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**Affective Migration: the role of food preparation and
visceral experience for Egyptian migrant women
settling in the Region of Waterloo**

By

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Thesis

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This study examining Egyptian migrants settling in Canada is exploratory in nature and is intended to initiate a conversation about the personal experience of transnationalism and the value of the body as an instrument of research. A semi-structured interview approach was designed to prompt the evocation of deep personal thoughts, experiences, and sensations in response to questions surrounding migration to Canada through the shared performative act of cooking and the visceral experience of eating in the private space of the migrant kitchen. Using a grounded theory approach, several adaptive mechanisms were identified such as the creation of manageable daily routines, the openness to new tastes, ideals, and experiences, and establishing a sense of community. Although migrants wish to embody experiences of ‘home’ in the host country, authenticity is willingly compromised in order to create a sense of comfort, or the feeling of being ‘at home’. Given the typical length of the interview process, the breadth and depth of the experiences covered and the details stirred up by the sensual experiences within the kitchen, I would argue that using the visceral realm accessed knowledge, experiences, sensations and moods that would not have been obtained through the traditional interview process. This study fills a gap in geographical literature by discussing the dynamic relationship between food, affect, embodiment, and the personal experience of transnationalism.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Conceptual Framework

1.1 Introduction

In her book *Carnal Appetites*, Elspeth Probyn marks the beginning of an era where food, eating and the body are tools to uncover deeper themes related to identity, power and authenticity. Probyn describes humans as ‘mouth machines’, beings that ingest and spit out the local and the global, the familiar and the strange, articulating “what we are, what we eat and what eats us” (Probyn, 2000:34). Following in Probyn’s footsteps, I wish to understand how the visceral experience of preparing and consuming food situates an individual not only in the present but also within a specific locality. This understanding begins with the rhizomatic nature of eating and its ability to branch and connect areas that may seem unrelated superficially, yet are deeply intertwined. An example of this connectivity is the association between eating traditional meals and the challenge of raising children in Canada. In relating how children refuse to eat traditional food at times, Egyptian migrant women in this study become acutely aware of the influences of the Western society which are far-reaching beyond taste but rather infiltrate fundamental thought, ideals and ethos. This is a highly influential reason for the Muslim women to return to Egypt and raise their children in the ‘flavour’ of a conservative society. This study investigates how Egyptian migrants use the visceral experience of preparing and consuming food to re-situate place in their host country after their transnational leap from their country of origin. My study seeks to better understand the dynamic relationship between food, affect, embodiment, and transnationalism.

1.2 Overview and Research Questions

This study begins by examining migration as an affective process. Affective response is understood as an entanglement of affects, emotions, perceptions, sensation, and attention arising from encounters between subjects, but also people and objects in the environment. In Chapter Three, a combination of theoretical and philosophical sources and the empirical data from interviews with Egyptian migrant women in the Region of Waterloo reveal the significance of affect in place-making after migration. This chapter addresses the research question: What role does the body's affective response of (dis)comfort play for Middle Eastern migrant women attempting to create a *sense of place* in Western countries? Taking a multi-scalar approach to this question, I investigate the impact of the national, the local community/social network and transnational connections to set the stage for further examination of the individual herself in later chapters.

In Chapters Four and Five, the analysis then moves toward the individual herself and the how the body changes in the process of adapting to a new country. When migrants arrive in a new place, their bodies must be disciplined in new ways, including through food and eating (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009). Establishment of routines, repetition of habitual interactions, and the memories in one's head contribute to finding home in a new country (Butcher, 2010; Kivisto, 2001; Noble, 2005; Nowicka, 2007). One must become familiar with a new place, understand the culture and norms, and re-establish daily practices in order to diminish the boundary between body and environment. In essence, migrants must discipline their bodies in new ways to create place from space. Over time and exposure to their local environment, the migrant body evolves to accept new tastes, new experiences, and new family dynamics. Through accepting how the body familiarizes itself with the local environment, migrants can begin to

create a *sense of place* in their host country. Thus, these chapters address the research question: In what ways does the visceral experience of food affect the transition to the host country and the subsequent place-making process?

Finally, in Chapter Six, I will reflect on the methodology implemented in this study and the significance of the visceral approach in migration studies. Successes and challenges will be addressed as well as reasons for variation in interview responsiveness and length. In this chapter, I will answer the research question: Does implementing a visceral approach within the single-site of the migrant kitchen obtain information, experiences, sensations and moods otherwise not readily accessed through the traditional interview process?

1.3 Transnationalism

Researchers have described the feeling of being ‘at home’ as being in a place that is invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that resonates beyond the household (Blunt and Varley, 2004; Lucas and Purkayastha, 2007). Home has been shown to “invoke a sense of place, belonging or alienation intimately tied with sense of self” (Blunt and Varley, 2004:3). Doreen Massey (1994) further supports this framework by applying the logic about relationships that construct ‘place’ to those that construct ‘home’. This is a model of home that is both mobile and localised; geographically ‘here’ and ‘there’. Some migrants describe home through memory or nostalgia for the past, living in the ‘here’ but longing for the ‘there’ of their birthplace or where they grew up (Blunt and Varley, 2004; Lam and Yeoh, 2004). In many cases, these nostalgic constructions are not representative of current affairs of their home country, leaving these migrants longing for a ‘lost’ time and place (Blunt and Varley, 2004;

Ralph and Staeheli, 2011). For others, decentred multiple attachments and feelings of belonging allow individuals to live within the span of two countries – transnationalism, in a word.

Examining the personal in the transnational may trigger thoughts of the local/global paradigm. However, Pratt and Rosner (2006) challenged feminist scholars to examine how the intimate and the global are intertwined and “to try and intervene in grand narratives of global relations by focusing on the specific, the quotidian, the affective, and the eccentric.” (Pratt and Rosner, 2006: 15). Rather than viewing the global as a “god’s-eye view” of the world (Pratt and Rosner, 2006: 17) and the intimate as the tactile experience, Pratt and Rosner view how bodies and objects interact “not as an opposite to the global but as its corrective, its supplement, or its undoing.” (2006: 17). It is here that I situate my research. Through the shared performative act of cooking, the visceral experience of eating and the comfort derived from the private space of one’s own kitchen, deep personal thoughts, experiences, and sensations are evoked from migrants in response to questions surrounding their own migration to Canada. The visceral is a tool to access and understand a migrant’s transnational relationships and responsibilities, the influence of the national, community and local environment, and the intimacy of one’s lived, daily experience in their new country. Using discursive accounts of migration, I wish to add to the body of literature that reveals how intimacy and personal are not only inhabitants of the private sphere but are contextual in nature taking on specific social, cultural and political meanings or, in essence, what Mountz and Hyndman refer to as the “global intimate” (2006: 450). It is this concept of the *global intimate* that I am referring to when I discuss the personal in the transnational, or the personal experience of transnationalism.

