. Not in the supermarket, not anywhere.”

Unfortunately, being invisible and socially disconnected can mean that one can disappear as easily as one can appear. In an early interview, René talked about an

immigrant man who had been seen walking around his community. René had waved at him “but he hasn’t become involved in anything in town, so the people wave at him, but that’s as far as it goes, right.” No one knew anything else about him other than the country he was from, where he was working, and the fact that he was not a good driver. A couple of months later, another participant from the same area, Laura, described a person that sounded like it was the same man. The man had since had a car accident, and his car was crushed. After that incident, people in the community “noticed that he wasn’t around anymore.” Laura mused, “so you know, I kind of wonder if they’re finding it hard to mix in and get to know a few people, and frankly it’s lonely.” Mr. X left as quietly as he arrived without anyone learning any more about him. Although his story is perhaps more dramatic than most, it is one extreme on a spectrum of loneliness that many immigrants have experienced at one time or another.

*Apprehension and social drive.* When talking about how immigrants could adapt to their new lives, several participants argued that interaction could make this possible. That said, many of the local participants admitted they felt a great degree of apprehension around communicating with an immigrant or inviting them over for supper. Interestingly, however, both immigrants and locals argued that the type of immigrant that is best equipped to adapt to a new place is one who is extroverted, outgoing, and takes the initiative to get to know their community and its people.

Newfoundlanders pride themselves on being friendly to strangers and being generous hosts. In this study, however, local participants expressed a great deal of apprehension around talking to immigrants and inviting them into their home. They worry that they might offend by saying or asking the wrong thing, or that they might fail

as good hosts by making them a food that they cannot or will not eat. As Brad put it “people are reluctant to take on something new that they know very little about for fear of doing something wrong, right? .... like you don’t want to be doing things that are offensive, so you may steer away from it.”<sup>17</sup>

Several participants talked about a general hesitancy to interact with immigrants for fear of doing something wrong. Scott, for example, admitted that although he would drop by for a spontaneous chat with most people in his community (a very common occurrence in rural Newfoundland), he would be hesitant to do that with an immigrant “because they come from somewhere else where there are a different set of cultural norms.” Brad admitted that he had a similar hesitancy when considering whether he should become roommates with Samson, a new immigrant to his community:

I got to tell you... I mean, I was a young person. I mean 20 years or less years of age, and here I was, I knew the perception in the community of this person, of course he was a different race and how was this going to work out? Like was I going to find myself still without somewhere to live when I was involved with the university because the differences were so great? And I was willing to take the risk?

Despite the apprehension, Brad moved in with Samson, and they became “exceptional friends.” Now Brad credits that friendship as having taught him that making friends from other cultures “is not an unsafe thing to do, this is probably a good thing to do and I

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<sup>17</sup> During member check, an immigrant woman who has spent most of her life in the province, confirmed that people do genuinely worry about offending, but that it can also become a crutch or excuse for why they may not make the effort to get to know an immigrant.

shouldn't have that great reluctance." He adds "I think it was because of that spending time, living with him for a year that he changed that for me."

Other participants, however, still have that reluctance that Brad overcame. They reported an apprehension for communicating with immigrants for fear that they do not speak English, that they (the locals) might say something offensive, that they might accidentally bring up a topic that will strike a bad chord. As Laura explained, what if someone asked someone from Somalia, "what happened to you over there?" As a result, she suggests "I think we're a little bit reluctant to ask too much you know; we're a bit shy."

The final and very specific example of some local people's apprehension around interacting with immigrants is regarding the idea of having them over for supper. This apprehension encompassed several elements of the potential event: asking a stranger over for dinner, the time they might eat, what they like to eat, what their religion allows them to eat, if their guest speaks enough English that they can carry on a conversation, if they could be a good host. As Jane said "I think there might be a bit of hesitancy on the part of people who are from here to be involved with people who migrate here from somewhere else in that way... 'well, they eat different, I wouldn't have anything that they like.'" In talking about how welcoming immigrants should have a more personal touch (as opposed to written introductory material from the municipality), Sasha admitted she would have a hard time inviting a stranger over for supper; Mercedes, a friend of Sasha's who spontaneously joined the interview, said she would not mind doing the inviting, but realized that she would need to know about their culture. She went on to say that there are many people in the area who might serve pork to a Jewish person, not knowing they

cannot eat it, and “some of the people around here just would not know that and might be insulted if they came and they didn’t take any [pork].”

Despite or perhaps because of this apprehension and hesitation on the part of local participants, both locals and immigrants talked about the importance of an immigrant being both extroverted and taking the initiative to meet people and learn about the community. Mabel, a CFA who moved to Newfoundland some time ago, was adamant that new people have to be outgoing: “If you are not, you are not going to meet people and get to know people...you’ve really got to make an effort because [locals] tend just to go on their own. But I feel sorry for somebody who comes in here who is not outgoing.” Local Diane agreed. She said that an immigrant’s experience of her community will depend on whether they are outgoing or not. If they are more shy or reserved, she feels their experience will be more difficult. New immigrant Manjeet, confessed, “I am not that extrovert [*sic*] as such,” but he would recommend that if they want to adapt, immigrants must “go out and interact with people” and “have a trusting thing [*sic*] in each other and don’t be too reserved.”

Participants reported several instances when taking initiative had benefited them or someone they knew. Scott recounted a time when clergy moved into his area from other countries. Rather than wait for their parishioners to get to know them, they took the first steps and shared stories about where they were from and performed music at local concerts. Some of the older people of the parish had never known someone from another country, but despite their initial apprehension, they were won over because “they were making the first step...with the music and that....It was a very, very lovely thing....That was a real eye opener for a lot of people.” Like Scott, David had a story of someone

taking initiative in order to get to know his community. A newcomer in a nearby community had volunteered his services to help a neighbor shingle a house, and “as a result, he is far more accepted in the community because they can see that he wants to be part of the community.” The man showed that being in the community “isn’t just buying at our local grocery store but helping out.”

As much as participants recognized that being outgoing and taking initiative reaped rewards, some local participants recognized that it is easier said than done. As mentioned earlier, Sasha confessed that she would be apprehensive to go visit a new person out of the blue, “but if it’s hard for me to do that to someone coming into town, how hard it is for someone coming into town to knock on someone’s door and say, “Can you help me?” There was a recognition that this would be particularly hard for those who have limited English: “if you don’t speak the language, I can’t imagine how you would do it,” Beverley mused.

***Opportunities to connect.*** On the other hand, not all participants focused solely on interaction apprehension. Some also talked about how immigrants are (and could be) connected with the larger community. When they did speak about this, they focused primarily on three locations/activities: the workplace, volunteering, and children’s activities.

***Workplace.*** Participants talked about their employment as a place to make friends, and a place to learn about each other’s cultures. Some immigrants who arrive into jobs (or whose spouses had arrived to a job) talked about how fortunate that made them. They talked about how that job gave them “an instant community” (Miles). Frank pointed out that in their rural community they were the only foreigners, so they had to make friends

with locals. In fact, they “fell in with a group of people,” primarily colleagues, and because of the nature of his work and the size of the town they

got to meet and know an awful lot more people than we ever did in St John’s.

That’s one thing, basically, you know everybody...it’s a lot simpler just to sort of stop and talk to somebody here than it is in [St. John’s], and so you do feel part of a larger community, if you like.

Several participants talked about how these work relationships offer an opportunity for immigrants to share something of their culture and for local colleagues to learn about it. Immigrant participants talked about how some workplaces, such as hospitals, have increasing numbers of people from certain countries; therefore, other staff members are learning more about those countries and their cultures. This learning ranges from sampling new kinds of food to discussions around various countries’ work processes and protocols. Ana Maria explained that her co-workers want to know about her culture and beliefs, and sometimes she is bombarded by questions. As much as it sounds like she is sometimes overwhelmed with their curiosity, she says “they take it in, so the next time when such a situation occurs they know what we will think, they know how we react. Because...now they are kind of a bit versed with our culture.”

*Community involvement.* The second way that participants talked about immigrants connecting to the larger community is regarding community involvement. This involvement can take the form of joining a sports team, but it also might be joining a quilting society, or helping raise money for the local hospital. One benefit of getting involved with a community group is meeting new people. As René explained:

the easiest way to become part of the community is to become a member of one of the volunteer groups, either through the church...there's all kinds of different venues for doing things. They're very welcoming now. I mean, if you show up and start helping out, they embrace you, and you become part of the community; everybody gets to know you then. That's the most direct route to getting to know people in the community I would say.

Another benefit of getting involved with a community group is an immigrant can prove his or her interest in the community's well-being. Sasha suggested this while talking about two immigrants in her community—one a well-established immigrant, and the other a brand new arrival. She talked about tangible steps these two men had taken to do their bit to improve the community. One regularly volunteers to raise money for the hospital, and the other offered to donate to the community's Christmas light show after attending the event for the first time. It was obvious in talking to Sasha that these efforts were appreciated by other community members.

*Children as connectors.* A third way that immigrants connect to their communities is through their children; Children connect their parents to other people and events in the community because they often are less reserved than the adults. Miles pointed out, for example, that his kids love living in their community because “they can have a conversation with anyone. Nobody's too busy to stop and talk to them for like five or ten minutes you know, and it's just really nice.” The fact that his kids are treated like that by strangers gives him and his wife “that sort good sort of family vibe” from their new community. Local woman Diane talked about how she had met immigrant mothers

at her children's playgroup, and how great it has been to see children get along despite different levels of English.

In addition, immigrant parents often are linked to other parents through school and extracurricular activities. That might be a choir concert, a bottle drive, or hockey practice. As Ann said, by ensuring "that their kids are involved in local [activities]" immigrant parents are "connect[ing] with other parents who have kids," and by extension the larger community. It ensures that they become "part of the whole community dynamics" (Leah).

*Intimate interaction rare.* Despite opportunities for interaction, immigrant participants point out that intimate interaction between locals and new immigrants in particular is fairly rare. As Peggy put it, she has found people friendly, but still "it's kind of hard to make friends, like, real friends." Participants suggested a number of reasons why this might be the case. As mentioned before, many rural communities are tight knit, and there are many perceived cultural differences between both groups. In addition, participants cited a lack of locations where they can go to meet people, the transient nature of immigrants' careers, and the chaotic schedules of medical professionals as reasons why immigrants and locals may not interact more intimately. This section explores how participants framed interaction between locals and immigrants as an educational and entertaining event. I end with a discussion of the benefits of more intimate interaction.

*Interaction as educational and/or entertaining event.* A couple of the questions within the interview and focus group protocol asked what sorts of things were happening around town that might see immigrants and locals interacting and/or learning about each

other's cultures. Time and time again, participants pointed to formal community events; very rarely were informal relationships (such as family, friends, or neighbors) mentioned. This interaction and connection subtheme focuses on how interaction is framed as an event that educates and/or entertains local people.

When asked what things might happen around town that would have people from different cultures meeting and learning about each other, people typically would answer as Hope did: "I think it's probably limited." When prompted, however, local participants in particular would mention that annual community festivals bring out the whole town. Those events, however, do not necessarily offer a format for learning about immigrants' cultures. When participants talked specifically about cultural learning, in the great majority of cases, they focused on times when immigrants share, and locals learn (despite the fact that the interview question asked about "learning about each other's cultures"). In only a couple of instances did participants mention how immigrants might learn about "local culture." So in the minds of most participants, then, interaction is a unidirectional educational event.

Immigrant participants talked about interaction as a necessary and important educational event. In some cases, this was literally a formal event; in others, the event is more figurative: an opportunity for sharing one's perspective or culture. Sam, for example, talked about how great it would be if his community's annual festival took on a multicultural approach so "every country has a booth and letting them know what our culture is like...just to give them an idea this is where we came from, these are our ways.... It would be nice for them to know our ways." Not all participants feel that this approach is effective, however. Nagesh feels that telling people about his home country is

not going to truly teach them about his culture. Rather, by talking “to a person, by respecting him, by giving him value to his culture,” only by doing that will he “get an idea about what is a [nationality] person.”

Just as immigrant participants framed interaction as a teaching opportunity, so did local participants frame it as a learning opportunity. Participants from both populations talked about a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of locals, and events were described as a key way to increase understanding and awareness. Talking about a multicultural event that has happened in her community in the past, Michelle described very well the perspective of many local participants:

I think the International Food and Craft Fair is a huge piece of that, because it really does give locals...an opportunity to experience, because...they didn't grow up with multiculturalism. They didn't have Thai restaurants or, you know, Filipino restaurants or Italian. Do you know what I mean? They never had these things to experience, so to them, it's foreign. It's no fault of theirs if they never had the opportunity to be exposed, so this is giving residents an opportunity to get exposure, to appreciate the food, the crafts, you know, the history, the culture of the people that are living here now, and it gives them an opportunity to share their stories and to create friends. And I think that's really important.

Toward the end of that statement, Michelle mentioned the opportunity these events give immigrants to create friends, but it is significant that the majority of her framing of the event focuses on the lack of locals' exposure, and how they will learn from the experience.

The second piece to this framing of interaction as event is that of the entertaining nature of the event. Participants talked about new events such as the one mentioned above, which has a multicultural focus, but also longstanding events which have grown to include immigrant cultures. Scott pointed out that he loved the addition of the Hindu Temple's food tent at the Royal St. John's Regatta. It increases the visibility of that community in the province (as thousands come in from rural areas for the day) and makes those cultures and foods "accessible in an environment where you're comfortable." Scott, and other participants also talked about the importance of sharing music and stories, and how there should be more "opportunities for people to share their stories."

When participants focused on the effects of these educational and/or entertaining events, they primarily talked about the benefits they bring—how they make people more aware of who is living in their communities and what their cultures are like. Immigrants and locals alike highlighted how these events increased immigrants' visibility in the community. Mercy was happy that an event in her community "let [locals] be aware that we exist," and at a similar event, Jane thought, "oh! there's this many people living in [community], I didn't realize that, you know, who are from other countries...we're more diverse than we thought."

Although the majority of participants focused on the benefits of these multicultural events, one participant had mixed feelings about them. Diane explained that she believes race is socially constructed, and that these events tend to minimize similarities and maximize or exoticize difference. She believes that people should have ample opportunity to share their cultural heritage, but worries that sometimes the unintended result are comments such as, "look at what they eat! And look what they do!"

Finally, worth mentioning is that this framing of interaction as an educational and/or entertaining event, if only partially, may reflect the form within which many locals have encountered difference. That is, in Canada, multiculturalism often is celebrated through international dance and food and craft fairs. Funding is available for such events, and a local organization has taken one model of such an event and expanded it outside the capital city to a couple of the larger municipalities in the province.

*Benefits of intimate interaction.* It is unfortunate that intimate interaction between locals and immigrants is relatively rare, because those interactions can have lasting effects. A couple of local participants talked about such examples. Michelle, for example, has found that some new immigrants assume that North Americans do not have “strong family ties,” and that “as soon as their kids are 18, they push them out the door.” Although they may arrive with that stereotype, she has found that “once [immigrants] do reach out and meet people,” they realize that local people also have strong family ties, and “that’s a big change for them...that’s the similarity which they didn’t realize existed until they actually got to know people.”

Bride talked extensively about the friendships she developed with visiting Muslim families, and how these friendships made her reject her former assumptions about Islam and Muslims. She talked about how impressed she had been with them, of all their good qualities, and how before she had met them, her understanding of Muslim people had been developed through TV. She realizes now that that portrayal was inaccurate and unfair. For example, she learned that her Muslim friends were “very, very clean people; very, very particular” about their appearance; the women wore veils, but also a lot of makeup (“I didn’t think we’d see that”); and they were very “family oriented.” This final

quality really impressed Bride, and she talked about how the whole family would take their children and go “walking with the stroller...and they aren’t like the way that you see it on TV, you see a lot of their women are put down. Not true. No, not true really. I found that [man’s name] was very protective of his family, very much a family man.”

This experience with those families has shifted the way that Bride now understands issues on TV as well. She watched a documentary about a small U.S. American town where some Muslim citizens bought land and wanted to build a mosque, but she was horrified to learn that some townspeople had burned the lumber they’d bought: “The people of the town, my dear, are terrible. They don’t want them there...And I says [*sic*] to [friend], and I says [*sic*], “what is wrong with them [*sic*] people!” However, she went on to confess:

Now you know, Willow, before I met the [nationality], I could have been thinking the same way, “I don’t blame them for not wanting them there if they’re going to take over country and do this,” but you know something, when you meet them people, they’re human beings just like us, and they think like us, they walk like us, they bleed like us, and they believe, if anything, I think their belief is much stronger than ours. And they’re very God-fearing people, and when I look around at our church on Saturday nights or Sundays and, you know, the numbers are dropping in your churches everywhere, and I think ... well, if we were more like [nationality], we’d probably be better off you know, and they are very, very nice people. They just want people to like them. They want you to like them, and people talk about not trusting them. My dear, look, the [nationality] are more

trustworthy than most people you're going to meet in Canada...they're very honest people.

Bride attributes this huge shift in her understanding of Muslims to the intimate friendships she made with those families; without that experience, she could still “be thinking the same way.”