Exploration of emergent themes reveals how a focus on the visceral experience of food can illuminate a migrant’s personal experience of transnationalism and place-making. Place has

always been a challenging concept for scholars of all disciplines. In recent years, there has been interest in grounding place using both a sociological and a geographical context (Agnew and Duncan, 1989; Feagan, 2007; Gieryn, 2000). By combining the geographer's description of classifying places and the links between them with the sociologist's desire to understand human behaviour in terms of social process, we can better understand the meaning of place-making at a personal level or, in a term, *sense of place* (Agnew and Duncan, 1989). This construct contributes to the dialogue about particular places and their positive and negative impact on well-being and belonging (Ley, 1983).

In Peter Kivisto's review of transnational immigration, he argues that transnationalism should be considered as one possible variant to assimilation because transnational immigrants are simultaneously striving to maintain homeland connections while engaged in the process of acculturating to the host society (Kivisto, 2001). There are two significant factors to this equation. First, place counts. The longer migrants spend in the host country, the more the issues of that place will tend to take precedence over those of the homeland (Butcher, 2010; Kivisto, 2001). Second, the performative act of participating in host country society can facilitate acculturation into the receiving country (Kivisto, 2001). In light of this view of transnationalism, this study focuses on how Egyptian migrants negotiate maintaining their transnational connections in Egypt while learning to live, or assimilate, in the Region of Waterloo. Transnationalism rejects the notion that migrants assimilate completely, but rather suggests that they maintain contact with their homeland and undergo processes which shatter conventional boundaries and resituate the individual in their new place (Lucas and Purkayastha, 2007). In my study, transnationalism can be observed as migrants continually attempt to balance traditions, memories, social and behavioural norms with a sense of belonging in a new country which

results in the formation of new hybrid identities. This is yet another place we see the concept of the *global intimate* emerge.

In geographical literature, belonging has been a central concept of *sense of place*; but as McCreanor *et al.* (2006) note, “culturally specific theorizing of belonging is also an important resource in accounting for the richness and distinctiveness of our data” (197). I seek to draw on the richness McCreanor *et al.* allude to above by investigating culturally specific experiences of Egyptian transnational migrants. In this study, I seek to understand how Egyptian migrants balance their transnational attachments and relationships while they adapt and learn from their host country and how this balance affects the process of place-making in Canada.

1.4 Bringing Ethnography “Home”

In his seminal article on multi-sited ethnography, George Marcus contends that although the methodological trend has moved away from the conventional single-site ethnography, there is still value for a single-site approach in the global era (Marcus, 1995). Over a decade later, Ruben Gielis (2011) uses Marcus’ argument for single-site ethnography as a stepping stone to demonstrate the value of examining the migrant house in transnational studies. Migration scholars tend to consider the migrant house an unsuitable venue for meaningful place study due to the social instability that accompanies relocation. However, Gielis asserts that the house is an emotional place and through emotion we can better comprehend the reasons for social instability following migration. This comprehension of emotion is critical to understanding the personal experiences of transnationalism – an understudied concept thus far.

According to Gielis, comprehending place-making through ethnography of the migrant house involves two theoretical frameworks: (1) a social constructivist approach which

understands the house as an open and relational space and (2) a phenomenological approach which understands the house as an emotional space (Gielis, 2011). Somerville (1997) coined the term *social phenomenological approach* to refer to this combined framework. This combined approach is effective in investigating how “migrants emotionally live this place [the house] as a transnational (relational) place. It hence tries to understand how the house is experienced as a transnational home place” (Gielis, 2011:259). Coupling this social phenomenological approach with the single-site of the migrant house, I will first discuss the influence of migrant interactions and perceptions outside the house (*i.e.* the national, the community, transnational connections) and then inside the house (*i.e.* family dynamics, domestic routines).

Despite its effectiveness as a strategic single-site methodology, this social phenomenological approach is rarely used in transnational and global studies. Through in-depth interviews with migrants in their kitchens, I will add evidence in support of Gielis’ argument that the migrant house is an ideal site to draw out the personal experience of transnationalism and further strengthen the argument for single-site methodology by demonstrating how the visceral realm can access these experiences more readily than traditional interview techniques.

1.5 Why Study the Visceral?

Authors such as Clifford (1997), Gilroy (1993) and Hall (1995) use the homophonic analogy of roots/routes to theorize the origins of migrants’ cultural identities. ‘Roots’ refer to a stable core of homeland values and traditions, and bounded culture, whereas ‘routes’ signify disruption of migration and intercultural mingling (Armbruster, 2001; Freidman, 1998). Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Clifford uses the notion of rhizomes (tap-roots that spread in a multidirectional fashion) to extend the root/route analogy. Rhizomes move outwards

from the original root in multiple routes with multiple possibilities much in the same way that migrants travel routes that expand their rootedness in many ways. As his imagery depicts, roots always precede routes.

Dwelling was understood to be the local ground of collective life, travel a supplement; roots always precede routes. But what would happen, I began to ask, if travel were untethered, seen as a complex of pervasive spectrum of human experiences? Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meaning rather than as their simple transfer or extension. Cultural centers, discrete regions and territories, do not exist prior to contacts, but are sustained through them, appropriating and disciplining the restless movements of people and things. (Clifford, 1997:3)

Therefore, travelling depends on both routes and roots in order to be comprehensible. A route from here to there involves two points of rootedness (Friedman, 1998).

For migrants, memory, rather than territory, constitutes roots of identity formation in diasporic cultures. Fortier describes this identity formation as the ‘changing same’. No longer focussed on the tension of been, being and becoming, the ‘changing same’ sees tradition as the result of the processing and reprocessing of cultural formation – past, place and memory are grounded in the experience of locality (Fortier, 2005:184). Psychologists have suggested a migrant’s identity of place is the result of connecting geographical location with significant life events. The ‘changing same’ speaks to attaching the living memory of place to local territory without diminishing the identity of the place (Fortier, 2005). Therefore, memories are place-based but not place-bound.

Interestingly, Probyn uses this same analogy of rhizomes to explain the relationship between the body and the mind, “[T]he rhizome spreads laterally and horizontally...compelling us to think of how we are connected diversely, to obvious and sometimes not so obvious entities” (Probyn 2000: 61). In this light, bodies are very informative subjects of research. The recent

embodied turn in the literature has researchers focussing on social theories of the body, body ‘histories’ and understanding the embodied experience. The embodied experience can be defined as “how we feel, how we perceive, how we relate to our own bodies and the place they have in the order of things.” (Brown et al., 2011:495) Although Brown *et al.*’s intended use of ‘place’ is metaphorical, geographers’ interest in the literal place as it relates to the embodied experience is the basis of visceral geography.

Visceral geography has been defined as “sensations, moods and ways of being that emerge from our sensory engagement with material and discursive environments in which we live” (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009: 334). Through this definition, Longhurst, Johnston and Ho encourage researchers to ‘think through the body’ thus using the body as a physical tool to access subjects under study. For example, the act of planting and tending to a garden and tasting the resulting fresh produce represents a personal sense of resistance to growing corporate food chains (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Thus, the visceral moves beyond the concept of a docile body awaiting an active mind and highlights the importance of the senses and its affect on being. In the visceral framework, the body is an agent (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009; Law, 2001) and the body thinks in ways neither social theorists nor biologists have understood (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Visceral geography offers a greater understanding of physical matter, both within and between bodies by examining context and interactions between self and other. The literature also challenges dualisms such as mind/body and representation/non-representation (Grosz, 1994; Hayes-Conroy, 2010).

1.6 Why Study Food?

The experience of food is in part a natural, autonomous response of the body toward items consumed. In a study that examined the stated preference and actual preference of commercial versus homemade jams, elementary students claimed they would prefer homemade jam. However, in a blind taste test, the majority of the group selected commercial jam because that was their accustomed taste (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Food preference is confounded by many sensual aspects such as tastes, cravings, hunger and moods. The term ‘comfort food’ is a case in point – associating certain foods with compensation for sadness or depression can complicate the visceral experience of an eating event. However, the visceral realm is also influenced by external social context. A pear tart, composed of sweetened pear filling in a pie crust, introduced to a kitchen classroom of students from diverse backgrounds will garner a range of responses from disgust to disappointment because viscerally it feels “white/ ‘not like me’, heavy or misunderstood” (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Thus there is a duality to the visceral experience of food, a struggle between internal response and external context.

Rachel Slocum (2008) defines *embodied* as “*what* people do, say, sense and feel as well as *how* they do any of these things.” (852). Taking my research into migrants’ kitchens addresses not only the personal sensations and feelings about food, but a fundamental understanding of the phenomenology of their daily lives. Food is more than a source of nutrients; it is a key ingredient to any culture. Therefore, food is central to one’s sense of identity, responding to existing and imagined social constraints in combination with the lived experiences. Thus one’s identity is not a fixed social construct but a permanent state of flux (Koc and Welsh, 2002). In my field

research, being in the kitchen rather than being asked to think about it abstractly engages both the mind and the body – in a term, *embodied subjectivity* (Brown et al., 2011; Holtzman, 2006).

A large body of research reveals how women have an intimate relationship to food that access accounts of memory and history - termed ‘food heritage’ - not accessible by other means (Holtzman, 2006). In Derek P. McCormack’s (2007) discussion of affective economies, he points out that once we accept that drugs can alter one’s mood, sensations or states of being, then we can attribute the same capacity to other ingestions such as food. McCormick writes, “[The] relation between ‘food and mood’ is particularly important, as eating becomes increasingly visible as a way of altering brain chemicals and ameliorating affective experience.” (2007: 363). Understanding affect and the impact of visceral experience after a transnational leap is understudied in geographical literature.

In mapping out place and food, Robert Feagan (2007) offers a robust review of geographic literature on this topic which predominately falls under the umbrella of *local food* (Feenstra, 1997; Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Henderson, 1998). A variety of topics are addressed such as sustainability and food security (Anderson and Cook, 1999; 2000; Pelletier *et al.*, 2000; Bellows and Hamm, 2003), civic and democratic agriculture (Bellows and Hamm, 2001; DeLind, 2002; Hassanein, 2003), postproductivism (Whatmore *et al.*, 2003), and heritage preservation (Bessiere, 1998).

Even when the role of bodies, culture and visceral experience are addressed, the conversation tends to revolve around local food discussions (DeLind, 2006; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Although geographers have taken an interest in understanding food in relation to ‘community’, the ‘local’ and ‘place’, Feagan cautions us to look beyond these constructed terms to see “the importance of local,

social, cultural and ecological particularity in our everyday world while also recognizing that we are reflexively and dialectically tied to many and diverse locals around the world.” (2007: 23). His point brings us back full circle to the concept of the *global intimate* and the understanding that one’s microgeography is constantly influenced by globalization and, particularly for migrants, transnationalism.

By understanding how migrants conceptualize food and the visceral experience associated with eating within their host country, I wish to fill a gap in the literature of food and place. This conceptualization can be understood as a combination of their personal experiences within their new locality, their past experiences in their country of origin as well as their transnational connection and how this combination has, in turn, affected their cultural/social ideologies, *sense of place* and their physical bodies. This study contributes to the growing literature on visceral geography.

1.7 Concluding Introductory Remarks

Why use the body to understand migration? Bodies are not merely blank canvases awaiting paint, neither are they solely biologically-determined. Bodies are shaped by genetics as well as sensual interaction with their environment and “become through what they do, the relations of which they are a part and the formations in which they act.” (Slocum, 2008:853). The conditions of our existence are imprinted in our body and the body can share the stories people cannot or will not tell for various personal reasons. Bodies tell stories that often match stated accounts, but this is not always the case (Krieger, 2005).

Research regarding the body has gained momentum in the field of geography; however, few researchers use the body as an ‘instrument of research’ (Longhurst, Ho and Johnston, 2008: 211). Using the body as an instrument of research as a geographer involves examining interactions, reactions and emotions as a means to access research subjects and their geographies. The act of sharing in food preparation and consumption, experiencing the smells and tastes of home with participants puts me, as a researcher, in the research. The embodied experience of consumption allows me the privilege of taking a journey with my participants and, as a result, I draw vivid conclusions about the importance of that ‘gut feeling’ - the visceral experience - in bridging the gap between one’s country of origin and establishing a new home in a foreign land. It is the quintessential definition of research led by the stomach.