**Connection with fellow immigrants.** Although it is fairly rare in rural Newfoundland for there to be enough immigrants from a single country that they can form their own community, it has happened in a handful of communities. In those cases, immigrant participants talked about their fellow countrymen as family and spoke glowingly about the comfort and support these connections offer them. When Mercy arrived in Canada several decades ago, she was fortunate to join a group of about twenty others from her country. Despite being from very different parts of their country, they quickly bonded and “were like one whole big family.” Ana Maria, who arrived within the last few years, has had a very similar experience. She and her friends get together on a regular basis. Her description of their time together is not unlike how her family at home might spend time; The girls are “in the kitchen cooking all the time, slogging off in the kitchen” and, she laughed, the guys hover around trying to see what they are cooking, getting in the way of the cooks. In these friends she admitted, “I have the family here, a few family.”

These friendships offer comfort in time spent together, but they also offer support, both tangible settlement support and emotional support. Immigrants understand what the experience of being new to a place is like, and so when new people arrive from their country, they show them around, explain the official government processes they need to

go through, feed them, lend them money when finances are tight, and offer them places to stay until they find their own place. Nagesh admits that he benefited by having arrived after his friend Ahmed was already settled:

I have not faced the same difficulty that he faced because he was here. On the first day of arrival, he took me to the places we had to do all these kinds of things. So he know [*sic*] the difficulty what he faced when he came over here, so he always compensated in case of adapting us to this place.

In addition to this tangible support, immigrants also were comforted by the presence of people from their own countries. When Ana Maria first arrived she boarded with a local family, and although they did their utmost to make her feel at home, she felt “something inside keeps...it’s kind of pricking you, saying that you are alone; you’re all alone, you don’t have anyone around here.” But the moment she met up with others from her country, that feeling dissipated, and she was elated.

### **Responsibility to Change<sup>18</sup>**

The final theme for this research question, responsibility to change, discusses participants’ beliefs about who has the onus to change: immigrants, local communities, or both. It explores five arguments that participants use to support this belief, and how this debate reflects a dialectical tension between the giving and taking involved in immigration-adaptation processes.

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<sup>18</sup> Cultural adaptation, for the purposes of this study is “the entirety of the evolutionary process an individual undergoes vis-à-vis a new and unfamiliar environment” (Kim, 2005, p. 379). As an evolutionary process, adaptation, therefore, is a change process. The interview protocol included the words *change* and *adapt*, and participants used the words interchangeably. Their use in this section in particular reflects that participant reality.

When discussing immigration and adaptation, one of the largest themes to emerge was that of who has the responsibility to change—the immigrant and/or the community. Not surprisingly, there was not a consensus on this issue, and participants believed one, the other, or both should change. More interesting, however, than who should change, were the arguments that were used in support of their beliefs. Those who believed the onus was on immigrants to adapt talked about choice (e.g., “they chose to come here, so...”), over-accommodation (e.g., “we’ve already made so many changes, so...”), and numbers (e.g., “we don’t have many immigrants, so...”). Those who believed that the adaptation should be a two-way street talked about contribution (e.g., “we are filling roles they need, so...”) and retention (e.g., “they want immigrants to stay so...”). These arguments of choice, over-accommodation, numbers, contribution, and retention reveal a dialectical tension about what immigration and immigrants may be giving to or taking from rural Newfoundland.

**Immigrant has more responsibility to change.** The great majority of participants, both immigrant and local, argued that an immigrant has more of an onus to change to the environment they have moved into than the community has to adapt to them. Often participants did not specify why immigrants should adapt—just that they should. Several quoted the expression, “when in Rome, do as the Romans do” (Nagesh, Juanita, John), while others talked about mixing in with the group, going with the flow (Yuen-Mei), or assimilating (Manjeet, John). On occasion, however, participants did specify why immigrants should change, and they used arguments of choice, over-accommodation, and numbers.

**Choice.** Some participants used the frame of choice to argue why immigrants should adapt to their new environments. An immigrant has chosen to make the move to this environment; therefore, they should adapt to the dominant way of doing things. As immigrant participant Sam explained:

You're the one who's coming to a new place. And I think it's your responsibility to adapt because...they didn't ask you to come here, you're the one who's coming here...when it comes to adaptability, like day to day life I think, it's your responsibility as an immigrant to adapt their way of living.

Sam used the example of Muslim immigrants who he feels are offended when you say, "Merry Christmas" rather than "Season's Greetings." He argued that if they choose to come here to a predominantly Christian country, "you should adapt...you shouldn't come at all if you cannot face the fact that the majority of Canadians are Christians."

Participants like Sam, then, argue that by choosing to make Canada their new home immigrants, by extension, are choosing to adapt to, or at least live with, the status quo within the dominant culture. He suggests that by asking Canadians to change the way they use greetings around the holidays to accommodate some immigrants are taking something away from Christian Canadians.

**Over-accommodation.** The idea of over-accommodation emerged from the discussions of one focus group in particular. Within that discussion, several local participants agreed that immigrants are asking Canadians to change, and that Canadians are accommodating (read: giving) too much. As Beverley put it, "I think that Canadians are trying to mould into...making them accepted into our country or trying to change Canada a little bit." The changes that some of these participants thought Canadians were

being asked to make primarily revolved around religion and the perception that Muslim immigrants were not comfortable with the Lord's Prayer being said in school or comfortable with God being mentioned in the Girl Guide's prayer. Beverley attributed the Girl Guide's organizational policy change to the fact that it conflicted "with some people that they want to bring in from the mainland," and she argued that "as an organization, I don't think we should have to change so much."

Within this focus group, there was considerable discussion about who is giving and who is taking, and why. Participants like Margaret suggested that immigrants are asking for the changes, but that they should be "more give and not all take" (Margaret). Grace, however, was not sure if immigrants were asking us to make the changes, or whether "we're changing because we think, oh, that might offend them, we'd better not do it?" "We're being too nice," she suggested. In this case, being nice means that Canadians are giving up too much. This giving to accommodate different cultures, Leslie suggested has started a "backlash of 'we've accommodated enough' ..... Because now we're starting to wonder about our own identity."

**Numbers.** Immigration to rural areas of Newfoundland is still relatively rare, and some participants argued that as a result, immigrants will have to adapt to their communities rather than the other way around. As John explained:

if I go to the smaller outports,<sup>19</sup> I don't think that's a matter of, you know, we don't want to make you feel welcome or anything like that, I don't think it has anything to do with that. Part of it is ignorance and part of it is the fact that we're

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<sup>19</sup> *Outports* is a word used to describe all the small, coastal communities of Newfoundland and Labrador (Story et al., 1999).

not going to change the way we've done things because we have one family you know. So the natural trend is assimilation.

John emphasized that he feels the fact that immigrants have to assimilate has nothing to do with who Newfoundlanders are as a people, because "we're an extremely friendly, tolerant people," but that it has "everything to do with the numbers." In large cities, like Toronto, John suggests, various ethnic groups have larger numbers and the infrastructure to support their community. Rural Newfoundland, however, cannot offer, or give, those same structures because the numbers of immigrants do not warrant it. Participants like John argued, then, that while immigrant numbers are low, community members will expect immigrants to adapt to their culture and way of living.

Participants who believe that immigrants have more responsibility than others to adapt, then, use arguments of choice, over-accommodation, and numbers to explain why that is the case. Those who believe that both immigrants and communities must change, however, frame their arguments within the constructs of contribution and retention.

**Communities and immigrants both have responsibility to change.** Some immigrant participants talked about how they felt adaptation should be a give and take, a two-way street, in which communities should also make an effort to change. As Amor put it, she does not need community members to eat her food or adopt her beliefs, or overhaul the social structures just for her. However,

what I need is to have opportunities to be part of the community, to be celebrated as coming from a different set of cultural and value system that they would want to learn with, to be made to feel that this is your home for now so we'll treat you like family.

Interestingly, Amor admitted that she would not expect this of more urban areas, because they already have lots of recreation activities and various cultural communities, but in rural areas “where you rely on each other,” it is particularly important that communities take steps to change. To give back to those immigrants who are contributing to their communities perhaps because it is the right thing to do, but also because it will help retain them.

**Contribution.** Some of those participants who believe that the community as well as the immigrant should change frame their argument within the idea that they are filling roles that Canada needs filled, they therefore are contributing to the country, and the country should adapt to prove that they are welcome and can belong. A couple of participants pointed out that Canada has labor shortages, and that as immigrants, they are helping meet those shortages. For example, when asked who has the responsibility to adapt—community or individual—Rosanna admitted that she is benefitting from the work she has here. However, Canada wants workers: “they need an employee to work, and we work here. We’re paying tax, and we support the government, right? So it’s helping. I think it’s both. It’s our responsibility and local responsibility.”

Amor pointed that “I’m here because you need me as well,” and putting all of the onus on the immigrant to change devalues her “contribution to this community.” By being open to change, her community could “show that I actually can belong here.”

**Retention.** Participants also framed community adaptation to immigration as an important way of retaining immigrants. This willingness to adapt creates a welcoming atmosphere, they argued. René heard that in Labrador, the hospital system “went to great pains to bring in doctors, teach them how to use snowmobiles in the winter time, and fish

and do that kind of stuff, and the retention rate is really high.” He pointed out that as important as doing that might be, he also feels that:

If you want to make Newfoundland a desirable place for other people to come, they’ve got to feel welcomed here, right. One way of making them feel welcome is for them to be able to showcase their culture and their background, in addition to them having to take on whatever they’re surrounded by. It should be a two-way street, not all one way.

This two-way street would allow locals to get to know newcomers’ cultures “so that the newcomers aren’t always the newcomers.” Amor agreed that if an immigrant was to move to a community that’s “more accepting, that’s willing to adapt to your sense of culture as well, then you are more likely to stay in that place than if you go to a place that give [*sic*] the responsibility to you to adapt to them.” For these participants, then, a community’s willingness to adapt to its new citizens may be reflected in its ability to retain said immigrants.

Adaptation processes are change processes, and participants felt strongly about who/what should change in relation to immigration to rural Newfoundland. Some felt that it should be solely immigrants who should change to adapt to their new environment, whereas others felt that local communities would be wise to take steps to better understand immigrants, their perspectives, and experiences. Participants used arguments of choice, over-accommodation, numbers, contribution, and retention to help build their reasoning on which approach is more appropriate, effective, and/or fair. Intertwined within each of these arguments is the dialectical tension surrounding what is being gained and lost through the give and take inherent in immigration and adaptation processes.

Four themes—struggle and loss, attributions of difference, interaction and connection, and responsibility to change—emerged from this study to answer the question, “What dimensions characterize the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland?” These themes covered a broad range of topics, from the struggles and losses that immigrants can face to a discussion of the responsibilities that individuals and communities may have to change in response to immigration. This broad understanding of the immigrant-adaptation experience serves as a good foundation for a discussion of the specific communicative approaches that are hindering and helping immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference.

**RQ2: What communicative approaches have helped and hindered immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference?**

Communication plays a role in helping and/or hindering immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference. My second research question explores this communication. I present the six themes that describe the communicative approaches raised in this study: “leaving be,” “differentiating,” “acknowledging,” “opening,” “resisting,” and “bridging.” The focus of these themes is diverse, from recognizing a separation between immigrants and locals to giving value and thought to the other. Despite these different foci, each theme describes communicative approaches that have real effect on people’s lives and their communities.

By means of explanation, I offer three caveats before proceeding to describe the six communicative approaches. First, within several of the themes below, there is a mix of both approaches that help and approaches that hinder immigrant adaptation and/or community building across cultural difference. The organization of this theme is a

conscious reflection of what participants shared; sometimes it reflects differences of opinion between participants, and at other times, it reflects differences of context. Second, although the great majority of the approaches described below are those participants said they either use or have witnessed on occasion, the discussion in focus groups inspired participants to brainstorm communicative approaches that they have not necessarily heard or used, but which they feel they may help or hinder immigrant adaptation or community building. I include them here for two reasons. They reflect how research methods can influence and change how participants think about study topics, and they may reflect genuine, new approaches that participants may use in the future.

Finally, I present the themes below in order of level of what I call *mindful engagement with difference*. Mindfulness, as Ting-Toomey (2005) explains, “encourages individuals to tune in conscientiously to their habituated mental scripts and preconceived expectations” (p. 226). This attention to “old” scripts and expectations allows one to “shift one’s frame of reference,” use “new categories to understand cultural or ethnic differences,” and test alternative ways to solve problems and make decisions (Ting-Toomey, 2005). When people mindfully engage with difference through their communicative approaches, then, they are attentive to the ways they have communicated in the past and intentionally extend their thinking, and by extension their communicating, to include diversity and complexity rather than simplicity in their understanding of themselves, the other, and the relationship between the two.

At one end of this spectrum of *mindful engagement with difference* is the communication strategy I have labeled “leaving be.” This approach represents no engagement with the other (and may or may not be mindful); at the other end are

“bridging” communicative approaches that consistently demonstrate both mindfulness and engagement. I do not intend this presentation of these communicative approaches in this particular order to be considered a hierarchy of effectiveness (i.e., from least helpful to most helpful for immigrant adaptation or community building), nor is it a framework that can be applied in all contexts. Instead, it offers one frame through which we can explore communication within this specific context.

Table 4: RQ2 Results

**Leaving be**

Not asking for help  
Disengagement  
Picking your battles

**Differentiating**

Accent assessment and dialect shifts  
Where are you from?/Not from here  
Rhetoric of competition  
Uninvited comments

**Acknowledging**

Gifts and invitations  
Assistance and demonstrations of care  
Recognition

**Opening**

Asking neighbors for help  
Friendly behavior

**Resisting**

Naming racism  
Resisting “Where are you from?”

**Bridging**

Inclusion of difference and similarity  
Compromise communication  
Responsive communication

## **Leaving Be**

“Leaving be” describes communicative approaches that let a person or topic remain as is; it is a lack of engagement with said person or topic and may or may not be mindful. “Leaving be” communicative approaches include not asking for help, disengagement from fellow community members, and picking one’s battles when offensive topics come up. Participants described “leaving be” communicative approaches as hindering or having a neutral effect on immigrant adaptation and community building.

**Not asking for help.** Some immigrant participants talked about how sometimes they feel they need help that a local person might be able to provide, but they do not ask for it, because they worry about the perceptions of that person, or that asking for something could be considered demanding within their culture. The way Mercy put it was, “there’s something in our head that we’re afraid to tell them, they think that, you know...[Interviewer: Too demanding?] Yes...that kind of thing.” Amor added that she has “a strong sense of gratitude, too.” Thinking back to her situation with the mattress with no pump she went on to explain:

.... for me, somebody offered me a job, and for me to ask for more would sound like I am pushing my limits...you know, that sense of, if I ask for this, are they going to perceive me as somebody demanding and being a demanding person?...[It] goes beyond what I was raised or how I was raised, so I think [instead of] asking for something you just, sort of, endure, right?

In another interview, Ana Maria brought up the same issue. She knows local people in her community are willing to help her out, but she is hesitant because she has “a feeling

inside me. ‘What will they think of me?’” These worries about local people’s perceptions sometimes keep immigrants from asking for the assistance they need to help them adapt.

**Disengagement.** Another form of “leaving be” is disengagement from one’s fellow community members. Participants who spoke about this communicative approach agreed that it hindered immigrant adaptation and community building, and they pointed to specific examples that they, or people they knew, had experienced. Local participant Brad brought this up as it related to his friendship with Samson. As he got to know Samson, he became amazed at how little other people in his small community really knew about him. They knew he had married a local girl, and they knew his first name, but that was essentially it. No one knew how to pronounce his last name, and “even during the summers when university wasn’t happening,” Brad explained “I mean I would go down and visit him on a regular basis, but there were very few people that would take the time to go to find out who he was and to make friends with him.” Brad admitted with disappointment that despite living in a small town, Samson “was not connected, and eventually he left,” leaving behind his local family and a successful business. It was obvious from talking to Brad how frustrated he was with his community’s response to his immigrant friend:

so even in rural communities I guess the point is we know somebody who’s different, we know they’re in our community, but very rarely do we take the time to go and find out who they really are as a person, and I think that impacts whether people stay or leave.

Brad talked about how the community had not reached out to his friend, but other participants talked about how immigrants themselves were not engaging with their rural

Newfoundland communities. This lack of engagement took a few different forms (staying at home, not going to community events, and/or not waving back when community members waved at them), but the ways it could be perceived were clear. Local participants talked about how at a minimum staying alone in one's house is isolating, but it might also mean that local people assume you do not want to be a part of the community, or sometimes even that they (the immigrants) think they are somehow better than them ("puttin' on airs"<sup>20</sup>). In separate interviews, both Scott and Grace talked about how being "aloof" is not a good thing. In Scott's community, for example, they had some foreign artists move into the area and live in cabins "off by themselves on a little point of land." He admitted that perhaps they wanted the isolation in order to focus on their work, but "they haven't been perceived, rightly or wrongly, as fitting in."