The visceral experience is not solely influenced by the local. In *Women’s Studies Quarterly’s* special issue *The Global and the Intimate*, Pratt and Rosner (2006) analyze two travelling memoirs to dissect the conventions of travel writing. *Among the Flowers* is a story of Jamaica Kincaid’s seed collecting journey to Nepal where she illustrates how messy personal relations bring meaning to the foreign. Although aware of the “intimate workings of colonialism, she [Kincaid] nonetheless frames the world as a spectacle for collecting and consumption and repeats familiar gestures of cultural superiority and paternalism.” (Pratt and Rosner, 2006:13). In *Skating to Antarctica*, Jenny Diski compulsively decides to take a journey to the most remote place imaginable. For Diski, Antarctica is not a place of blankness but is “shaded by rhetorics of environmentalism, the lingering territorial struggle of the Falklands War, American fantasies of Britishness, animal-rights activism, and more.” (Pratt and Rosner, 2006:14). Pratt and Rosner’s analysis reveals how intimate relations and experience are constantly influenced by “politics,

ethics and positioning” (2006:14) and how the *global intimate* must be situated within a multi-scalar approach in order to be fully understood.

My research with Egyptian migrant women in the Region of Waterloo consists of discursive accounts of the migration experience told through the visceral experience and the body. These accounts reflect multi-scalar interactions from the body, to the community, to the national, and to connections with the homeland. Since beginning of the recent Egyptian revolution (now termed the ‘Arab Spring’) began in January 25, 2011, the uncertainty of the political situation in Egypt has many citizens seeking the opportunity to emigrate to another country. The potential rise of Egyptian migrants to Canada makes this a group of interest for transnational study.

Chapter 2: Creating a Research Environment within the Migrant Kitchen

2.1 My Personal Connection to the Research

My interest lies in my personal connection with the research. I am a second generation Egyptian Christian, the first of my family born in Canada. My perspective growing up was one of a child trying to strike a balance between my parents' culture and the one in which I was living. There were moments of confusion and of tension; nevertheless, I respected my parents' unwavering adherence to their cultural practices, and conviction of their religious values despite how archaic they might have seemed to people around them – values that were passed down to me in an accultured kind of way. One thing that was not passed down to me, however, was Egyptian culinary skills. It was later in life that I decided to embrace the kitchen and have now become a full-fledged 'foodie', using the freshest ingredients and challenging myself to invent new creations and experience new tastes. But part of me still yearns to connect my culture with my passion for food. My rapport with my research participants is not solely because we share the same nationality, but also because I am a second generation woman seeking traditional food knowledge first-hand – a fact that was quite meaningful for my participants.

I am (peripherally) familiar with Egyptian culture, food, domestic politics, traditions and language. Yet, I am far removed. I married a non-Egyptian and have little interaction within the community. As a result, I approach this research with a level of naivety that is ideal for grounded theory work. My status seemed to encourage my participants to take on the natural role of teaching me like they would their daughter, sister or friend. Essentially I am what James Spradley refers to as an “*unencultured ethnographer*” with the benefits of being an insider (1979:50).

I am familiar with the Egyptian nationality (being Egyptian myself) and the religions under study. I grew up in the Coptic Christian community in Kitchener, Ontario and am knowledgeable in the beliefs and traditions of this religion. Given that Egypt is a predominately Muslim country, my parents were taught about the Islamic faith when they attended public school. My father passed a great deal of this information to me, partly to explain how some aspects of the Coptic faith practiced by first generation Canadian Coptic Christians is founded on Islamic influence carried from Egypt to Canada rather than on Church canon (*e.g.* women and men sit on opposite sides of the church during liturgies). Through my Muslim friends and my time spent living and working in Egypt, I learned a great deal about Islam. However, I have a great deal more to learn about both religions as I seek to understand the context of my data in this study.

2.2 The Visceral Approach

Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) stepped into eleven immigrant women's kitchens to understand their experience transitioning into their new home in New Zealand. By preparing and sharing a meal with participants, they captured how immigrant women create a domestic space where the body feels 'at home' as a means to resituate the diasporic subject. When migrants arrive at a new place, their bodies are disciplined in new ways including the performative acts of food preparation and consumption (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009). This disciplining is affected by internal, visceral factors such as taste and quality of products available (*e.g.* higher fat content to meats) as well as external factors such as cost of food items and availability of culturally acceptable foods (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009; Benari, Fund and Edelstein, 2007; Koc and Welsh, 2002; Satia et al., 2000). In speaking with the immigrant women from

various countries with varying demographics, Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) discovered many commonalities among the group. Some of the women interviewed grew their own culturally familiar vegetables and herbs in order to make food taste and smell familiar. Those women with children grappled balancing cultural identity with adapting to their new country. Children often preferred to take lunches similar to the other school children because strong aromas can mark students as ‘different’ with a negative connotation. Even the women who enjoyed many aspects of their new home reported missing the tastes and aromas of home and attempt to recreate them ‘at a gut level’ in their new home (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009). As Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) used the visceral approach to “push understandings of migrants’ experiences” (2009:333) with women of different nationalities, I wish to further this work by using this approach with multiple women of the same nationality in order understand a culturally specific experience of migration.

The visceral approach refers to “sensations, moods and ways of being that emerge from our sensory engagement with material and discursive environments in which we live” (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009: 334). Through this definition, Longhurst, Johnston and Ho encourage researchers to use the body as a physical tool to access subjects under study. One such example of using the “body as an instrument of research” (Longhurst, Ho and Johnston, 2008) is reflected in the act of planting and tending to a garden and how tasting the resulting fresh produce represents a personal sense of resistance to growing corporate food chains (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Thus, the visceral moves beyond the concept of a docile body awaiting an active mind and highlights the importance of the senses and its affect on being. In the visceral framework, the body is an agent (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009; Law, 2001) and the body thinks in ways neither social theorists nor biologists have understood (Hayes-Conroy

and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Visceral geography offers a greater understanding of physical matter, both within and between bodies by examining context and interactions between self and other, as well as challenges dualisms such as mind/body and representation/non-representation (Grosz, 1994; Hayes-Conroy, 2010).