Participants also brought up the importance of waving and waving back. David is a fairly private person and does not interact with his neighbors a lot "unless they start waving, and I'll wave back." Following this ritual, if you like, "gradually you coalesce," David explained. Unlike David, however, an immigrant in Scott's community, for whatever reason, did not wave back when people waved to her, and since she was a big runner and was seen around the community a lot, this became something people talked about. They began saying things like "geez, she's not very friggin' friendly," or "she's hard to get a read on,"<sup>21</sup> and the fact that she did not wave or say hello as she passed people became a strike against her, Scott explained:

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<sup>20</sup> When someone is "puttin' on airs" they are acting high and mighty and suggesting that they are better than others.

<sup>21</sup> "She's hard to get a read on" means that someone is hard to understand or hard to figure out.

That's all they want, they just want you to—they don't want to be up in your business, they don't want you to appear to be aloof or better than anybody else, you know, they just want you to fit in.

By not attending community events, by staying at home, or by not waving as you pass someone, local participants argue, you may not only isolating yourself from those around you, but also be unintentionally giving the community the impression you are not interested in them, and that you are not interested in being a part of the community in which you live.

**Picking your battles.** As mentioned earlier, some participants talked about offensive comments they had heard others say or had heard through the grapevine. In some cases, participants thought the most appropriate way to respond was not to engage with the person, but to let them be. This was particularly the case when it appeared that engaging in the topic would lead to no effect or negative outcomes. Participants did not say this communicative approach would help or hinder immigrant adaptation or community building, but instead they framed their response as “all you can do.”

René recounted an experience that a friend of a friend had when a stranger on the street asked if her non-white baby would be able to understand English when he grew up. When I asked René what one could even say after such a comment, he answered “Nothing, you pass it off as a joke, that's all you can do.” Local woman Diane spoke about how she has called friends and colleagues on comments she feels are racist, but she admitted she would respond in a similar fashion as René under some circumstances. As she explained, there are “people I think it doesn't matter what I say, they're not going to—it's not going to change their thinking, so I will maybe just avoid those people, you

know, and that's sad, but...we've kind of got to pick our battles." René and Diane suggest, then, that under some circumstances one has to let a topic be in order to save energy for conversations where one might actually see results.

Communicative approaches that fall under the "leaving be" category may or may not be mindful. However, they do represent a total lack of engagement. This lack of engagement may be designed to respect the perspective or experience of the other (such as not wanting to seem needy by asking for help), but it also may disregard it (such as not waving back, or not putting the effort into getting to know a new neighbor).

### **Differentiating**

"Differentiating" communicative approaches are approaches that some local people use that intentionally or, more commonly, unintentionally remind people "from away" that they are somehow different or separate from locals. These communicative approaches represent a kind of engagement that has little to no mindfulness. Immigrant participants (and some CFAs) argued that some of these approaches can hinder adaptation of newcomers<sup>22</sup> and community building across cultural difference, while others may simply function to remind newcomers that they are not native Newfoundlanders. "Differentiating" communicative approaches include accent assessment and dialect shifts, the common question "where are you from?" (and the related observation "you're not from here"), the phenomenon of competition rhetoric, and uninvited comments.

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<sup>22</sup> When talking about "differentiating" communicative approaches in particular, many participants suggested that the experience of being a CFA and being an immigrant in moving to Newfoundland may have many similarities. As René put it, you are either a Newfoundlander or you are not. As a result, I use the word *newcomer* on occasion to bring attention to any shared experiences that these groups might have.

Something worth noting for the first two of these communicative approaches (accent assessment and dialect shifts and where are you from/not from here) is that Newfoundlanders in rural areas, in particular, are often very curious about strangers. Someone new to a small town is like a puzzle that people want to solve, and they will look for clues to try to figure out who the person is and where they might be from. Clues such as how someone looks, what their name is, and, particularly, their accent help local people guess if they are from the province, what region they are from, or if they are “from away.” As much as anything, figuring out this puzzle gives Newfoundlanders an opportunity to try to place you within the large web of local people or places they know, and this can play an important part in establishing trust. They want to find out if you are somehow connected to them, and if you are and they can name that connection, it is both very reassuring and gratifying.

**Accent assessment and dialect shifts.** When a Newfoundlander meets someone for the first time, they often will listen to their accent and try to determine where they are from. Hope laughed when she admitted this: “People would be aware” of people’s accents and “pick up on subtleties,” so that they can figure out whether they are from a nearby community, St. John’s, from across the island, or elsewhere. Other Canadian-born participants pointed out that their CFA accents also seemed to mark them as people with formal education and a professional position. Bill shared that at the supermarket, people often noted that he was “from away” by his accent and guessed that he must teach at the local post-secondary institution. David agreed, and added that his accent sets him, and others like him, apart: “The moment you open your mouth, you identify that you’re in a different world, not from a different part of Canada, but a different level of education.”

Whether it is simply the fact that they are “from away,” or the fact that they have a different level of education, immigrant and CFA participants noted that locals changed the way they interacted with them when they heard their accent. As René explained it, “regardless of how you look...as soon as you speak differently [than Newfoundlanders], then they know that you’re not one of them, and you get treated somewhat differently.” René suggested in his interview that when people, both CFAs and immigrants, do not have a Newfoundland accent, they are put in the same non-Newfoundlander category, regardless of their race or ethnic background (“you are either a Newfoundlander or you are not”). Despite the fact that Alejandro has been on the island a relatively short time, he has also noticed that Newfoundlanders will use different language depending on who they are speaking to:

I’ve actually even noticed that...sometimes the way people talk to other people will vary depending on where they think they’re from. If they’re a Newfoundlander, then they would be more--they’ll be freer with the Newfoundlander accent and way of speaking. Whereas if they know you’re from somewhere else, they’ll sometimes, you know, talk the way I guess you’d expect...they think you expect them to talk.

When asked why they might change the way they talk, participants suggested there may be a couple of things at play. First, it may be a polite step in order to be understood. Newfoundlanders realize it may be difficult for non-Newfoundlanders to follow their speech, but also, occasionally, there can be an assumption that people of color do not speak English as their first language. In these cases, locals will slow their speech because they think it may be needed for comprehension. Furthermore, it may be out of

embarrassment, because some locals have been criticized for not speaking “proper English” in the past. Thirdly, if the stranger to whom the local is talking is a person of color, there is often an assumption that s/he is well educated, and lest they be presumed uneducated, locals will sometimes try to impress by using words they would not normally use and avoiding topics that may be considered base or uncultured.<sup>23</sup>

On one level, the communicative approach of accent assessment and dialect shifts represent a somewhat mindful communicative accommodation in that people are responding to a perceived of the person they are speaking with. In addition, participants like René and Alejandro did not specify whether this dialect shift hindered or helped immigrant adaptation or community building. That said, accent assessment and dialect shifts also serve as one of many reminders of perceived difference which immigrant participants said can be hurtful.

**Where are you from?/Not from here.** “Where are you from?,” and the related observation, “you’re not from here,” were raised by participants more than any other specific phrases during this study. This section describes how these phrases are used, what the purposes and intentions are behind them, and the negative effects that some participants suggested these phrases can have.

As mentioned earlier, local people often will assess people’s accents when they first meet them, and Michelle admitted “that people pay attention” to names as well.

When this clue (or others such as accent or race) point to the fact that someone may not be “from here,” a Newfoundlander will often ask the stranger, “where are you from?”

Michelle has found that she gets this question because, although she is local, she married

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<sup>23</sup> The third reason was added by a long-time Newfoundlander (an immigrant of color) and reflects frequent experiences that she has had at social gatherings.

a Canadian whose last name is not a common one in the province, and “they’re kind of suspicious.”<sup>24</sup> David, Mabel, and Bill, all CFAs now living in the province, talked about getting this question as well. As Mabel explained, “as soon as they hear our name, it’s ‘Oh, you’re from afar’ or ‘from away’ or whatever.” David also gets this reaction to his name, but so do his immigrant friends: “they regard themselves as [members of the community] and...the rest of the community would still say, ‘You’re not from here.’”

Immigrant participant René spoke about “where are you from” as it related to his time in Newfoundland, but also in another province. In fact, he spent most of his growing-up years in this other province, and when he thought back on those years of being a young immigrant in a rural community, he shared “I never [had] any comments made about me.” “Well, no, that’s not true,” he quickly added, “people will say ‘where are you from?’” Despite having the same accent and dialect as those in his home province, René, a person of color, often was (and is) asked where he was from. When he gave the name of his Canadian home town, they would correct him and add, “no, no, before that.” As he was asked this question more, René learned:

what they’re trying to get at is where are you originally from, right, but they don’t ask you where you’re originally from or what your ethnic background is. They dig away at it in little bits and pieces and hope that you’ll volunteer, right.

Diane and her family also have had these kinds of exchanges because of their adopted Chinese-born children, and she agrees with René’s assessment. People may ask where

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<sup>24</sup> A Newfoundland woman of color who has a common Newfoundland surname reported she gets the same apprehensive response, but for a different reason. The juxtaposition of her Newfoundland name with her skin color “throws them off,” because they feel there is a “disconnect.” However, if she is in the region where her husband’s family is from, she can often put them at ease with mentioning the name of her brother-in-law who is well known in the area.

you are from, but what they really want to learn is your ethnic background/race or, as Diane put it, where your ancestors are from.

I should add that participants reported that the correction of one's answer to "where are you from?" is not only used with people of color. Bill, a white CFA who moved to the province in the last few years, says he also receives that response when he answers "where are you from" with the name of his adopted Newfoundland community. Local people will reject his answer and respond, "no, you're not from here."

What does this communicative exchange reflect about Newfoundland cultural norms? As suggested earlier, it reflects an eagerness to find a connection. David pointed out that if your answer to "where you are from" is a place they know (even if it is outside the province), and they know someone there, they will follow up with "'oh!' and 'I've got family in there from St. Catherine's or Vancouver' or wherever." It also reflects the homogeneity of the local population. Again David explained:

It's one of the few provinces that has a really homogeneous population, either you're descended from Irish-Catholics or from West Country Protestants...that's why the question, "where are you from?" because it's so unusual to run into people...at least it was...who are from elsewhere."

Secondly, it appears that it people are uncomfortable with asking directly about a person's ethnicity/race. I asked René why people might "dig away" for this information without asking the direct question, and if he thought it was because people thought it was rude to ask what one's ethnic background/race was and he answered: "they must, because they do that all the time." He guessed they "are too self-conscious/polite to ask that

outright.” He suggested that the “no, no, before that” response, rather than a dismissal of his answer, “is a means of veering me onto the path that they want me to be on.”

Finally, the exchange also reflects Newfoundlanders’ strong attachment to place. Interestingly, two local Newfoundland-born participants referred to themselves as being from outside the communities where they have lived for more than two decades. Bride, for example, called herself “a transplant” to her community, and when I began Jane’s interview by saying that I was not from her community and could she tell me about it, Jane started her answer with, “Well, I’m not from [community] either; however, I have been here for 21 years, so I guess that qualifies.” The fact that local people who have been in their communities for decades still identify as being from another part of the province and are not sure if 21 years qualifies as being *from* their community, if nothing else, is an indication of how much time it takes even a “born and bred Newfoundlander” to qualify as being *from* a specific place.

Local participants talked about how the question “where are you from” is “not meant maliciously” (David), and they insisted that “they’re just curious” (Mabel). David and Mabel both moved to Newfoundland from another province decades ago, and they shared that they have never taken offense to that question. Participants such as Bill, René, and Diane, however, suggested that, at a minimum, they were frustrated by the “where are you from?/you’re not from here” communicative approach. Bill explained that he was not offended by the question in the beginning, but he has heard it with such frequency (when he pays for gas, when he buys groceries, when someone comes to do some kind of repair at his house), that the reminder that he is different is unrelenting and has led him to think “my goodness, where do I fit in?”:

growing up in [large Canadian city], I was a minority<sup>25</sup> in my school. I mean, it never bothered me. Never even thought about it actually. I just did things, you did your work, played sports, whatever. And then you come here, and it's like, "You're different, You're this..." I guess what it is is, you're continually reminded that you're different, and you don't belong, which is a bad message to send out...because it has a lot of psychological damage to people that are here that could make really good contributions.

Member checks confirmed that "where are you from?" is asked out of curiosity, but that being the object of this curiosity can be exhausting and frustrating, particularly, perhaps, for people of color. The "where are you from?/you're not from here" dynamic, therefore, however innocent in its intent, obviously has serious implications for how welcome and accepted newcomers feel, and how/if they are able to build a sense of belonging in their adopted communities.

**Rhetoric of competition.** The third and final type of "differentiating" communicative approaches is the rhetoric of competition. This us-them rhetoric is used by Newfoundland politicians to frame their dealings with the federal government; it is also used on occasion by locals in order to explain who should receive benefits when there is a perception of limited services or resources.

Newfoundland politicians have a long history of casting some policy and resource issues in an "us versus them" frame, particularly as it relates to negotiating with the federal government in Ottawa. David felt its effects when he first moved to the province several decades ago, and Brian Peckford (the premier at the time) came to his community

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<sup>25</sup> This participant is not a visible minority, but grew up with French as his first language.

to give a talk: “He capitalized on the ‘us versus them.’ And the CFAs were singled out as being...as taking jobs from Newfoundlanders and not being...we felt very unwelcome.”

David went on to say that he does not feel it is nearly that strongly now. However, Bill argued that it continues today. Politicians recognize that if they cast their political battles in the “us-them” terms, it will help them earn the support of the province for their cause. “Effective politics,” David suggested; “bad policy,” Bill responded.

David suggested that Newfoundland politicians are setting a bad example, if you will, “because people take their cue from the way in which provincial leadership is.” Bill agreed that dogmatic gestures such as lowering Canadian flags on all provincial government buildings (a step that former premier Danny Williams made just a couple of years ago during a fight with Ottawa), has “given a license to people that have been here for generations to say, ‘Hey, you’re a CFA. You don’t belong here.’” Although they did not agree on the degree to which that us-them frame currently is being used, Bill and David did agree that this kind of political behavior gives Newfoundlanders the impression that us-them thinking is “tolerated” and “acceptable because Danny just lowered the flags” (David).

Other participants talked about competition rhetoric as it related to interacting with non-politicians. As mentioned earlier, Feroz feels that some local people are jealous about how successful he has been compared to them, and Carol said her immigrant friend faced similar attitudes when starting a new business. Shortly after arriving in Newfoundland, Francine was really angered by the frequent writing of a woman to the local paper complaining about French immersion in the schools. According to Francine, the woman wrote things like, “it’s a scandal, our kids don’t need French,”

and she framed the creation of the new program as a competition. Francine wrote the paper and asked them to stop publishing the woman's letters: "and I said to the paper, stop it. It's pure bigotry. How do you feel [French speakers] feel? We exist, we are here, and no, we are not taking the bread from the English kids to feed the French kids, what is this?!"

Bill was able to give many examples of how this us-versus-them framing has affected his family's ability to adapt. The most striking example occurred when they needed to find a family doctor. They had heard that three doctors were accepting new patients, but despite their efforts, they could not find someone who would give them an appointment. When his wife called back and insisted, the receptionist said "You're just not getting this, ma'am. You're not from [community]. We don't have enough doctors here for us. We're sure not going to have enough for you. You're not going to get one." Needless to say, they were very upset, but Bill put it all in an email and sent it to a local politician:

And within half an hour, I had the President of the Doctors Association called [*sic*] me, the hospital called me, other people. Doctors called me up and said, "No, we didn't mean things that way, we just meant..." So those type of things are a little...they make things difficult to get acclimated.

Important to note is that the above story is about the adaptation experience of a CFA family, not an immigrant, and that the political rhetoric used by the provincial leadership has framed the "them" as mainland Canadians or the federal government, not immigrants. However, this communicative approach still is relevant to the immigrant adaptation experience as it describes an "other" frame that is in prevalent use within the

province and, although it was not brought up specifically by immigrant participants, it may be at play in the immigrant adaptation experience as well.

**Uninvited comments.** One of the “differentiating” approaches that participants agreed hindered immigrant adaptation or community building across cultural difference are uninvited comments, questions, or opinions about an immigrant’s country of birth or racial background. These inaccurate comments, questions, or opinions may, in some cases, reflect “just” ignorance on the part of the commenter/questioner, but regardless of the intent, the comments can be hurtful and offensive to those who receive them.

Diane, the local woman who adopted children from China, shared, in a very sarcastic voice, that she’s discovered

there’s a lot of experts out there on China [Interviewer: Oh really, yeah?] Oh yes, and they tell me how my children were available for adoption.... To which I say “yes, of course they hate girls in China and here in Canada [we’re] so equal and yet who is being murdered and beaten on a regular basis and sexually abused—girls...So...how are we any better?” kind of a thing.

Those comments anger Diane on a couple of levels. First, as she intimates above, they reflect an assumption that there are no inequalities between the sexes in Canada, and secondly, she is convinced that the people who share these thoughts know little to nothing about China, but still feel they have the right to make judgments on her girls’ country of origin: “A little bit of knowledge is dangerous,” Diane quips.

Immigrant participants also mentioned offensive comments and questions they received from people. As mentioned earlier, Nagesh has had people assume his country has lots of terrorists; Locals have also assumed he would smoke marijuana. In the end, he

chalked it up to the fact that “youngsters are stupid, really stupid.” However, it was obvious that he was offended by these assumptions, and now he and his friends tend to avoid the young people he feels might make such comments.

“Differentiating” communicative approaches do engage with difference, but with little to no mindfulness. Although some of them may be innocent in their intent (such as shifting one’s accent or dialect), others represent racist assumptions and an us-them struggle. All “differentiating” approaches, however, represent an unrelenting series of reminders of perceived difference. One member check volunteer called it an “acupuncture of the soul”—small, continuous pricks, but without therapeutic value.<sup>26</sup>

### **Acknowledging**

“Acknowledging” communicative approaches are those that express a value for and thought toward the other. Although they represent an engagement with difference, they are only sometimes mindful. They are distinct from “bridging” communicative approaches in that the behavior is not always intentionally inclusive, it does not respond to the needs of the other, nor does it purposively explore similarity and difference.

“Acknowledging” communicative approaches include the offers of gifts and invitations, assistance and demonstrations of care, and recognition.

**Gifts and invitations.** One way immigrants and locals show value and thought for the other is by offering gifts or inviting another to a meal. Immigrants Francine and Miles both have benefited from the generosity of their Newfoundland neighbors, for example. Although Francine does not have any fishermen in her family, she always has salmon in her fridge because “they know I love fish so...I always have a neighbor that

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<sup>26</sup> This person explains that she often forgets she is different, but then is constantly reminded by others. In fact, during the three days she was reviewing excerpts of this dissertation, she had four such incidents.

come [*sic*] back with a piece of salmon for me.” Miles and his family also have benefited from this sort of neighborliness. He says the guy next door has asked him, “do you like fish?,” and when he answered that his kids love it, the guy “comes back with a few trout” It was obvious that Francine and Miles were impressed with their neighbors’ thoughtfulness and generosity.

Local participant Scott also suggested a kind of gift offering might help immigrant adaptation and community building, but with a slightly different twist. Scott suggested that there are some immigrants who may be perceived as not wanting to participate in the community or as not wanting to belong. To counteract that, Scott suggested, perhaps newcomers might want to reach out and share a gift with the community (such as a story or a song at a local concert). This approach of this is “who I am...I have something to offer” he feels, would help counter people’s assumptions that some immigrants are thinking “geez, I just want to come here to work, leave me alone.” Scott’s suggestion points to the fact that some locals assume immigrants want to work and leave, but by reaching out to share with the community, immigrants can show that they value the community, and that they want to be a part of it.

A second part of this subtheme is the idea of invitation. Participants John and Diane both had stories of inviting immigrants over for supper. In the case of John and his family, they had a new South African doctor move into their area, so when his brother-in-law gave him a huge container of crab, John invited the couple over. “And that got flipped,” John explained, and they later went to the South African’s house and had crab curry. Diane also invited some immigrants to a meal at her house. She had attended a multicultural event in her community and met several people, including new immigrant

families. Afterwards, she took it upon herself to contact some of the people she had met and ask them, “remember me?” It took a lot of effort to find the people she had met, remind them who she was, invite them, and set up a time, but eventually “we kind of overcame that, and we had a lovely barbeque.” Diane was happy with how it went and was particularly pleased to see that the children had fun even though a couple of them did not speak much English: “It doesn’t matter with kids. They find their way.”

In both of the above cases, local participants made a point to reach out new immigrants and invite them into their homes. This personal connection, participants like Sasha pointed out, has far more effect than handing someone tourism literature:

they need a more personal presence. It’s fine to give someone a book and say “Here’s where things are.” It’s another thing to call somebody and say, “You know, there’s a concert going on tonight, would you like to go?,” or “I’m having a few people in, would you like to come over?”

Participants in this study, then, argue that communicative approaches that see individuals reaching out to offer gifts or invitations can positively influence both immigrant adaptation and community building.

**Assistance and demonstration of care.** Both immigrant and local participants described how assistance and demonstrations of care (from strangers, neighbors, or friends) can help immigrant adaptation and community building. Nagesh, for example, was touched when during his first few days in the country, strangers at the bank and hospital helped direct him to the exact locations where he needed to go for various cards and licenses: “I never expected that kind of help in the town people, because I thought that I had to go alone, and I had to finish that but I never had a struggle to complete all

those things.” Ram recounted how useful it was to board with a local family when he first arrived. The family helped him find where he could buy things, but more importantly, they taught him “how to interact with these people” and the local “culture and lifestyle.” Because of this help and instruction, “it’s become easy to getting on with this culture and everything.” Nagesh agreed. The local people he stayed with on his arrival really helped him understand the cultural “dos and don’ts” and helped him to be mindful of their perspective:

the joke that we may say may be an offense to the people over here, so the joke that they say may be an offense to us, so it’s kind of different things. So it really helped staying with a Canadian to know all these kind of things. It was very helpful indeed.

Finally, both Ram and Nagesh said that local people had introduced them to others, which they found helped their ability to adapt to their adopted community.

Although they are not immigrants, but CFAs, Bill and his wife are also fairly new to the province. Unfortunately, they have not had an easy time adapting to their life in rural Newfoundland. As a result, Bill had many suggestions on how local people might use communication to demonstrate their care and offer assistance to immigrants. He suggested that immigrants should be visited a couple of times during their first year in the community. The first visit would be shortly after they arrived in the community. A local person could drop by, welcome them, answer any of their questions, and give them some basic information on the community (including practical information such as garbage collection pick up dates). Then six weeks later, he suggested the same person should drop by again and ask them:

“How are things going? There are some gaps in there? You’re having some trouble here? Do you need something for your kid’s school or something?.... I may not have the answer but I’ll find out for you.”

The third time of contact, Bill suggested, should be when “the snow gets nine feet tall.” Keeping in mind that that much snow might be daunting and potentially isolating for someone not used to it, the local person could offer to help them shovel or invite them over for a cup of tea. Bill suggested that this sort of communicative attention “would be like a homerun to those people because all of a sudden they feel like, ‘Hey, we have someone here that we feel like we can contact and...we matter. This is a good community to live in. I want to be here.’”

Interestingly, a native-born Newfoundlander in that same focus group, Heather, works for the municipality, and she felt she had to respond to Bill’s suggestion: “that’s what we want to do, we want to show that. So if I knew you were here a year ago...” Heather trailed off, but it was obvious she wished Bill’s adjustment to the community had not been so difficult. She took note of the communicative approaches that Bill and others said would help newcomers, however, and plans to try to implement some of them in her position.

**Recognition.** Some communicative approaches value the contribution of newcomers and their cultural identity and make an effort to recognize them. For example, some local focus group participants talked about how individuals and municipalities might help immigrants adapt and feel more welcomed in new communities. Bill suggested that once or twice a year their town’s mayor might have a welcome breakfast for new immigrants. At that breakfast, the mayor could “say ‘Welcome to [community]....

I'd like to welcome you here. I'm Mayor So and So, here, my council members are this.... Thank you for making this your home, for moving here and contributing to our community.” Bill, and others in the group, thought that formally welcoming new immigrants and acknowledging the contributions they make would show immigrants that they are part of the community, and that people appreciate their choice to make this community their new home.

In another focus group, Ann mused about the importance of learning how to say an immigrant's real name. Often, she admits, it is something that locals “don't bother about...we sort of say ‘oh well that's Joe, we'll just call him Joe’ rather than go through having to say their name properly.” She empathized with how that might feel; She gets angry when people simply add an “e” on the end of her name, “so how do people who immigrated feel that we're not even trying?” As she thought about it, Ann suggested that rather than call someone “Joe” as a default, a better way to respond would be to confess that you might have a hard time pronouncing their name, but that you'll try: “I don't know how to say it, tell me again, and tell me until I get it right.” Ann suggested that this effort to learn someone's real name would show that their cultural identity is valued. “Acknowledging” communicative approaches, then, expresses a value for and thought towards the other and often reflects the weight of a personal connection or effort over more indirect communication methods.

### **Opening**

“Opening” communicative approaches are those that reflect a willingness to interact with strangers. These approaches are engaging and sometimes mindful, and participants reported that they help immigrant adaptation and community building.

“Opening” communicative approaches include reaching out to neighbors to get assistance and behaviors that participants called friendly such as chatting in line or using endearments with people you do not know.

**Asking neighbors for help.** Local participants talked about the importance of reaching out to one’s neighbors, asking them for assistance when it is needed. In fact, many locals said this would be one of the most important pieces of advice they would give a new immigrant on how they could adapt to the community. As Jane said, getting to know your neighbors “would make a big difference” to an immigrant’s experience. From Frances’s perspective “it’s not difficult to get to know the people. You know, you can go to anybody and ask them for anything or any advice, and they will help you. There’s no problem there.” In the case of her community there is no restaurant, and so she will tell people new to the area, “you can knock on any door and get a cup of tea.” She admits that some new “people don’t feel that comfortable, you know...but you can. You can just knock on any door and people would be helpful.” In another session, Grace said the same, that immigrants should “[reach] out to the neighbors, because I think Newfoundlanders are basically friendly enough to help anybody that asks, and you can start with the person next door.”

Local participants in particular specified that reaching out to one’s neighbors is an acceptable and very effective way that an immigrant might help him/herself adapt to the new surroundings. In fact, during member check, a CFA that lived in rural Newfoundland for some time reflected that she feels that her approach to adapting to the area was, “I don’t really know what I’m doing here, so please help me as I bumble along.” She

genuinely needed the assistance, but realized afterwards that this approach probably helped her seem less aloof and prevented people from assuming she was “puttin’ on airs.”

**Friendly behavior.** Participants, both immigrants and locals alike, talked about local people as generally being very friendly. This friendly behavior, as they described it, includes being polite, chatty, and using endearments when interacting with strangers. There was general agreement that this form of “opening” communicative approach was helpful to immigrant adaptation or community building across cultural difference. However, the use of endearments with strangers was initially shocking/surprising to some participants who were originally “from away.”

Many times, participants raised the fact that people take the time to chat when they come across each other in rural Newfoundland. This is the case with people who know each other but sometimes is case with strangers as well. This way of greeting, Manjeet finds, is similar to what he is used to in his home country:

Everybody’s friendly...not as such [*sic*] like in Toronto or Vancouver...most folk over here they do talk a little bit and interact a bit whenever you meet them and tend to build a bit of a bond in there...some of them back in [country of origin] also, like, we have that. Everybody we go to we tend to build up a bond a bit, whoever we meet over there.

Participants were impressed with this willingness to chat, and a couple credited it specifically as a reason why they have been able to make friends. In the case of Miles, he recounted a story about cross-country skiing with his kids shortly after they arrived in their community. They had gotten ahead of him a little, and while he was trying catch up with them, a guy came up next to him with his kids. Miles thought to himself, “you know

what, I'll just take ten minutes to chat to him because it's not the end of the world." That approach worked, he reported happily: "they're like a couple of our best friends now."

Mabel, who moved to the province from another part of Canada several decades ago, explained that she has also adapted to this kind of friendliness (by saying hello or talking about the weather with people she passes on the street). She feels, however, that it is something specific to this province: "you wouldn't do that somewhere else, now."

Another woman (Heather) in that same focus group agreed that this was more common in Newfoundland and admitted she was upset when she lived in another province, and people did not say hi back.

A second way that people talked about friendliness was in reference to the terms of endearment that some Newfoundlanders use with strangers (in addition to their loved ones). Terms like *my love* or *my darlin'* are often added at the beginning or end of a phrase. For example, a waitress might say "My love, we've run out of the fish cakes, but I can still get you the pancakes if you want." Francine admits when "the first time a cashier look at me and say 'here you go, my love' I really didn't know what to think," but now she finds it "really relaxing." Mabel's first encounter with these terms of endearment, however, was very stressful for her. She and her husband had just moved to the province, and she was waiting at home to have an appliance fixed while her husband was at the office. When the doorbell rang she went to the door and the guy said, "Oh, how are you doing, my love?" She explains that she "had never encountered my love before and I thought, 'Oh my God, where have I come?!'" This extreme familiarity was really worrying to her, she assumed he was hitting on her, and she was "afraid to even let him in the door." Coming from another part of Canada, "you don't go around and go to

somebody's house and call them 'my love' the first time you see them." However, she let him in, all was well, and she realized later this kind of speech was common.

With the exception of the endearments, which took some people a little time to get used to, immigrant participants spoke clearly about how this friendly behavior helped them adapt to rural Newfoundland. People talked about it as a way to "bond" (Manjeet), as "a starting place for friends" (Diane), and as something that "makes your day to day easier" (Miles). Although some participants admitted that this friendliness does not necessarily lead to friendship, the willingness to have a short conversation with people you know little to nothing about "means that you're more likely to make friends...it may open the door" (Miles).

### **Resisting**

"Resisting" communicative approaches directly engage with difference, usually mindfully, to resist another person's beliefs, assumptions, or choice of communicative approach. "Resisting" communicative approaches can hinder or help immigrant adaptation or community building, but they may not necessarily do either. Instead, they may reflect a resistance that one is compelled to do because it is the right thing.

"Resisting" communicative approaches include naming racism and resisting "where are you from?"

**Naming racism.** Participants in this study talked about how they would resist some communicative approaches through their own language use. In the case of Diane, she admits that after adopting her daughters, she is on "super high racism alert," and she spoke about how "on a good day," she is able to name racist comments when she hears them. When that person is a stranger, she can be very frank; when the person is a close

friend, she tries to use humor to convey, “did you hear what you just said?” Although she feels compelled to make these comments, she admits “it can be difficult,” and there are days when she does not know what to say: “I’m completely shocked, because I was taken off guard.” On those “good days,” however, she will continue to point out racism where she sees it, because she feels it is the right thing to do: “People don’t like it when you name that, but, you know, people will have to get used to me.”

**Resisting “Where are you from?”** Immigrant and local participants alike also talked about using “resisting” communicative approaches to respond to “where are you from?/not from here.” Michelle talked about how she uses humor to play with people’s reaction to her name. When she says her full name (which for the purposes of this we will say is Michelle Hasanovic), people will say “Hasanovic...” (trying and failing to place her name in the context of the names and places they know). She responds to this pause by saying “Yeah, Hasanovic, you know the crowd<sup>27</sup> from Fogo” (referring to a particularly small, traditional, and remote part of the province). Michelle explains that she tailors her response to the area where she is at the time, each time inserting a different small town’s name. By juxtaposing her unique name with a small local town, Michelle is at once pointing out she knows a little about the area, but she is also making light of her different name and the assumption that some names are not “from here.” When asked how they respond to it, Michelle says it works really well to break the ice: “they laugh. They get a big charge<sup>28</sup> out of that.”

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<sup>27</sup> “The crowd” in this case refers to a group of people, but suggests a collectivity and connectivity that words like “the people of Fogo” would not.

<sup>28</sup> To get a charge out of something is to get a kick out of it: to find something funny.

A second example of resistance to where you are from comes in the form of accidental resistance. Diane (O'Brien) explains that when her Chinese-born daughter was around three, a woman in a grocery store came up to them and asked the toddler, "where are you from?" Her daughter took the woman literally and said "The O'Brien family." Diane was absolutely thrilled that accidentally her daughter had pushed back at the assumption that she could not be "from here."

The third and final example of resistance to "where are you from?" was provided by René. As mentioned earlier, René has been asked "where are you from?" many times in his 50+ years in Canada (both in another province and in Newfoundland). Like Michelle, he will tailor his "where you are from?" answers to the area where he is at the time. In the interview, he recounted an exchange that happened between him and an aboriginal man in northern Labrador:

I was up in Labrador in Nain, and an Inuit guy came up to me in the bar. "Where are you from?" he says? "The island" says I. "And what part of the island," says he? And so I said "[community]," and he didn't know where [community] was. And he says, "well, before that where were you from?" And I said "[another province]". "How long were you at [another province]?" "Since I was ten." "What were you before you were ten?" I said "I was nine!" [laughs]<sup>29</sup>

René obviously got quite a kick out of telling this story, but he admits the man in the story was "starting to get a little upset because I wasn't giving him the answers that he wanted to hear." As René explained:

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<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, René (let us say his last name is Weljie for the purposes of this discussion) reported that often he tries to use humor to respond to the "no, no, before that" comment and, like, Michelle, he will say "Haven't your heard of the Trinity Bay Weljies?"

And I don't volunteer [birth country] easily; I'll eventually talk about it, but you have to keep at it for a long time. Because I figure like, you know, I'm almost 60 years old; I've lived in Canada for 50 of that, you know, so what odds.... What difference does the first ten years of my life make, right? Really? I mean, I suppose they were formative to some extent but they weren't really my formative years.... So those are the little games that we play.

In the above example, the Inuit man who approached René at the bar wants to learn his ethnicity/race; however, he does not ask that question directly. Instead he continues to “dig” (René’s word) at it with indirect questioning about where he is from, hoping to get to the information he actually wants. The insistence with which he continues the questioning points to the importance of René’s ultimate answer, but having participated in these exchanges many times before, René resists. He plays with the man’s questions, feigning ignorance at where the man wants the conversation to go; he does not end the conversation, but continues to participate, letting the man continue driving down the same road, but answering him by putting up communicative detour signs.