Using Longhurst, Johnston and Ho's visceral approach, I interviewed migrant women while together we prepared and consumed a meal of significance to their time in their country of origin as chosen by each participant. The participants were contacted using snowball sampling. I began with two women, one from both the Muslim and Christian communities, and they each introduced me (via email) to an acquaintance within their respective communities which I interviewed. At that point, each of the women I interviewed directed me to another acquaintance and so forth. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim from audio recordings (Arabic comments were translated to English) and the information was imported into the computer program, NVivo™. The data was analyzed using a grounded theory approach, documenting themes including the repetition of key words, phrases and issues of significance to participants (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is the method of choice when examining a dynamic process. Data collection and analysis are connected throughout the process to create a descriptive model of human behaviour grounded in the emerging data (Benari, Fund and Edelstein, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Spradley, 1979). The resulting themes and sub-themes created the material for my analysis and discussion.

The visceral approach in this study involves using the visceral experience (*e.g.* the tastes, textures and aromas) and the body's performative acts that surround eating (*e.g.* cooking, conversing, cleaning) as a means to access emotional and affective relations with place. The interviews were semi-structured and largely directed by the interest and experience of the

interviewee with some prompting questions such as ‘who taught you how to cook?’, ‘how do you feel about fasting in Canada?’, ‘where is home to you?’ (refer to the Appendix for a complete interview guide). The eleven interviews lasted from two to five and a half hours.

2.3 Participant Selection

In a research report issued in 2012, one year after the ‘Arab Spring’, migration scholars discussed the push/pull factors for migration among Egyptian citizens. Although the main reasons for migration did not change, mainly poverty, unemployment, and substandard education, the economic downturn as a result of the revolution only exacerbated the situation (Hafez and Ghaly, 2012).

The shortcomings of the educational system and the economic situation are not the only factors to consider when understanding the motivations for migration, however. The political Islamic movement has disturbed members of the Christian community as well as moderate Muslims. While some Muslims are expected to leave because they do not wish to adjust to a new regime, it was noted that Christians will likely leave in greater numbers for fear of fundamentalist rule. This trend has already been observed as most of the visas issued for Europe, Canada and the U.S. were to Christians (Hafez and Ghaly, 2012).

A purposive sampling approach was taken for this study. In many cultures, the Egyptian culture included, the responsibility of purchasing, preparing and cooking food falls primarily on the women. Given my relationship with Egyptian women in the Region of Waterloo, I depended on snowball sampling to obtain volunteers for my study. Islam and Coptic Christian are the two largest religious sects in Egypt and to capture the experiences of these two subsets of the Egyptian demographic, six participants were Muslim women and five were Coptic Orthodox

Christian women. These participants all migrated to Canada within the last two to seven years (Table 1).

Table 1 – Description of Participants

| <i>Respondent Pseudonym</i> | <i>Residence Status</i> | <i>Religion</i> | <i>Time living in Canada</i> | <i>Living Arrangements</i> | <i>Employment</i> | <i>Dish Prepared</i> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| Mariam | Immigrant | Christian | 7 years | Husband, two adult children, parents | Pharmacist | Molokhia and Chicken |
| Hala | Migrant | Muslim | 6 years | Husband, 10 year old son, 8 year old daughter, 4 month old baby | PhD Student | Molokhia and Chicken |
| Huda | Migrant | Muslim | 4 years | Husband, 9 year old son, 7 year old son, 3 year old son, 7 month old daughter | PhD Student | Macarona bil bechamel |
| Fatima | Migrant | Muslim | 5 years | Husband, 6 year old son | Day Care Worker | Bamyia, Kofta, Golash bil lahmah, chicken |
| Helen | Immigrant | Christian | 6 years | Husband, 4 year old son | Internal Auditor, Student | Koshery |
| Elizabeth | Immigrant | Christian | 2 years | Husband, 7 year old daughter, 12 year old son | College Student | Kofta, Breaded chicken, Golash, Molokhia |
| Aisha | Migrant | Muslim | 2 years | Husband, 11 month old son | College Student | Fatir mi'shalit, molokhia, koshery |
| Hanan | Immigrant | Muslim | 3 years | 7 year old and 5 year old daughters | Unemployed | Mashie and sokok |
| Amani | Migrant | Muslim | 5 years | Husband, 6 year old and 2 year old daughters | Masters Student | Koshery |
| Catherine | Immigrant | Christian | 4 years | Husband, 2 year old daughter, 4 month old son | Financial Advisor | Seafood chowder, salmon, vegetables |
| Sarah | Migrant | Christian | 5 years | Husband, 10 year old daughter, 5 year old son | Unemployed | Chicken and molokhia |

The second column refers to the participants' settlement situation. Migrant indicates participants who are either returning to Egypt after a period of time or are unsure of their future plans. Immigrant indicates participants who have decided that they will remain in Canada permanently. Settlement situation is significant because migrants may consider Canada a transition in their lives which would impact place-making strategies when compared to immigrants who are building a future in Canada. Interestingly, place-making strategies did not seem affected by settlement situation.

All but one of the migrants in this study came to Canada for their husband's education. The Egyptian government offers scholarships for their citizens to be trained in English-speaking countries and they are offered full-time Teaching Assistantship or Assistant Professorship roles upon their return. Huda was the only female in my study who received a scholarship from the Egyptian government to study in Canada. Many of these women came to Canada expecting to return after their husband's degree was achieved; however, some of the husbands wished to pursue postdoctoral fellowships in Canada. There are only certain conditions the Egyptian government would allow scholarship recipients to extend their stay abroad, such as a spouse completing a degree. As a result, many of the migrant women are enrolled in University or College programs as well as taking care of the domestic duties. For example, Aisha began full-time studies in a College program while her child was only 10 months old to accommodate her husband's postdoctoral fellowship opportunity.

The women in this study who immigrated to Canada came under a variety of circumstances. Mariam and her husband decided to come to Canada for a better future for their children. They came later in their lives and their children were teenagers. At first the transition was confounded with the struggle for Mariam to finish her pharmacy equivalency exams but she

is more settled now with a full-time job and owns a house. Elizabeth also migrated for her children's future and neither her nor her husband's credentials were recognized in Canada. After working labour jobs on opposite shifts, they both decided to enroll in College programs. It was a financial struggle but now they have found full-time jobs and they are content. Helen married a man who was already working and living in Canada, so her decision to immigrate was more spontaneous. Hanan came to Canada to avoid the life of public scrutiny as a divorced woman in Egypt. All of the immigrants came without recognized credentials and, as a result, many of them began their transition by struggling to balance their student, mother, and wife duties. Sarah and Hanan were the exception as they decided it was more important to stay home and take care of their family than to study or find a job.

Although this study focuses on culturally specific experiences of transnationalism, religion is a significant component of culture, value systems and social interaction. Therefore, the religion of my participants is provided in the third column. It should be noted, however, that religion was only a differing factor when it came to the issue of raising children in Canada. This topic will be further addressed in Chapter Five.

The length of time the participant has lived in Canada is recorded in the fourth column. The participants range from two to seven years in Canada and can, therefore, offer a wide range of experience when addressing adaptation and place-making. For example, Fatima has been in Canada for five years and remembers how her neighbours kindly showed her the amenities in her neighbourhood when she first arrived. She, in turn, has offered the same courtesy to newcomers. Helen has been in Canada for six years and is just finishing her Certified General Accountants (CGA) exams. She looks forward to finding employment in her field and hopes that helps her feel more settled in Canada.

The fifth column, describing participant living arrangements, and the sixth column, which indicates employment status, are both important to understanding the multiple roles these women must negotiate in their lives as well as the potential influences in establishing daily routines and food in general. Hala spoke about how her children's tastes have changed since they began to attend daycare and school. They no longer want to eat traditional food, but rather they want pizza and hamburgers. Helen explained how her co-workers taught her to try new food as they went out for lunch at various restaurants. Familial and social influences will be further elaborated in Chapter Five.

2.4 Migration Location

Many migration studies have focussed on Canada's three major gateway cities, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, examining fragmentation and ethnic segregation within these metropolitans (Walks and Borne, 2006; Bauder and Sharpe, 2002). However, over the past decade there has been a decline in the percentage of migrants moving to gateway cities, opting instead to settle in cities outside the metropolitans which have been termed second tier cities (Walton-Roberts, 2011). This geographical shift in settlement patterns and associated policies supporting this trend has been termed a 'new paradigm' in international migration. (Walton-Roberts, 2011). In Ontario, the Region of Waterloo¹ has seen the impact of this new paradigm. The 2006 Census of Canada reports 105 375 residents of the Region of Waterloo were born outside of Canada, accounting for 22.3% of the total population. This region has seen a growth of 13.6% from 2001 to 2006, twice the growth rate of the non-immigrant population (Region of Waterloo, 2007). When examining total immigrant population by region, the Region of Waterloo

¹ The Region of Waterloo includes the cities of Cambridge, Waterloo, Kitchener, and the townships of North Dumfries and Woolwich.

places 13th at the national level and 8th at the provincial level (Region of Waterloo, 2007). As the recipient of many new migrants, the Region of Waterloo is a good venue to study how migrants resituate themselves after settlement.

2.5 Ensuring ‘Trustworthiness’

2.5.1 Pilot Study

Selecting six Egyptian women (three Muslim and three Coptic Christians) who migrated to Canada between two and seven years ago, I conducted a pilot study in which I solicited feedback regarding the interview process including (but not limited to) the order, structure and line of questioning/prompting. I found the iterative approach to be an effective implementation of the visceral approach. For example, when one of my participants mentioned that she had regularly cooked with produce not common in Egypt, such as mushrooms and avocados, I asked her where she had encountered these foods. She told me that she had once resided in Ma’adi, which is a tourist centre in Cairo. It was at that point that I added the question, ‘where did you live in Egypt?’ to my interview guide.

2.5.2 Triangulation

Having an iterative interview process allowed me, as the interviewer, to introduce topics and elaborate on themes which emerged from interviews with previous participants. Once I began analyzing data, I had regular debriefing sessions with my supervisor and other women from the Egyptian community about my interviews and subsequent coding.

Reflective commentary went hand-in-hand with discussing my findings with others. As I developed this method, I kept a field notebook to document successes, failures, suggestions, considerations, modifications, personal thoughts and emotions. This notebook was a useful tool as it brought many important points to the forefront. For example, I noted during the transcription of my first interview that I needed to work on using more non-verbal cues to indicate that I was engaged in the conversation in order to minimize disruption of my participants' thoughts. I believe this is especially important because English is a second language for these women and it can be difficult for the participant to find the correct word.

Furthermore, emerging themes from my research were compared to existing research about women who migrate to developed countries in order to extrapolate trends between prior research and my findings. These processes are considered valid methods of triangulation for qualitative research (Shenton, 2004; Baxter and Eyles, 1997).

2.5.3 Positionality

Andrew K. Shenton (2004) describes how familiarity with one's study community adds credibility to research findings, thus my inside knowledge of both nationality and religion is of significant value. The commonality of nationality also builds rapport with my participants. I approach this study with all my past experiences having been raised by first generation Egyptian parents with strong connections within the Coptic Christian community. Although I did not harbour any preconceived notions as to what I expect to find (because I honestly had no idea), critical reflexivity begs me to realize that my background runs certain risks (*e.g.* making assumptions about what a participant intended to say, mutual unspoken understandings, etc). This potential bias highlights the importance of my process for data triangulation.

2.5.4 Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation is a fundamental characteristic of grounded theory and while many qualitative studies mention data collection continued until saturation was reached, few define what saturation entails (Bowen, 2008). To determine theoretical saturation for my study, I used a constant comparative method which consists of four stages: (1) comparing incidents from the data that relate to the same theme; (2) amalgamating themes and related properties; (3) defining the theory; and (4) writing the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Bowen, 2008). Using a grounded theory approach means data collection and analysis occurred concurrently. As new data were collected and coded, new codes were compared with previous codes to develop and refine theoretical concepts. Throughout this method, I actively searched for negative cases which contested emerging themes. Theoretical saturation was achieved when additional data failed to yield new insights or themes and no new falsifications arose (Bowen, 2008).

2.5.5 Potential Limitations

Understanding potential limitations is a significant step to qualifying the rigour and validity of one's research. When Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) entered into eleven immigrant women's homes to record cooking sessions, they noted that the interviews were transcribed "as best we could" (338) because there were loud noises (*e.g.*, pot lids banging, laughter, etc). Another challenge faced was that of language. The interviews were conducted in English and at points throughout the interview other languages were spoken to friends and family, translations were not always offered (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009). In my study, I was able to translate if the women spoke Arabic. However, I am not fluent in the Arabic language which hindered communication at times. Longhurst, Ho and Johnston (2008) also noted

the potential for disgust to impact research involving food citing the potential of refusing food or finding food undesirable. Being sensitive to my participants' feelings, efforts and traditions was of utmost importance to me as a researcher in this context.

Religious factors surrounding food and consumption had the potential to confound my methodology. In the Coptic Christian tradition, fasts are practiced with a vegan diet. Fasts include every Wednesday and Friday as well as longer amounts of time before major church feasts (e.g. seasons of Advent and Lent). For Muslims, fasts entail abstaining from food from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. Scheduling interviews during these religious seasons was a challenge.