René resists sharing where he was born for a couple of reasons. First, as he suggests above, he is offended by the assumption that “people who look different (or talk different) are somehow either not Canadian or less Canadian.” This, he adds “is an unthinking denial of the multicultural character of our nation.” Secondly, “all of us-immigrants or CFAs want to be judged on the basis of who we are, not on the basis of where we are from.” Finally, by using a “circuitous answer,” René hopes “that the questioner will come to realize that the questioning is really not appropriate.” However, he admits “most of the time, it doesn’t work.” René explains that it is the “value

judgment” part of the questioning that offends him, not the curiosity. He would be fine with questions such as “Have you lived in countries other than Canada? Where did you live? What was it like?”<sup>30</sup>

None of the above participants spoke about their “resisting” communicative approaches in terms of it hindering or helping immigrant adaptation or community building. Instead, they framed their responses as ways that they felt they had learned to respond or were compelled to respond (“It is something that I need to do to make a point,” René), given other communicative behaviors they regularly faced.

### **Bridging**

“Bridging” communicative approaches reach across cultures to explore similarities and differences. The communicative form may vary, from storytelling at a formal event to modifying a class’s curriculum, but what distinguishes this communicative approach from everyday communication is the effort to intentionally include and reflect the cultural diversity within a community and/or its attempt to be responsive to the needs of the other. It is an extension beyond the status quo for intentional inclusion of difference or response to difference. Participants agreed that “bridging” communicative approaches help immigrant adaptation and community building, and the “bridging” communicative approaches of inclusion of difference and similarity, compromise communication and responsive communication all represent mindful engagement with difference.

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<sup>30</sup> During the member check process, a recently arrived immigrant was totally perplexed by René’s resistance to this questioning because she herself has “no reservations whatsoever” sharing where she is from. Another long-time immigrant like René, however, agreed wholeheartedly with René’s reaction, and she has played similar games with the “where are you from?” questioning.

**Inclusion of difference and similarity.** One of the components of “bridging” approaches is the inclusion of difference. As Leah expressed when talking about what a community might do to help immigrants adapt, “it is around celebrating who’s in your neighborhood and making people aware that we come from different backgrounds.” Scott argued that the best way to explore difference is through things people might have in common (food, music, storytelling), but approach them from different angles. He had a couple of very specific example of what this might look like. The previous year, he had attended an event in St. John’s around Guy Fawkes Night. Guy Fawkes Night, an old English and Newfoundland tradition, involves huge bonfires, and the event Scott attended talked about the holiday as it traditionally is celebrated but also in terms of other cultures’ connections to fire:

they had the thing on fire, on bonfires, and there was a great thing, I went to a lecture on it, and I mean we had bonfires all our lives growing up, but it came from a very distinct cultural background...they had a gentleman in who was a Hindu, and he was telling how they had fires all their lives, where he was from, and his rationale for it was totally different, but it was fascinating. It was absolutely fascinating. I enjoyed hearing him tell his story.

Scott went on to say that there were only around 20 people in the room, “but those 20 people went away with a new perspective.” If you want people to learn about each other’s cultures and come together across cultural difference, “that’s how you do it,” Scott argues: “You need to make opportunities for people to share their stories.” It may take a long time, he admitted, but creating those opportunities for sharing stories of similarity

and difference is important. Scott specified the need to “make opportunities,” pointing to the importance of efforts to move beyond current communicative practices.

Some participants, however, worried that sometimes people focus too much on difference, and they argued that it is also useful when people highlight commonalities. Jeannine, for example, pointed out that although many immigrants to her community are not Christian, “most people have some religious convictions and,” since her community is religious “that’s a commonality that you can tap into.” She herself practiced this idea when she taught religion at a local school. One student’s family was “Krishna believers,” and although the regular curriculum did not cover their faith, Jeannine devoted part of the class to it. She invited the family in to talk about their faith and teach some of their music. She reported that “I think it really gave the kids a deeper appreciation for her and her family. And after that, the other kids were more friendly with her, and all this...because they understood a bit more.” Grace, another woman in the same focus group thought this approach was “a really good idea; really good because then you start with the children in your own community, having them understand something different than themselves.” Although cultural differences may have been part of what the children learned, Jeannine felt it was important that the whole class realize that what they had in common was a value for religious practice, and she took the initiative to help them make those connections. Scott’s and Jeannine’s experiences point out that when communities or individuals reach beyond the status quo to intentionally explore cultural similarities and differences it can aid immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference.

**Compromise communication.** A second way that participants talked about recognizing similarity and difference and being responsive to the other was as it related to arranging a social activity with an immigrant whose culture one does not know. For example, when Bride heard that some local participants said they were hesitant to ask immigrants over for a meal because they did not know what or when they ate, Bride suggested that was a foolish dilemma and one easily addressed with compromise communication:

I mean let's face it, if you're inviting somebody into your house, you're going to say "well, do you like whatever?" I mean, I'm not going to go and cook a leg of lamb when I know people don't eat lamb. So it's only a matter of saying "what type of food do you like?"...like "what time do you usually eat?" You know, and I would say "well you know you guys eat at eight, eight thirty, we usually eat at six, let's make it seven." You know they would meet half ways, because then they would feel that you were giving a little for them as well they're giving for you.

**Responsive communication.** Another way that people might reach across cultures to respond to the needs of the other is through "responsive" communication. Responsive, in this case, means responding and changing one's communicative approach in recognition of the other's perspective.

Alejandro had an interesting story that reflected how he practiced responsive communication. Shortly after moving to the province, Alejandro became friends with a local woman, but he noticed that sometimes she got offended by things that he said about the community. For example, if he complained about the lack of clear sidewalks in winter, she seemed to take it personally and to take offense. When encouraged to talk

about this more, he shared that it has become better since he changed the way he would bring up such things. He learned to preface his complaints with “which also annoys me when it happens in Toronto,” and this preface seemed to satisfy his friend that he was not specifically picking on this Newfoundland community, but that it is also bothersome in other places.

This example is particularly interesting for a couple of reasons. First, Alejandro not only realized a communicative approach he used was offending his friend, but in responding to it, he adopted a communicative behavior that many local participants demonstrated in this study: A caveat that people attached to the majority of comments that might put Newfoundland, its people and culture in any sort of a negative light. Comments like “it’s not just here, but everywhere,” and “I don’t think it’s a rural Newfoundland thing, it’s a rural everywhere thing,” seemed to be used as a defensive mechanism to ensure that others do not get the impression that the speaker is putting the province down. By switching his language to include this expression, Alejandro is reflecting back to his friend a communicative approach that she can understand and appreciate.

Scott relayed how successfully some immigrant clergymen had adapted to his community by embracing music as a communicative form. He said they were very astute in recognizing really early in their time in rural Newfoundland that both their home culture and Newfoundland culture had a deep love of music; they used music to reach out to local people, hoping to lessen the traditional “social distance” that Scott says has existed “between doctors and lawyers and priests and the ‘common people.’” This approach, Scott explained “made them instantly welcome”:

we may have had a hard time understanding their accent, and they had a hard time understanding our accent, but we all understand the “Fields of Athenry” ...we could all relate to the message behind like a “Salt Waters Joys” or something, so that kind of thing opened doors.

Amor also shared how she has adapted her language in response to local people. In her case, she has found that making fun of herself has been very useful in helping her colleagues feel more comfortable around her. In the interview, she gave an example of the type of joke she might tell her colleagues. She recounted to them a time when she had a female friend over to help her family accomplish a task, but Amor’s husband was not giving it enough attention:

I was telling [my husband] “[husband] can you please fuckus!” He was like, “Amor, what are you saying?” I said, “fuckus!” And he started to, you know, getting red. “Amor, do you know what you’re trying to say?”...He corrected me, “It’s focus.” (laughs) So, I’ve been telling this story. (laughs)

By making fun of her own accent, Amor explained, she gives permission to those around her to laugh at her as well:

Making fun of me made the people around me comfortable in laughing at me.

Some people, especially amongst professionals, they don’t know how culturally competent they are because they’ve never been immersed in a multicultural setting, so they would tend to try to be careful and walk on egg shells. So when I start cracking like that, they let loose, and then we get to know each other.

Amor has recognized the hesitancy and apprehension that her colleagues might feel in working with someone of another culture; by utilizing humor to help break the ice, she is

engaging a form of communication important both in Newfoundland and in her home country in ways that should lessen the gaps between her and her colleagues.

Amor also pointed to another way people might use responsive communication. She argued that sometimes local people might say things that offend, but that they are said “out of ignorance or out of not really knowing” and “not to intentionally cause harm.” In those cases, Amor shared, she feels it is important to try to take off “the mind frame that people are trying to be prejudiced or racist or trying to hurt you,” because then “you’ll be able to see that people around you are also struggling to know how to understand and how not to offend you.” As well, she argued, “if you suddenly just have your back up, you are going to lose the chance to correct them, to inform them, to share with them what it is really like.” Responsive communication, then, is empathetic for the other’s perspective and, Amor suggests, may leave more room for correcting ignorance.

The communicative approaches that emerged from this study are many and diverse. “Leaving be,” “differentiating,” “acknowledging,” “opening,” “resisting,” and “bridging” approaches all function to either help or hinder immigrant adaptation and community building (and in some cases do both). Participants reported both tangible ways which communication is and could affect their everyday lives. Both reflect the power and potential of communication to reflect and build who a community is and what they want to be.

### **RQ3: What changes have rural communities experienced due to the arrival of immigrants?**

When asked what changes their communities have experienced due to immigration, many participants shared that their communities have undergone massive

change in the last couple of decades, but that little to none of it could be attributed to immigration. Probing further, however, sometimes led to an exploration of other more subtle changes that are happening on an interpersonal or organizational level within communities. In this section, I first explore the idea that immigration is not changing rural communities; secondly, I present the opposing view that immigration is affecting rural Newfoundland communities and how (increased exposure of locals, increased openness to difference, individuals adapting and helping others do the same, and accents as belonging); Finally, I briefly share some of the other factors that have led to great flux in rural areas in order to paint a clearer picture of the challenges that rural Newfoundland faces-challenges that no doubt are also influencing the immigrant experience.

Table 5: RQ3 Results

**No community change**

**Community change**

Immigrant community change

Larger community change

More exposure to different cultures

Increased acceptance of difference

Individuals are adapting and helping others adapt

Immigrants and their children have adopted a local accent

**Other community changes affecting rural Newfoundland**

Traditionally collectivistic communities

Community membership in flux

Faster pace of life

Social time shifting

Effects of these changes

Knowing neighbors less

Less community involvement

Social time more formalized

Harder to break into friendship groups

Effects for immigrants

## **No Community Change**

Generally speaking, participants felt that it would take greater numbers of immigrants to create any community-level change. As Jane said, “I don’t think there’s enough [immigrants] to create any kind of a big cultural change or anything.” That said, when they spoke about cultural differences between locals and immigrants, participants pointed out instances when these differences caused tension (such as those mentioned in RQ1). John admitted that sometimes there would be “negative reactions” when an immigrant conducts their business or work life differently:

there are different ways, different ways of interacting with individuals that somebody would have to learn, and that’s a culture that they were raised in, and that just happens to be totally different from the one that we were raised in. I’m not saying in this province that that’s a situation where we’re fighting about or a clash, that’s just simply a matter of some re-understanding or misunderstanding. We’re not fighting or clashing over that; it’s just taking the people, us and somebody, an immigrant, a while to adjust.

Whether you label it adjustment, a clash, or a “tussle of cultures,” as Ann did, this tension does indicate that rural Newfoundland is experiencing some change due to immigration.

## **Community Change**

When participants spoke about the changes they are seeing in their communities as they relate to immigration, they talked about both changes to immigrant communities and those in the greater community. Some communities, for the first time, have enough immigrants to form small ethnic groups. In the case of the larger community, local people

are getting more exposure to different cultures, and there are spin-off effects of that exposure.

**Immigrant community change.** Participants like Ana Maria pointed out that in some larger communities, there are enough immigrants to form small immigrant communities. In her town, for example, there are several people from various Middle Eastern and Asian countries; some of them were more established when she arrived and already had an association that organizes get-togethers: “We too go in and have a good time with them, so that is a kind of mix of cultures.” In some cases, there are even enough people from the same country of origin that they can form their own mini national community. Ann mentioned that she feels this has helped with immigrant retention and given those groups the numbers they need to introduce “us to some of their customs.”

**Larger community change.** Participants also spoke about how communities at large are experiencing changes: More local people have had exposure to different cultures, there is increased acceptance of difference, individuals are adapting and helping others adapt, and some immigrants and their children have adopted a local accent. Again, it was primarily in the larger communities where immigrant and local participants talked about how local people had more exposure to cultures than in the past. Mercy pointed out that since there are several people from her home country, and some have been there for a couple of decades, townspeople now know more about their culture. Ana Maria also attributed the arrival of an earlier generation of immigrants for the changes her community has already made: “When they came, people starting [*sic*] accepting people from a different culture.”

In fact, many people linked the increased exposure of local people to an increased openness to or acceptance of difference. Michelle lived outside of the province for a couple of decades and recently returned home. She has found quite a difference from when she left. When she grew up, there were just “three different ethnic families” living in her community: “There wasn’t much tolerance for people from away...It was very close-minded.” Now, she reported, there is a lot more cultural diversity, “and there is more acceptance of people from away, than what it was when I was living here back then. So absolutely, it’s improved.”

Local and immigrant participants alike admitted that it is not always immigration that is leading to this greater openness and acceptance, but the fact that Newfoundlanders are travelling farther afield than before. René said a lot of people in his community are quite cosmopolitan, and Feeroz has found that Newfoundlanders who have had to leave the province for work have “seen places outside of Newfoundland...have got a lot to talk about.” Raju and his family have been befriended by a couple who have travelled to Asia a lot and were pleased to learn that “they like our culture and everything.” As a local person herself, Leah agreed that “more people [are] coming and going from other countries” than in years past, and that this is leading to people “starting to accept [difference], not necessarily understand it or...but people are more open.”

Another way that rural communities are changing is individuals, businesses, and occasionally municipalities are stepping up to the plate to help immigrants adapt. In the case of individuals, these encounters were not part of organized effort but rather locals taking it upon themselves to help. For example, Sasha once had to go to her community’s library to use the Internet while hers was down. While there, she met a new immigrant

who “had all kinds of questions, simple things like ‘Where do I get my hair cut?,’ in a place where she could take her scarf off.” So Sasha got to work to find somewhere for the woman, and eventually her own stylist agreed to cut the woman’s hair:

she was very good to her. She made sure that everything was closed off, so no men would come in at the time...I mean [the immigrant woman] was frightened to death! And so [the stylist] would make sure that she would put her appointment at a time where there was nobody else scheduled to come in and she would lock the door...And she would—she honored her needs, you know.

Sasha was glad she happened to be in the right place at the right time to help the woman, but lamented the fact that this sort of assistance “kinda...happens by chance.” Another chance encounter was described in a focus group by Phoebe. Phoebe knows a woman whose new doctor and wife are studying during their time off to get Canadian credentials. “Out of the kindness of her heart,” she offered to take their kids for a walk and distract them for a bit while the parents studied. She is not being paid for it, and to this day, “she continues to do that.”

Very occasionally, participants would also mention that businesses and municipalities are making some changes to help reflect their changing demographics. One woman who attended a focus group was working on creating a municipal website specifically to help recruit immigrants but also to give them information in advance of their move and to welcome and assist them once they have arrived.<sup>31</sup> René has found that in neighboring towns that are larger than his, you can now buy “virtually anything...we

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<sup>31</sup> This is part of the “Welcoming Communities” Initiative funded by the federal government through the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and although it was only raised in one interview, a few communities are developing such websites.

can get all fixings for a Thai meal or an Indian meal or basically what you want. It's all there." He has been impressed that some local people like curried food, and they have invited him over for a meal of it: "It's nice around here that we can go to somebody's house and have a meal of curried chicken that they prepared (laughs)...and they're doing a good job...it's good that somebody else is doing it."

The final theme within community change worth addressing here was less explicit than those just mentioned. That said, the frequency with which it arose points to its importance to this study. Local and immigrant participants talked about how some communities now include immigrant families who have developed local accents, something their communities would not have experienced in years past. They suggested that when immigrants or their children develop these accents or pick up the dialect, it is a good thing and signals a fitting in and belonging to rural Newfoundland. More than a couple participants brought up encounters they had had with immigrants who had developed a local accent, and more often than not they smiled or laughed when they spoke about it. It seems that hearing a Newfoundland accent from someone who is not white, in particular, presents a strange juxtaposition; perhaps because people of color are presumed to be "not from here" and/or presumed to be better educated. That said, people were ultimately as pleased as they were surprised. Scott spoke about an Indian doctor who used to live in his community:

[It] was the funniest thing in the world, because he was like, visibly he looked nothing like anybody from home, but he spoke with a Newfie accent...when you closed your eyes...he sounded like an old fisherman. He had all the "lord,

tunderin’<sup>32</sup> but there was always that little undercurrent of the land breeze of Bombay in his voice...he never...lost who he was, but he—and it wasn’t put on, that was legitimately him...as he got excited, he sounded a lot like a lot of Newfoundlanders.