2.6 Concluding Remarks on Methodology

My methodology involves using the body as an instrument of research. By incorporating visceral experiences in the interview process, my objective is two-fold: (1) to access knowledge, experiences, and emotions that may not be shared using traditional interview techniques, which lack the evocation of memories and thoughts that arise with the sensations of preparing and sharing a traditional meal and (2) to understand how these migrant women use the visceral realm to feel 'at home' in their host country. Here, we return full circle to the research question posed in Chapter One: Does implementing a visceral approach within the single-site of the migrant kitchen obtain information, experiences, sensations and moods otherwise not readily accessed through the traditional interview process?

Chapter 3: Understanding Affective Migration

3.1 Introduction

In the past, migration researchers viewed nationality as a source for individual identity, a model that left migrants rootless and without home. Using nationality as a source of identity is a rather negative view of mobility as it portrays migrants as powerless to bind past and present or develop emotional attachments with another country. Recently, a more optimistic approach has been taken where individuals are empowered and able to shape their lives and social network without losing local attachment to their country of origin (Nowicka, 2007). Place is imagined as moments in networks of social relations where the majority of relations, experiences, and understandings are on a larger scale than the moment itself – larger than the street, region, or even continent in which the moment resides (Usher, 2002: 47, quoting Massey). Home is considered a meaningful moment in time and space where the creation of identity, social relations, and collective meanings make the transition from space to place (Nowicka, 2007: Usher, 2002).

Home has become a fluid concept. Examining highly mobile professionals has shown that home is re-placed by creating a ‘space of comfort’ and cultural fit in one’s new environment. Affective responses to new cultural contexts can challenge one’s understanding of identity, so that being embedded in a particular place does not guarantee a sense of belonging (Butcher, 2010; Walsh, 2006a; Walsh, 2006b). Discomfort arises when one tries to situate identity in a new location while using former cultural frames of reference and familiar landscape. This affective response of discomfort is, therefore, a means to manage vulnerability and confusion. Re-establishing a sense of comfort involves resituating embodied social, material, and imaginary

practices and the body itself (Butcher, 2010; Law, 2001; Noble, 2005; Walsh, 2006a; Walsh, 2006b).

Cultural inquiry has, in recent years, examined the body as a locus for meaning, experience, and knowledge. Using a similar metaphor to Sara Ahmed's 'stickiness' (Ahmed, 2004: 90), emphasizing how sticky entanglements of matter and affect are core to our interaction with the world, Highmore describes social aesthetics as the way the sensual world meets the body's senses (Highmore 2010:119). The affective responses generated at this meeting result in an entanglement of affects, emotions, perceptions, sensation, and attention (Highmore 2010). The view of affective response as arising from encounters between subjects and also between people and objects in the environment is supported by theorists such as Spinoza, Deleuze, and Ahmed who believe affect is the result of contact between surfaces and is influenced by history (Ahmed, 2004; Grosz, 1994). Arjun Appadurai takes affect a step further by suggesting a 'co-constitutive' model which links locality and subjectivity to the creation of *sense of place*, which grounds one's sense of identity to a given surrounding (Butcher, 2010: 25).

This chapter addresses the question: what role does the body's affective response of (dis)comfort play for Middle Eastern migrant women attempting to create a *sense of place* in Western countries? Taking a multi-scalar approach to this question, I will investigate the impact of the host country nation, the local community/social network and transnational connections to set the stage for further examination of the individual herself in later chapters. A combination of theoretical and philosophical sources as well as empirical data from interviews with Egyptian migrant women in the Region of Waterloo offers a balance between theory and field evidence in support of my findings regarding affect, the body and migration.

3.2 Affect at the National Scale

The policies, social norms, and religion of the host nation can have a profound effect on migrants trying to settle in Western countries. C. Nadia Seremetakis (1996) argues that a politics of sensory reception and creation is a product of everyday life where the political and the sensual are founded in everyday experiences. For example, Filipino domestic workers in Central Hong Kong create a 'Little Manila' experience for one day a week, offering a sense of home through the senses and building a site of bodily resistance. The opportunity to recover from the sensory acculturation of daily life in Chinese homes to eat Filipino food, read Filipino newspapers and magazines, and obtain Filipino specific products offers the embodied experience of a home away from home (Law, 2001).

Muslim women in my study explain how religious seasons such as Ramadan can be difficult in Canada because the sensual atmosphere is not felt at a national level, as it is in Egypt,

Oh my God, fasting here is so difficult. And it doesn't give you the same feeling like in Egypt. For example, in Egypt most of the people are fasting even though we have Christians. In the time of breaking fast, no one is walking in the street...But here because there is no Asan, call for prayer. In Egypt, it is announced. For me, it gives me a good feeling to hear. But here I didn't hear that [in Canada]. (Hala)

A lack of visual and aural cues to which one is accustomed makes this migrant hyperaware of the boundary between herself and her environment. This sensitivity is how Ahmed defines discomfort (Ahmed, 2004).

Discourse on multiculturalism at the national level also plays a role in migrant comfort as it sets the ideal in pluralism, being loving and welcoming to others. However, since 9/11, multiculturalism has been perceived as a security threat due to the possibility of welcoming 'could be' terrorists (Ahmed, 2004; Noble, 2005). In the UK, migrants are now expected to

‘learn to be British’ (Ahmed, 2004: 134), a commitment that involves embracing the language, values, and ethos of the nation in order to mix with others and share each other’s differences. This love for the nation expects a certain level of conformity where others can be accepted into the community of strangers if they give up visible signs of their ‘concrete difference’ (Ahmed, 2004: 132). This pressure to ‘fit in’ can conflict with personal and religious beliefs resulting in the feeling of being out of place, especially for veiled Muslim women whose difference is always physically apparent.

The recurring images of 9/11 have created a language of disgust in Western countries toward Muslims and Middle Eastern bodies. The transference of affect to these bodies affects each person who can be identified as Middle Eastern, making them the potential target of racial assault or abuse under the association of ‘could be’ terrorists (Ahmed, 2004: 97). Since 2001, racism has affected the migrant’s ability to feel ‘at home’ and their capacity to exist as citizens which negatively impacts their ontological security, defined as the trust we place in our surroundings. It is this security which provides stability to our identity (Noble, 2005). Muslim women interviewed in Australia indicated great discomfort at wearing the hijab in some places over others, and realised that people they knew before 9/11 began to distance from them (Noble, 2005). Muslim women I interviewed expressed a similar discomfort,

You know, when I’m walking you know I have hijab...and I feel something less, this is not my country. I feel this is not my country, you know. You feel good in your country, your family, your people. (Fatima)

This reduction to an affective sign removes the capacity to be considered ‘fully human’ and legitimate citizens (Noble, 2005), leaving Middle Eastern migrants feeling like aliens in their host country.