Scott went on to say that the doctor “was there that long” that he took on the accent, and “he kind of fit in, and he was well liked.”

Ann also linked a local accent with fitting in and becoming local. She mused, “the longer somebody’s been here, the more Newfoundland they do become,” and she went on to talk about an immigrant family she knows from Sri Lanka. The parents have taken their kids back to their home country, but they have also “ensured that their kids are involved in local.” Talking to the children, she said, is “like talking to the neighbor’s child.” Participants like Ann talked about immigrants with Newfoundland accents sometimes with amazement but also with pride and described this natural adoption of their accent and dialect as “wonderful” and “great.”

### **Other Community Changes Affecting Rural Newfoundland**

Rural Newfoundland communities have been facing drastic changes over the last couple of decades. As mentioned earlier, there has been significant out-migration. In fact, one participant’s community has had such a decline in its population that the provincial government has approached the small island community with an offer to buy the houses so the community can be resettled to the main island. The community, therefore, is facing extinction, and they are not alone. During the writing of this chapter, three towns had fish-processing plants shut down. Although the loss was major in each community, in one, the plant employed approximately 50% of the town; with no company in the wings

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<sup>32</sup> “Lord, tunderin’” refers to the exclamatory phrase “Lord, thundering Jesus!”

to take over operation, the isolated community is at a loss as to how they will survive. Not all communities face such dire circumstances, but many have experienced/are experiencing large changes, and participants raised them and their effects during interviews and focus groups. This section outlines those changes and effects. It starts with a description of how small, rural Newfoundland communities traditionally have been quite collectivistic. It then moves into how community membership in flux, how there is a faster pace of life, and how social time is shifting. Finally, the section ends with a description of the effects of these changes: Knowing neighbors less, less community involvement, social time more formalized, harder to break into friendship groups, and the impact on immigrants.

**Traditionally collectivistic communities.** Small, rural Newfoundland communities traditionally have been very collectivistic in their orientation, and some communities still function that way. In one focus group, for example, there was an interesting conversation about how fewer Newfoundlanders have mortgages or house insurance than in other provinces. Heather agreed; no one in her family has ever had a mortgage, and her parents have never had house insurance, although they have always owned their own home: “They don’t bother. No one has to get it because if your house burnt down, the next day it will be already started, be rebuilt....Because their thought is, you don’t need insurance, you’re here and if your house is burned, we [the community] will take care of you.” “We’re your insurance,” David added. Sasha also recounted how her community can pull together quickly to respond to a need in the community. There was a recent call for donations of time and money to build a playground, and in one afternoon, 400 of the approximately 3000 people in her town showed up to build it;

nearly all of the \$90,000 needed for the playground was raised within the community as well. The organizer told her “it was amazing to see how people worked together.”

**Community membership in flux.** Some small, rural Newfoundland communities still function such as those mentioned above. However, participants in larger communities, especially those closer to the capital city, reported huge changes to their communities over the last couple of decades. One of the most significant changes is that community membership is in flux as many have left the province, and others commute outside of their community to work. Scott remembers a time not so long ago “when at home it was you knew everybody,” but now the older generation is dying off, and their families (many of whom live “away” now) are selling off the family home and, “all of a sudden...where there was a house for 200 years, the house is no longer there, it’s an old parcel of land right on the water. People are buying ‘em up, putting up homes...that dynamic [of knowing your neighbor] is changing.” Ann also laments this change, and she shared that people “don’t have that same knowledge about their neighbor even.”

**Faster pace of life.** Participants also shared that in many communities there are increasing demands on families due to aging parents and children’s activities and a faster pace of life. They also talked about how they are working more than they did before. Scott attributed it to the growing strength of the economy. When it improved, “all of a sudden something shifted, and it was subtle, it wasn’t a real obvious thing, but you could notice that there is less free time.” Partially, Scott pointed out, this lack of free time is due to the fact that parents want to offer their children more than they got as children. So, he feels, they “work a little harder and make sure that they’re involved in the activities that I didn’t get to go to.” Before, Scott explained, kids would be off doing their own things

around town, but now their leisure time is “a lot more structured. Everybody’s in skating or ballet, or minor hockey or softball, on seven or eight teams, or taking music lessons.”

He does not discount how good it may be for the development of the kid, but Scott laments that the more structured lifestyle and “the absence of free time...affects parents.”

Before:

they may have went off doing some fishing or hunting or had knitting circles or whatever it is they did, they don’t have that now because now their lives kind of revolve around or are dominated by the activities of the child.

**Social time shifting.** In years past, people would spend most of their leisure time in their communities and with larger groups of people, but several participants spoke about a separation between where local people live and where they socialize. As John put it:

We’ve stopped socializing in our towns, but we now do it in the cabins, whether that be out on an island somewhere or up in the woods somewhere...that is where they do socialize. So they’ll go from cabin to cabin or trailer to trailer and they’ll sit down in large groups, they’ll have a few beers, they’ll play cards, they’ll do all those things that at one time we did in the community. So now they have to get away from the community...we’ve sort of separated where we live from some other recreational place and we socialize in this recreational place

John, and others in the same focus group, also pointed out that at one time, huge groups of people would socialize together, but now people gather (at least within the community) in smaller groups.

**Effects of these changes.** Not surprisingly, the fact that community membership is in flux, people are living faster paced lives, and social time has shifted to either smaller groups or outside of the community altogether has had huge effects on rural communities; in most cases, participants talked about the detrimental effects these changes have had. Below I describe these effects: knowing neighbors less, reduced community involvement, more formalized social time, barriers to making new friends, and how these changes might influence immigrant adaptation.

*Knowing neighbors less.* Some participants lamented the fact that they know their neighbors less than they did in the past. Brad confessed that he has been so busy recently that it took him two years to meet the retired couple who moved in at the end of the street. Others in the same focus group agreed that that would have been unheard of a couple of years ago. In different interview/focus group sessions Scott and Ann shared their worry that not knowing your neighbors well and having a busy life means that neighbors do not help each other out in the way they used to. Ann shared: “You know if a neighbor asked you for help, you would do anything for them, but you don’t know that there’s anything wrong or that they need help until they ask, because you’re not connected with your community in the same way.” Scott talked about how in the past if you needed help with something:

you didn’t need to ask anybody, if somebody seen out doing something in the yard, moving something around, or a load of wood showed up or something...someone would come over and give you a hand...it’s a little different now, now you’ve almost got, you got to kind of coordinate those things, because people are on their time now. They’ve got a lot of activities.

A couple of people suggested that knowing your neighbors provides a level of safety that does not exist when people who you know nothing about are moving into the community.

*Less community involvement.* Some participants also talked about how larger community events such as fundraisers for the church, fire hall, or recreation center had been major and regular events in the past, but “that’s all died off.” Scott suggested that in the past, local people frequently worked seasonally as “construction workers and fisherman and farmers,” and so when they came home for the winter, “they were able to devote that time to do what they needed to do and to give it to the community.” Now, however, people have “busy lifestyles, and they’re doing more things outside the community.”

*Social time more formalized.* In small, rural Newfoundland communities dropping in on someone unexpectedly is welcome and very common, but some participants reported that this is changing in their communities. As John explained, socializing is:

much more formalized. Even relatives now will call [phone ahead of time], and that was never a part of our fabric. I mean, you could practically open almost any door in the community, walk on in and make yourself at home, you know. So that spontaneity is certainly less.

Brad confessed that he has a neighbor who drops in a lot, and it is getting on his nerves. The man will come down to his house, dog in tow, when he knows Brad is home on the weekend, and “stop and have a yarn,”<sup>33</sup> asking him about his last moose hunting trip. Brad confessed “it’s almost to the point that he’s...you only get a day to do some work,

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<sup>33</sup> To “have a yarn” is to have a leisurely and somewhat aimless chat.

and I got a day to do some work, and now you want to take an hour of that time. I really can't afford to give you that hour." Leah agreed that "20, 50 years ago you wouldn't have worried about that," and "it's the demands that are being placed on the individuals are causing us to be more formalized."

***Harder to break into friendship groups.*** As mentioned earlier, some participants talked about how people in rural communities used to socialize more broadly, and it was not uncommon to have groups of 40 or even 100 people together for a party or a dance:

when everybody was out at a dance on Saturday night—and that was the norm not just a special occasion—over time you would get to see the same people, and you know, you'd strike up conversations, and eventually you'd break in there. So I think it is much more tougher these days to establish that really close connection, that close friendship with people in our rural towns now than it used to be.

John pointed out that changes to the ways people spend their leisure time, in smaller groups and outside the community, is affecting local people's ability to establish close connections.

***Effects on immigrants.*** A couple of participants mused about what these changes to rural Newfoundland might mean for immigrant adaptation. Peter pointed out that his community has taken "some hard blows from downsizing," and that as a result, although the town has a "history with people moving from different places," things such as the formation of a multicultural association have gone "on the backburner" while the community rebuilds itself.

A second way that participants suggested community changes might affect immigrant adaptation is that smaller groups socializing and recreating outside of the

community means “it’s so much more difficult to break in” (John) to those groups, and this might impede an immigrant’s ability to adapt to their new community. As Ann put it: “on weekends, I’m in a community that’s very, very vacant. You know, my husband and I are probably one of the few couples that actually stay in the community. So that makes a difference to people coming in.” If locals, with established links to the province, are feeling the effects of these changes to rural Newfoundland, it is not a huge leap to say that these changes are important factors in the experience of immigrants as well.

Set against this backdrop of drastic socioeconomic changes, the changes to rural Newfoundland caused by immigration may seem minute. However, those changes are there. Places of employment are affected by cultural differences between employees; immigrant groups are forming in larger communities, and some individuals, businesses, and municipalities are stepping up to the plate to address the needs of this very subtle shift in the demographics of their communities. Local people are becoming more exposed to different cultures and, by extension, are somewhat more open to difference. Finally, immigrants and children of immigrants who develop a local dialect and accent may be helping shift assumptions of who is “from away” versus who belongs to/in rural Newfoundland.

This study was guided by three research questions that explored the immigrant adaptation experience; the communicative approaches that are helping and hindering immigrant adaptation and community building; and what, if any, community change has happened as a result of immigration. The results paint a complex picture of the immigrant adaptation experience—one that is influenced by a multitude of factors, including ethnic proximity, profession, and personality. This experience happens within a context that

already is experiencing social and economic upheaval but one that is still seeing some incremental change due to immigration. Emerging from this unique context and experience are interesting communicative approaches that reflect varying levels of engagement and mindfulness.

## CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

This study was an inquiry into the adaptation experiences of immigrants to rural Newfoundland, the communicative approaches that are at play, and the ways that communities themselves might be changing. It contributes by offering a look into a rural context and offering specific communicative approaches that are helping and hindering immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference. Three research questions explored immigrant-adaptation experiences, communicative approaches, and community-level change, and they were answered with qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups. This section outlines how the results of this study reflect, extend, or contradict pre-existing literature; suggests the implications for policy and practice; and presents limitations, future directions, and conclusions.

### **Discussion of the Research Questions**

**Research question 1.** Research question one stated: *What dimensions characterize the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland?* The results revealed four significant and complex themes: (a) Struggle and loss; (b) Attributions of difference; (c) Interaction and connection; and (d) Responsibility for change. Struggle and loss describes a multitude of challenges that immigrants can face during their adaptation experience. They can feel geographically isolated, can be struggling to get their previous training recognized, and face the possible loss of their culture in themselves and in their families. These struggles and losses are very stressful and can affect immigrants' mental health. Attributions of difference encompass those differences that immigrants and locals feel exist between them (such as formal education and self-sufficiency) and how they may influence immigrant reception. The theme of

interaction and connection explores the nature of immigrants' interaction with fellow immigrants and the larger community. It includes stories of social isolation but also connectedness to people and place. Finally, responsibility to change describes participants' assumptions about who/what should change as a result of immigration and what the effects of these changes/lack of changes might be. These various results reflect, contradict, and extend current theory on and understanding of immigrant adaptation in the areas of the nature of adaptation, the importance of ethnic proximity, the immigrant as facility object, and the characteristics of small communities.

*Nature of adaptation.* The findings of my study reflect some current cultural adaptation theory. Participants pointed out that they are adapting/have adapted to their new environment in a variety of ways. As Berry's (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010) work suggests, people are at various places on the continuum of maintenance of original culture and proximity to host culture, and most suggested that assimilation is not the "ultimate theoretical directionality of adaptive change" (Kim, 2005, p. 383).

As much as the results do not support Kim's (1987, 2001, 2005, 2009) assumption that adaptation's "end result" is assimilation, they do support her assertion that stress is a central part of the adaptation process. Participants spent considerable time describing the various challenges they face (employment, financial, cultural, social), and the stress this has added to their lives. This study extends Kim's stress-adaption-growth model by offering specific personal attributes, approaches, and motivations that make the growth possible. For example, participants talked about how their strategic choice to move to a

rural area could benefit them, and how they must continue their hard work in order to support their family back home.

However, the study's results also contradict some of the assumptions of traditional cultural adaptation theory (Berry, 2001, 2005, 2007; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Kim, 1987, 2001, 2005, 2009). Specifically, my findings highlight the weakness of the assumption that immigrants always have the power to decide how they adapt, suggesting instead that a variety of institutional/social/environmental constraints influence what adaptation strategies may be available. Other scholars (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Hermans, 2001; Padilla & Perez, 2003) have referenced these constraints, but this study expands on their assertions by offering specific examples from real life stories of those who have struggled with issues such as institutional barriers and geographic and cultural isolation.

One of the contextual constraints about which participants spoke was the problem of credential recognition. Some immigrants felt like there is a disconnect between how they would like to adapt and how they are having to adapt because of the ways systems are blocking them. In addition, they frequently noted that immigrating to another country is “not a leisure trip” (Amor), and that if you have family depending on you in your home country, you must find a job regardless of what kind of job it is. For people in those circumstances, adaptation is not a choice; it “is just part of the package” (Amor).

In addition, this study found that immigration to rural and remote areas can include geographic and cultural constraints that may not be at play in more urban, or even less remote rural, settings. Rural Newfoundland communities do not often offer the infrastructure, materials, or amenities necessary for an immigrant to practice his/her culture. Things as central to culture as an ability to converse in person in your native

tongue, to eat your own food, or to practice your faith within a like community often do not exist. This can be described then, using Berry's terms, as forced assimilation or marginalization. That is, an immigrant may not want to distance him/herself from his or her culture, but the constraints of the isolation may result in it nonetheless.

*Ethnic proximity.* A second way this study relates to existing literature on immigration is in its assertion that ethnic proximity is an important factor in how an immigrant might be received in a community (Kim, 2005; Michalowski, 1987; Padilla & Perez, 2003; van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010). Ethnic proximity, as Kim (2005) understands it, is made up of the external symbols (such as race) and internal markers (such as beliefs and values). That is, the more that locals and immigrants share these external and internal markers, the more ethnic proximity they might have. For example, local participants admitted that the strong ties with England and Ireland, in particular, would make local communities far more comfortable in welcoming them. Immigrants from other countries, however, can be met with fear, apprehension, confusion, and extreme curiosity. There is a hierarchy in the ease of acceptance that reflects early literature from scholars such as Jerabek and Man (1994), Anderson (2010) and Kalin and Berry (1996). Kalin and Berry (1996), for example, found that British immigrants were the most accepted in Canada and Sikhs the least; in my study, participants talked about how English and Irish immigrants would fit in pretty easily “but anybody outside of that it's got to be a real challenge” (Carol). This study adds to this existing quantitative work on ethnicity and reception by giving it richer and contextualized description through personal stories of social isolation, emotional struggle, and the effects of competitive rhetoric.

***Immigrant as facility object.*** Findings from this study support Jones and Lambert's (1959) conceptualization of the immigrant as *reward* or *facilities objects*. They suggest that positive attitudes toward immigrants would have more stability and strength if immigrants were considered to offer "rewards" such as friendship rather than simply serving as *facilities objects* who are meeting a skills shortage. Participants in this study were very aware that their work is contributing to society in ways that are greatly needed, but simultaneously they report feeling socially isolated and having a difficult time making "real friends." Earlier research suggested that a dissatisfaction with social networks is the second most frequent reason why immigrants leave Newfoundland (Vardy et al., 2008). Therefore, this study's results suggest not only the ongoing significance of Jones and Lambert's (1959) conceptualization, but that a successful reframing of the contribution of immigrants from "serving an employment need" to being of social/cultural benefit as well may help alleviate social isolation and increase retention.

***Community characteristics.*** Results from this study both reflect and contradict existing research on three perspectives about community characteristics: emotional connection to community is always good, small towns are friendly, and influence allows community members to shape their community. Emotional connection is one of the elements that McMillan and Chavis (1986) describe as being part and parcel of sense of community. They argue that community members should feel an emotional connection to their community, and that it builds through factors such as time, quality of contact, and intensity of shared events. Although they admit that "sense of community is a powerful force" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 20) that may not always be used for good, the authors offer few specifics about how emotional connection might go wrong. This

study's results, however, can extend current understandings of emotional connection to admit how these bonds might be to the exclusion of newcomers. Participants often described locals' strong connection to community and place while admitting the difficulty of breaking into these circles. New immigrant participants in particular talked about how locals are "separate" and spend their spare time within established friendship and family networks, making it hard for them to establish "real" friendships.

A second community characteristic that might be rethought as it pertains to this study's results is the assumption that small towns are always friendly places where people "may easily establish rewarding relationships in which they are 'known'" (George, 2008, p. 828). By contrast, cities are constructed as cold and impersonal. The immigrant experience in rural Newfoundland suggests otherwise. As mentioned above, new immigrants in particular may have a hard time making friends in small towns; the city, for many immigrants, is a place where they can find greater social networks and opportunities to maintain their culture. Although Newfoundlanders pride themselves on being friendly, and many immigrant participants confirmed that they found people generally helpful, polite, and chatty, they also pointed out that it is important not to equate friendliness with friendship. Friendship, it seems, is a much rarer quality than locals would like to admit.

Finally, McMillan and Chavis (1986) add the idea of influence to community research. Influence in close communities, they suggest, is a force that can be simultaneously exerted in both directions (individual to community and vice versa). The more tight-knit the community, however, the more pressure an individual may feel to adapt to local ways of doing things. Although this study's results do not necessarily

support this final suggestion, getting involved in the community was strongly recommended by local participants as an important way immigrants might adapt to rural Newfoundland. People spoke with pleasure about the immigrants they knew who had proven their interest in the community's wellbeing by giving of their time. Some immigrant participants also recognized the importance of this influence and pointed out, "if you show up and start helping out, they embrace you, and you become part of the community" (René). In fact, I would suggest that community involvement is even more important in rural Newfoundland communities and for immigrants than in other contexts and for other individuals. Communities in rural Newfoundland have a long collectivist history. That history, coupled with the apprehension/assumption of difference, means that an immigrant's time in community volunteering is time well invested.

**Research question 2.** Six themes of communicative approaches emerged in response to research question two: *What communicative approaches have helped and hindered immigrant adaptation and community building across cultural difference?* Those approaches are "leaving be," "differentiating," "acknowledging," "opening," "resisting," and "bridging." "Leaving be" communicative approaches represent a lack of engagement with a person or topic and they let the person or a topic remain as is. "Differentiating" approaches are those that intentionally or unintentionally remind people "from away" that they are somehow different or separate from locals. "Opening" communicative approaches are engaging and sometimes mindful. They show a willingness to interact with strangers and include approaches such as reaching out to neighbors or using endearments with strangers. "Resisting" communicative approaches are more mindful than "opening" communicative approaches and they resist another

person's beliefs, assumptions or communicative approach. Finally, "bridging" communicative approaches represent mindful engagement with cultural similarities and differences and may take the form of modifying a class's curriculum to include a student from another county or sharing different religious perspectives on a common activity such as bonfires.

The above mentioned themes answer a call for "more qualitative approaches to immigration research" (Keshishian, 2000, p. 94) and "help us more vividly see the complexities and subtleties of acculturation" (Keshishian, 2000, p. 94) through specific examples of how communication plays an integral role in this process. As well, these results build on earlier suggestions that politics may play an important role in the adaptation experiences of immigrants. Finally, a number of this study's results reflect some of the important findings that came out of Philipsen's (1975, 1976) work in Teamsterville.

*Communicative exemplars.* Both Kim's (2005) and Berry's (2005) models of adaptation center around the importance of communication (Kim, 2005) and interaction (Berry, 2005), and although they add significantly to immigration adaptation research, they leave a gap that this study might help fill by adding precise ways that communication is reflecting and constructing reality. For example, Kim (2009) talks about the importance of an immigrant being competent in terms of communication with people in the new setting so that s/he might be able to act and speak appropriately. The responsive communicative approaches that emerged from this study offer specific examples of how immigrants engage in host communication competence. Clergy in Scott's community, for example, bridged the social distance between them and the

“common people” through music, and Amor used self-deprecating humor to make her colleagues feel more comfortable around her.

***Political influence.*** This study might also add something to one of Berry’s (2005) suppositions. He has suggested that politics can influence immigrant-adaptation experiences. My results reflect this reality and offer specific rhetorical framings that participants believe are creating and reaffirming an us-them perspective. Some participants reported that this competitive rhetoric has made people “from away” feel unwelcome and, unfortunately, the fact that it has come from provincial leadership, they argue, has given “regular” Newfoundlanders permission to think the same way “because Danny just lowered the flags.”<sup>34</sup>

***Differentiation.*** Another way that this study’s results converse with previous research is in the area of differentiating linguistic devices and work done by Tajfel (1978) and Philipsen (1976). Tajfel’s social identity theory (1978) seeks to explain how people create “social meaning” (p. 86) through the “creation of intergroup differences” (p. 86). He points out that sometimes those difference do not exist, while other times people seek to enhance “whatever differences that do exist” (p. 86). This study’s results clearly paint a picture in which, for some participants, the “social world” (p. 97) has been divided into “clearly distinct categories”(p. 97)—Newfoundlanders and everyone else. The case of immigrants in rural Newfoundland, however, differs from Tajfel’s conceptualization of differentiation in that the focus is on difference, but there are no clear categories of inferiority and superiority. Any clear categorization is made more complex by competing

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<sup>34</sup> Danny Williams was the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador until late 2011. He was a millionaire and had incredibly high popularity, particularly when he announced that all Canadian flags in the province would be lowered to signal the province’s displeasure with the federal government’s not giving the province a fair shake as it related to oil revenues and transfer payments.

statuses due to race, ethnicity, formal education, social standing, and class. That said, obvious ingroup/outgroup dynamics point to the importance of social identity theory in reflecting on this study's results.

*Teamsterville meets Newfoundland.* Finally, there are also a number of ways in which this study reflects Philipsen's (1976) discoveries in Teamsterville. Specifically, both studies' populations put considerable weight on accent and its role in social status and identity. Secondly, both populations put importance on placing people within ethnic and geographic categories. In terms of accent and its role in culture, Philipsen's (1976) subjects, like Newfoundlanders, were aware of their "own speaking style as one distinct from others" (p. 18). In this study, Hope pointed out that Newfoundlanders are "aware" of accents, and that that they listen to someone's accent to try to place where they were from. This study also found that Newfoundlanders are sometimes self-conscious about their accents and may switch their way of speaking to reflect what they feel is expected of them. Interestingly, Philipsen reported that in Teamsterville, people "are insecure about their own speech outside of neighborhood contexts" (p. 18). In the case of rural Newfoundland, however, results suggested that not only might a "proper English" accent mean a Newfoundlander might shift accent and dialect, but s/he might also change topics in order to appear more "cultured" or educated. Philipsen points out that:

Awareness of a linguistic norm and the concurrent belief that one's own speech is substandard can lead to what Labov calls "linguistic insecurity." This in turn can lead to attempts at correction, even hypercorrection, the practice of speaking so carefully as to betray a deliberate attempt at compensation. (p. 18)

That CFAs and immigrants alike reported that some Newfoundlanders switch their accents and topics points to the fact that they are hypercorrecting in response to “linguistic insecurity.”

Secondly, the communicative approaches surrounding “where are you from?/not from here” reflect the importance Newfoundlanders place on geographic and ethnic origin. This echoes Philipsen’s (1976) finding in Teamsterville that there was “a strong concern for locating people in social-physical space” (p. 25). He found that a stranger must be “placed by the resident in terms of ethnicity and residence before a conversation can comfortably proceed” (p. 17). Philipsen linked this communicative tradition to a history of “settling” the surrounding city blocks by ethnicity; it is through that tradition that where someone lived and their ethnic background became “salient variables in decisions to mark an occasion as appropriate for speaking” (p. 17).

Similarly, Newfoundland communities were primarily settled by either West Country England Protestants or Irish Catholics, and to this day, smaller, older communities in particular have a reputation of being either Protestant or Catholic. In some cases, Catholic and Protestant communities may only have a mile of road or a bridge between them; yet there was very little intermarrying until the 1960s and 1970s. Even for my generation, the fact that young people were schooled in either Protestant, Catholic, or Pentecostal schools meant that although there was no ethnic tension, you often did not make friends with the other because you were schooled separately and did not meet; the denominational school system was only dismantled in the late 1990s. As a result, it could be that “where are you from?” is partially a reflection of the fact that for

most of Newfoundland's history, ethnicity and locality were "at least partially interchangeable as organizing devices" (Philipsen, 1976, p. 18).

**Research question 3.** Research question three asked: *What changes have rural communities experienced due to the arrival of immigrants?* The results revealed that many participants felt that there was not enough immigration to rural Newfoundland for rural communities to have changed. Scratching beneath the surface, however, revealed that communities are making incremental changes. For example, in a handful of communities, there are enough immigrants from the same country of origin that small immigrant communities are forming, and larger communities have seen more locals exposed to different cultures. Some felt this has led to an increased acceptance of difference. In addition, this study revealed that individual acts of kindness have seen locals helping immigrants adapt. Although the changes resulting from immigration may be slow, the results also revealed significant and rapid changes facing rural Newfoundland outside of immigration-related issues, including reduced knowledge of one's neighbors and a faster pace of life. Within these results, there are four specific areas where this study reflects and/or extends current research: exploration of contextual, rural community immigration research, accent as membership, and reduced civic and social engagement.

***Contextual, rural community immigration research.*** By exploring immigration within the very specific context of rural Newfoundland communities, this study adds to current research in four ways. First, it supports and extends Berry's (2001) supposition that immigrant-receiving communities change as a result of immigration. Although rural Newfoundland communities are not "massively-transformed" (Berry, 2001, p. 616), they

have experienced some incremental change. The results of my study extend Berry's theory by suggesting specific ways this change might take shape. This finding is important as current research has focused on the experience of individual immigrants and neglected to explore receiving societies' changes.

Secondly, this study brings attention to the experience of immigrants in rural areas, a topic yet unexplored in communication and rarely discussed in other disciplines (see Everts, 2008, for an exception), but one many scholars feel deserves attention (Akbari et al., 2005). These results show that immigrants in rural areas face additional adaptation issues that their counterparts in more urban areas may not. They can be affected by the culture shock of moving from an urban to a rural setting, feel geographically and socially isolated, and have no one from their ethnicity and race in their adopted community. These results are significant because they may help us understand more about the experience of the 11% of immigrants in Canada who do not live in urban areas (Beshiri, 2004).

Thirdly, by seeking the input of both immigrants and members of the greater community, this study addresses the complaint that intercultural communication has minimized the interdependence that can exist in North American contexts (Kim & Hubbard, 2007); the study was shaped in order to reflect the reality that cultural adaptation is a social process (Padilla & Perez, 2003). For example, this study found that the nature of the community where an immigrant lives can influence how an immigrant can or will adapt. If a community is very tight-knit, it can be harder for an immigrant to make strong linkages with its members. In addition, this study's findings point out that immigrants do not always enter their new country as independent entities, but instead

often have a responsibility to assist the family they left behind. As a result, their adaptation choices are constrained by their duty to do well and send money home. This finding is significant as cultural adaptation research primarily has focused on the independent individual. Admittedly, Berry (2007) has argued that adaptation models should look at the social unit; however, his acculturation theory continues to recognize an individual experience. This study was able to give form to a more interdependent adaptation experience.

Finally, this study recognizes that the cultural adaptation of immigrants and their communities is embedded within a very specific socio-economic and geographic context. Rural Newfoundland has been experiencing extreme change in the last couple of decades. Many people have left communities to work elsewhere, pulling apart families and communities. More people commute to work and relax outside of their communities. As a result, how people spend their social time and interact with their neighbors is changing. This is the context into which new immigrants arrive, and by acknowledging that context and its influence on adaptation, this study offers something that scholars have argued is too often missing from communication scholarship (Croucher, 2009; Kim & Hubbard, 2007; Padilla & Perez, 2003).

***Accent as membership.*** The finding that local people are pleased when immigrants or their children develop a local accent reflects Philipsen's (1976) assertion that people who do not speak "proper English" are pleased when someone develops their accent; it joins them in "a kind of unity in adversity" (p. 18). In the case of Newfoundland we know that this perception of adversity exists. Newfoundlanders feel a sense of being marginalized and isolated (King & Clarke, 2002; Pocius, 2000) and

recognize that their accents and dialects have been the one of the focal points of Newfie jokes and “associated with laziness and stupidity” (King & Clarke, 2002, p. 538). When immigrants adopt a local accent or dialect then they are intentionally or unintentionally signaling “one’s similarity to his friends” (p. 19) and membership in a group that is marginalized in the rest of Canada. In the us/them dynamic of mainlander versus Newfoundlander, immigrants are signaling where their allegiances lie: “I am on your side.”

This study adds another interesting element to this discussion of accent as membership; immigrants of color who develop a local accent present a contradiction of categorization or a juxtaposition that leads to surprise or confusion in locals. First, immigrants of color are assumed to be highly educated; having had their English corrected by school teachers and ridiculed by other Canadians, Newfoundlanders do not associate their accent with formal education. Secondly, 89.9 percent of Newfoundlanders are white (Statistics Canada, 2009b), and this study has found that there is a commonly held assumption that people of color are not “from here.” As a result of these two factors in particular, immigrants of color adopting a local accent and/or dialect surprises and confuses locals as much as it pleases. This finding is significant because it suggests another layer of complexity in Newfoundlanders of color’s acceptance as belonging to Newfoundland—a layer that white immigrants do not face.

***Reduced civic and social engagement.*** The results of research question three explain the context into which immigrants are moving, and these findings both reflect and contradict Putnam’s (Putnam, 1995, 2001) findings on civic and social engagement. Since the mid-1990s, Putnam has argued that the United States, among many countries, is

experiencing huge declines in civic engagement. In his book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam (2001) argues that growing cultural diversity is one of the largest reasons for reduced societal trust. In this study, however, participants reported high levels of social engagement, cohesiveness, and trust in some communities (such as the one Heather is originally from). That said, other participants reported that their communities have undergone considerable social and civic change, and they feel those changes are not for the better. Scott talked about how his community is less community driven, and John talked about how people spend more time in smaller social groupings, and that there are far fewer community-wide events. The changes in these communities reflect those that Putnam himself found.

In addition, participants such as Scott and Ann talked about how their communities now have new people moving in and/or people commuting to work outside the community, and they suggested that this has changed community dynamic and reduced trust. As Ann put it, “there are safety issues too, you know, in terms of you don’t know who your neighbors are anymore.” In exploring the reasons behind reduced societal trust, Putnam (2001) suggested that cultural diversity is one of the main reasons. In the case of rural Newfoundland, however, no references to reduced trust pointed specifically to immigrants. In some cases, in fact, the “newcomers” to their communities were fellow Newfoundlanders, and more often they were CFAs; in all cases, however, they were outsiders or strangers who people in the community did not know therefore reducing people’s feeling of security. In addition, the reduction of community-wide events and the increase of socialization outside the community means that opportunities to get to know those strangers are lessened as well.

Immigrants to rural Newfoundland, then, are moving into an area in a state of flux. Some of these changes reflect those that Putnam (2001) found in his study; however, the results of my study also suggest that reduced societal trust need not only result from increased cultural diversity but also from shifting community dynamics. That is, even fellow Newfoundlanders moving into a new community may reduce societal trust if community members do not have/take opportunities to get to know them.

### **Implications**

The results of this study have a number of policy/practice and theoretical/research implications. The policy/practice section highlights five specific areas: Initiation, interaction, and support, mutual learning, the framing of immigrants, multiculturalism and their roles, and importance of effort and mindfulness. Theoretical/research implications include that there are diverse immigrant adaption experiences, that rural contexts are unique from their urban counterparts, and that immigrant reception is in a vulnerable position.

**Policy and practice implications.** The findings from this study point to a variety of ways in which policy and practice might shift and change to improve immigrant adaptation and take steps towards making locals (and the province as a whole) more inclusive of cultural difference. These specific implications are: initiation, interaction, and support; mutual learning; the framing of immigrants and multiculturalism; and the importance of effort and mindfulness.

***Initiation, interaction, and support.*** The results of this study indicate just how tremendous the struggles and losses are that immigrants can face. This part of the adaptation experience is often very personal, internalized, and can be hard for immigrants

to admit. As a result, individuals, communities, and institutions should recognize that immigrants may be reluctant to take the first step in asking for assistance or making friends. That said, immigrants should also keep in mind that community members have established networks and schedules, and it usually will take some “interruption” of those regular patterns for them to recognize that there is a new person they could help or befriend.

Regardless of who takes the first step on an interpersonal level, at an institutional level, there needs to be a more coordinated approach to assisting immigrant adaptation in rural areas. The stories of goodwill that emerged from this research are heartwarming in their content but disheartening in the fact that they were the result of accidental meetings. This issue deserves more attention than it currently is receiving, particularly if the province wants to retain the immigrants it has worked so hard to recruit.

The findings that new immigrants in particular feel socially isolated and that local people feel community service is a good way for immigrants to adapt suggests that one of the best ways that institutions might support immigrant adaptation is by organizing service-focused events. These events should intentionally include immigrants and locals alike and may be a good step in increasing interaction and encouraging community building across cultural difference. As well, these sorts of activities may help minimize local people’s self-fulfilling prophecy that rural communities are simply a stepping stone for immigrants, that they are not invested in their new communities, and that they are not going to stay.

***Mutual learning.*** The evidence from this study suggests that there is a need for mutual learning between immigrants and locals. This is particularly true in those

workplaces, such as hospitals, where many immigrants have employment. Despite the fact that some participants had experienced culture shock and racism on the job, and that health authorities are actively recruiting doctors and nurses abroad, there was no indication from this research that there are sufficient orientation programs for new immigrants or adequate intercultural communication or diversity training for staff members in any of these institutions.

At the level of the average community member/immigrant, it would be useful for both to understand more about the other's perspective and experience. Some immigrants may not realize the extreme changes and pressures that rural Newfoundland has and is experiencing and how many people feel their livelihoods—and even their community's survival—is at risk. Some locals may not realize the hardships and responsibilities that immigrants harbor and may assume that if they have a “good job” that they “got ‘er scald.”<sup>35</sup>

***Framing of immigrant and multiculturalism.*** There are three implications from this study's findings within the framing of the immigrant and multiculturalism. First, organizations should plan multicultural events with a clear understanding of the advantages and pitfalls of various approaches. This study's results, for example, point out that locals and immigrants alike can appreciate events such as multicultural food and craft fairs as an opportunity to share cultures; for some locals, it may be the first time they have tasted food from another country, and this may be an important step. However, organizers should be cognizant that the people who are hosting tables at these events and their cultures should be celebrated as integral parts of the community, not exoticized.

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<sup>35</sup> This expression has a similar meaning to “to have it made.”

Secondly, as important as these events are, they are unidirectional in their focus. That is, those with non-Newfoundland connections share their food, music, and culture with those who do. Multiculturalism, however, is meant to embrace all cultures; therefore, Newfoundlanders should be equal participants in sharing who they are. Making explicit that “local culture” is also a culture is an important step toward more in-depth intercultural conversation and learning.

Secondly, this study’s results suggest that governments and agencies should highlight the various ways that immigrants contribute to the province’s communities and cultures. That said, it is equally important to recognize that there are “born and bred” Newfoundlanders who are people of color, and that they are also an integral part of the province. Both of these might be achieved through a thoughtful advertising campaign that shines a spotlight on the achievements and contributions of Newfoundlanders from all walks of life. For example, one segment might commend a fisherman for lobbying government to create a marine-protected area, which helped save his region’s fish stocks from decline. Another might celebrate local actor and comedian Shaun Majumder (whose father was an immigrant) for “doing right” by his province in starring in U.S. American TV shows while giving back to the rural community in which he grew up by starting the Burlington Community Business Initiative that supports local entrepreneurs (Majumder, 2012). An identity shift away from Newfoundland as singly Irish and English is not an easy one, but moves in that direction might help minimize the assumption of who is “from here.”

***Importance of effort and mindfulness.*** The final implication of these results is of the importance of effort and mindfulness. We know that friendliness and generosity has

been helpful with immigrant adaptation, but what has also emerged is the importance of putting effort into and being mindful of communicative choices in cross-cultural interactions. Several of the communicative approaches that participants suggested affected them negatively were usually said with no malicious intent. For example, some local people assumed that when an immigrant disengages from the community or does not ask for help that they think they are better than others or do not want to be part of the community. Similarly, locals comments/questions such as “where are you from?” “no, no, before that,” and “you’re not from here” give newcomers the impression that they are different from locals and do not belong. Increased mindfulness about the other’s perspective might minimize these effects.

**Theoretical and research implications.** The findings from this study suggest several implications for theory and research. First, there are a multitude of factors at play in immigrant adaptation pointing to the complexity of the experience. Secondly, rural adaptation experiences have some unique features that highlight the importance of expanding research to more fully understand the challenges and benefits of immigration to rural contexts. Finally, the framing of immigrants as facilities objects suggests that refugees are less welcome than other immigrants and points to the vulnerability of immigrant reception.

***Diverse experiences.*** One of the things that struck me as a researcher was the diversity of immigration experiences that I heard. There are an endless numbers of factors at play (country of origin, race, linguistic ability, community where they are living, whether they have family with them, whether they married into a local family, personality, the age they immigrated, whether they are gainfully employed, etc.). This

diversity of experience proves the complexity of the topic and cautions against an oversimplification of the immigrant adaptation experience. For example, although this study did not aim to compare different immigrant experiences, the data collected made it clear that white European immigrant participants' experiences could be quite different from those of non-white participants from further afield. One implication of this for theory and research is that researchers must recognize how integral the race and ethnicity of immigrants—and those in the greater community—are to adaptation experiences.

***Rural experiences.*** Another area where this study's findings have implications for research and theory is within the area of rural contexts. These findings pointed out that the experience of rural-based immigrants has additional challenges that urban-based immigrants do not usually face. They have extreme difficulty in obtaining their native foods, and they lack settlement services, things to do, and access to cultural and religious institutions that relate to their culture. In addition, immigrants of color are far more visible than they would be in urban areas, and all immigrants have a far smaller pool of people to befriend than they would in a city. Nonetheless, some immigrants still tout the benefits of moving to rural areas where they feel that if they have a job, they can get ahead rather than be "poor as a rat" (Amor) in the cities where most immigrants move. Intercultural communication and cultural adaptation research and theory should expand its capacity to tell these unique stories and perspectives from non-urban contexts.

***Vulnerability of immigrant reception.*** Finally, there are a couple of theoretical implications that relate to how people understand and appreciate immigrants' role in society. As discussed in this study's findings, within the context of rural Newfoundland, there is a transitive relation that states that professionals equal respect and people of color

equal professionals and therefore people of color equal respect (or at a minimum that this respectful role trumps racist behavior). First, it suggests that the reception for refugees, who do not arrive as “employment-ready” as most other immigrants, may not be as welcomed. It may trigger the competitive rhetoric that “they” are abusing the social welfare system when they use the social support net available to all Canadians, both permanent residents and refugees. Secondly, as Amor pointed out, the implication for being “esteemed” as a person of color in a professional role leaves “no room for failure.” What happens if immigrants “fall below the expectations of being professionals?” Does that mean that they now “don’t deserve to be here?” This implication points to the danger of the *facilities object* frame: that what immigrants contribute to rural Newfoundland is linked solely to their economic usefulness.

### **Limitations**

The findings of this study are subject to four main limitations. First, the definition that was utilized may have been too broad in that it included both immigrants that had immigrated to another Canadian province almost fifty years ago (with a fairly recent move to Newfoundland) as well as an immigrant who moved directly to Newfoundland just a year ago. Although the goals of this study did not include generalization, the experiences of these participants were vastly different from each other, primarily because the former immigrant’s “formative adaptation years” had been in a different context. That said, Newfoundland is a unique environment, and even those participants who had arrived initially in other Canadian provinces reported things they needed to adapt to in Newfoundland. It is possible, as well, that these participants may have had a unique and important perspective, because they were able to compare their initial Canadian

adaptation experience with their “secondary” adaptation experience. These immigrants also had a strong command of English and so were able to articulate themselves in ways that newer immigrants were not always able. Finally, the low number of immigrants in rural Newfoundland means that a narrower definition of immigrant may have made an adequate sample impossible.

A second limitation of this research is the fact that none of the local participants were people of color. Given the demographics of the rural areas, that is not surprising perhaps, but the perspective of non-white Newfoundlanders could have been very insightful. That said, the people that volunteered to help with member check were a diverse group, and their feedback and input was invaluable.

The third limitation of this research is the fact that some of the local participants who were interviewed did not have any immigrants in their community. As a result, when they were asked questions such as, “how are immigrants adapting?,” their answers were primarily guesswork. That said, there were immigrants living in neighboring communities, and their suppositions still offered important insight into Newfoundlanders’ perspectives on their communities, immigration, and the relationship between the two. It should be added that their perspectives may have been no less accurate than those of locals who did have immigrants in their communities because those people were often also unsure about how immigrants were making out.

Finally, this study sought to understand how communities may be changing as a result of immigration. Immigration in rural Newfoundland is happening at a slow pace; therefore, the corresponding changes are also measured. As a result, communities experiencing faster rates of immigration may offer further insight into more dramatic

community change. That said, by including the community perspective on immigrant adaptation, I broadened my data collection in ways that led to a far more rich and complex understanding than I would have gained had I focused solely on the immigrant perspective.

### **Future Directions**

Based on this study's findings, there are four areas that further research might explore. First, it would be interesting to learn about the adaptation experience of immigrants in Labrador. This northern, mainland part of the province was excluded from this study because it is an entirely different context and is very expensive to travel to. Labrador is more isolated than the island, but it also has a lot more cultural diversity, due in great part to several aboriginal populations. Also, a couple of Labrador's larger communities have a history of transient occupations, so it is not uncommon for newcomers to arrive. For these reasons, a similar study in Labrador might yield different results.

Secondly, an area of research worthy of pursuit is the identity development/negotiation of Newfoundlanders of color. Specifically it would be very interesting to learn what "techniques" they might use to assert their sense of belonging. Might they intentionally use a local accent and dialect to indicate they are "from here?" Or perhaps they do not feel they belong. In that case, how might it manifest in their interactions with other Newfoundlanders? How might their experiences be different or the same from immigrants of color (in terms of white locals' response to them)? More research needs to be done to determine these answers.

In addition, further research should continue to delve into the topic of community-level change as it relates to immigration. Medium- to large-sized cities might be more appropriate sites for this sort of work because immigration is likely to be happening at a greater rate in more urban areas. This work could serve as an important supplement to current cultural adaptation theory by exploring the characteristics of the massive transformation that Berry (2001) argues immigrant-receiving societies have undergone. This further research also could help us explore the relationship between the larger society's attitudes and how immigrants adapt (Berry & Sabatier, 2010) while attending to the tangible constraints influencing these processes.

Finally, participants in this study referred to "social distance" and hierarchy, suggesting that power distance is a factor in immigrant adaptation. In future, researchers might investigate the roles of class, power distance, and formal education as they relate to the isolation that immigrants experience in rural Newfoundland. A majority of immigrants to rural Newfoundland are university educated and have professional positions; in rural Newfoundland, however, skills related to self-sufficiency (on the water, in the woods, or in the home) are more highly valued (or at a minimum more understood) than formal learning. Particularly for older generations of rural Newfoundlanders, those with formal education may be respected but not considered someone you could easily have over for tea and a chat. Among other things, their own self-consciousness about a lack of formal education or lack of understanding about other cultures seem to act as barriers to more intimate interactions. The confines of this study, however, did not allow for the factors of class, power distance, and formal education to be parsed out fully, but a study in this area might prove very interesting.

## **Conclusions**

The current study explored immigration to rural Newfoundland, the experience of immigrants themselves, but also the effects on communities. It sought to understand what communicative approaches might be helping or hindering both immigrant adaptation and community building across culture difference. The study's research questions explored these areas and were addressed by using transcribed data from 17 face-to-face interviews and six focus groups conducted in rural communities. A rigorous thematic analysis of this data revealed four dimensions of immigrant adaptation experience (struggle and loss, attributions of difference, interaction and connection, responsibility for change), six communicative approaches that are helping or hindering immigrant adaptation and community building, and five ways some rural communities are changing due to immigration (small ethnic communities, increased exposure and acceptance, individuals helping others adapt, and immigrants adopting accents). This investigation contributes by offering an in-depth look into the rarely studied area of rural immigration and offers specific communicative approaches that reflect and construct immigrant adaptation experience and community building. In addition, this qualitative work supplements significant quantitative research by adding rich, contextualized stories that touch on issues of loss, culture, identity, and change.

I would like to return to the opening quotation from Gerald L. Pocius (2000) by reminding the reader that in Newfoundland “you ‘belong to’ a place” (p. 3) and, as this study affirmed, people will often ask where it is that you belong. Participant René suggested:

You come closer to belonging here (at least in my frame of reference) when someone says you are just like a bayman.<sup>36</sup> I like that. And, to that extent, I have a boat. I go out fishing. I have a lot in common with the folks around here. So, at least in [this community], I feel a sense of belonging because I don't get asked "where are you from" at all—they know I'm from here now.

I would like to end on a self-confession of sorts. I have to admit that when in Newfoundland, if I hear a different accent or see someone of another color, even I, an intercultural communication scholar, think "I wonder where they're from?" I have learned to withhold the question, though, and to try to pick up other clues in order to place them as "from here," from elsewhere in the province, elsewhere in the country, or abroad. Perhaps it is a way of thinking that has been engrained in me as well. I was given a moment to reflect on my own related assumptions after an interaction that happened in the final days of writing this study's results. I had lunch with friends at our favorite Chinese restaurant, a place owned by long-time immigrants, a place where we are well known and frequent often, so much so that the owners will send out free dessert every time we visit. As I was paying my bill, I chatted to one of the owners as I usually do and inquired when she had returned from a trip to her country of origin for Lunar New Year. She told me, and I asked "so, how long were you at home?" Her face, which is usually beaming, fell immediately, and she muttered how long she had been out of the province. I immediately realized my mistake and had to shake my head at myself as I left. Next year, when she returns from her annual trip I will have to remember to tell her "it's good to have you back home."

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<sup>36</sup> A bayman is someone who is not from the city; someone from rural Newfoundland, but particularly from a coastal community.

## APPENDIX A: PROTOCOLS

### “LOCAL” PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Obviously, I’m not from *community name here*. Tell me what it’s like.
2. What do people like to do in their spare time?
3. Do you have many people move here from away? From outside the country?
4. How do you feel they are making out? (the people from other countries)
5. Do they tend to do the same sorts of things in their spare time as the crowd that grew up here?
6. What sort of things around town might see locals and the people from other countries working on something together... (prompt: Maybe things that happen at the school? Church? Hospital?)
7. Can you think of any times when something happened that showed just how similar or different they are from those that grew up here?
8. How did they react? Locals?
9. Did that surprise you? Would you do it differently?
10. If you had to compare how locals see *community* and the people who grew up in other countries see *community*, how is it the same or different?
11. What other differences and similarities do you think there are between locals and the folks from away?
12. As time passes do you think these folks from away will become just as if they were from *community*?
13. What things are being done in town so that locals can learn about the place and culture of the newcomers and the other way around?
14. What could be done?
15. Has the community changed as people from different cultures settle here?
16. Let’s say a new immigrant arrived to the community, which three or four things would you tell them that would help them adapt to life in *community*?
17. Is there anything I missed? Anything you want to add?

## APPENDIX A (cont.)

### IMMIGRANT PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Obviously, I'm not from *community name here*. Tell me what it's like.
2. What do people like to do in their spare time?
3. Do many immigrants move here?
4. What has your experience been so far?
5. Do you tend to do the same sorts of things in your spare time as locals do?
6. Do you find you are having to make changes?
7. What sort of things around town might see locals and immigrants working on something together? (prompt: Maybe things that happen at the school? Church? Hospital?)
8. Can you think of any times when something happened that showed just how similar or different immigrants are from those who grew up here?
9. How did locals react? Those from away?
10. Did that surprise you? Would you do it differently?
11. If you had to compare how locals see *community* and how immigrants see *community* how is it the same or different?
12. What other differences and similarities do you think there are between locals and immigrants?
13. As time passes do you think the people who live here who were born in other countries will become just as if they were born in *community*?
14. What things are being done in town so that locals can learn about the place and culture of the newcomers and the other way around?
15. What could be done?
16. Has the community changed as people from different cultures settle here?
17. Let's say a new immigrant arrived to the community, which three or four things would you tell them that would help them adapt to life in *community*?
18. Is there anything I missed? Anything you want to add?

## APPENDIX A (cont.)

### “LOCAL” PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

1. Obviously, I’m not from *community or region name here*. Tell me what it’s like.
2. What do people like to do in their spare time?
3. What is the first thing that comes to mind when I say immigration to rural Newfoundland?
4. Have you had many people from other countries move to your community, and if so, how do you feel they are making out?
5. Are there things the community or community members have done to help them settle in? Feel more at home?
6. Are there any other things you feel the community should be doing?
7. Thinking now of the immigrants that moved into your community, what have they done to help themselves adapt to local life?
8. What more could they do?
9. What more do you think could be done to help the community come together more across cultures?

### IMMIGRANT PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

1. Obviously, I’m not from *community or region name here*. Tell me what it’s like.
2. What do people like to do in their spare time?
3. What is the first thing that comes to mind when I say rural Newfoundland?
4. What was your experience like when you first arrived here?
5. Has the community or community members done things to help you settle in? Feel more at home?
6. Are there any other things you feel the community should be doing?
7. What kind of things do you do to help you adapt to local life?
8. What more could you do?
9. What more do you think could be done to help the community come together more across cultures?

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