Abjection can result in the reinforcement of borders between ‘I’ and ‘that which opposes the I’. (Ahmed, 2004:87, quoting Kristeva). This abjection can be seen both from the perspective

of the migrant and the citizen as expressed in this young woman's account of her first employment experience as a new immigrant,

I started working at Tim Hortons™...I've never done BLT before, I don't know what's in there...And two guys was waiting for their sandwich and I was a little bit behind, I admit. And he said something like 'That's what they bring off the boat' or 'fresh off the boat' or something like that. I was very offended. You cannot call me 'fresh off the boat' or fresh from whatever. No. I'm a person, probably come from a much better family than you. Probably have much better education than you have. And, umm, it's not fair. So moving to Canada wasn't easy. (Helen)

Ahmed (2004) criticizes the work of some philosophers [see Butler (1997) and Matsuda (1993)] for assuming "hate resides in particular signs and that the effects of such signs are already determined in advance of their circulation" (59). She argues, rather, that some signs that are considered hate speech and affect others accordingly do not necessarily contain hate themselves but derive their connotations from historical application. For example, 'Nigger' or 'Paki' are words that stick due to a history of affective economy that assigns the other as 'different' or lesser (Ahmed, 2004). In other words, these terms stick because of particular associated affects.

Within a high school English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom in Hawaii, diverse forms of student, teacher, and institutional racism directed toward Micronesians, a local minority group, contributed to their marginalization in the ESL program and the wider school context. One particular method of marginalization was the use of the language "fresh off the boat" or *FOB* to differentiate this group in a negative fashion (Talmy, 2010). Ahmed argues, "Tracking the history of hate involves reading the surfaces of bodies, as well as listening to those who have been shaped by this history" (2004: 60). The phrase *fresh off the boat* is used to describe immigrants that have not yet assimilated into the host nation's culture, language, and behaviour (Goleman, 2006). The phrase can be considered politically incorrect and derogatory. For example, within some ethnic communities *FOB* can be used to describe stereotypical

behaviour of new immigrants (*e.g.* Asian's poor driving ability), their employment in unskilled labour despite receiving higher education, and their use of broken English (Reinelt and Roach, 2007).

Given the affective economy of the term *fresh off the boat*, we can contextualize Helen's reaction at that Tim Hortons™. What may have been a passing remark to the customer in her scenario resulted in a permanent imprint on her body, reminding her of the border between self and surrounding and the abjection she feels in Canada. Such reminders conflict with efforts to re-construct place by constantly feeling out of place. As Ahmed eloquently points out, it is not a question of whether such speech works or fails but "what effects do such encounters have on the bodies of others who become transformed into objects of hate?" (2004: 60).

3.3 Affect at the Community Scale

French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari developed the notion of the *Body without Organs* in order to understand the body not as an organization of biological processes but rather as elements of a desiring machine. The body is thus amenable to the "flows and particles of other bodies and things" (Grosz, 1994:168) as well as the intensities and flows of the desiring machine that composes it. Food, for example, becomes more than just a source of nutrients for the body through the process of digestion. Food becomes a complex object of desire with many attributes such as an evocation of nostalgia, a symbol of one's culture and history, and a necessary staple of social gatherings.

The intensities and flow model examines body production as a way of ‘becoming’ through interactions at a local level, or what has direct contact with the body (Grosz, 1994). Therefore, migrant transition is affected by the intensity and flows of one’s own body but also that of the specific locality, the resources and services available, as well as the local social network established. Some Christian and Muslim migrant workers in Hong Kong described receiving comfort by participation in their religion of home, others experimented with new religions in their new context, while others chose to reject religion completely. Women who found comfort in religious communities felt so for a number of reasons including social support, a substitute family to overcome isolation, and an established sense of self (Constable, 2010).

Both Christians and Muslims in my study spoke about the importance of religious institutions to their transition to Canada,

We have a community here, yes. We go to the Waterloo mosque...We spend some time to know the people here and after that we become friends and the life become easier. (Huda)

Church helped a lot. Having a community in Church, with people share the same values, language. You know, we come from the same background, we have the same needs. This helped a lot always having a Church and a community around. (Helen)

Ahmed (2004) describes comfort as being about well-being and satisfaction as well as ease and easiness. One aspect of well-being and ease is a sense of belonging, to feel you are not out of place. Religious communities for my participants offered that belonging. It is interesting to note that when these migrant women were asked if they felt they had a community in Canada, many of the women described visceral incidences involving food as examples to illustrate their sense of belonging emphasizing the importance of food to community and place-making,

[A]fter delivering my baby, they [my friends] made me food. Because Muslim arrange and make schedule everyone bring food for me because I can’t make food for myself. We usually do this. Everyone has a baby, we have to make sure she has food for one month or one month and a half...They also did this because I am their

friend and you can't feel like I will leave her. They did actually too much for me, I really appreciate what they did. (Hala)

You know in Ramadan, when we break our fasting, we gather and make food and invite people to break fast with us. And in Eid, we also gather. And when someone married and someone have a baby. We do these things here. We have a sense of community because we go to the mosque here. When we came here the first time, the first thing we asked about was the mosque. And from the mosque, we know many people and become involved in the community. It make our life easier. (Fatima)

Here we see how the migrant house is a place where the interaction of scales as personal as the body and household to broader scales as the community, city and national contribute to a sense of belonging and of alienation.

Religious sites are venues that build a sense of community and the opportunity to participate physically in rituals of one's country of origin. Interaction with people who share the same language and beliefs is critical for these women to feel at ease in their new country. In these religious places, belonging begins to fill the void of leaving family in Egypt. I met Huda, a migrant who came to Canada for graduate school, at a community event a few weeks before her permanent return to Egypt. When I asked her if she will miss Canada, she replied with a solemn nod as she looked at all her friends around her. Although having a religious community does not compensate for the absence of family in every way, these spaces offer the opportunity to fill nostalgic gaps and ease the longing for family by participating in a community of shared values and culture.

The intensities and flows model also refers specifically to the body's locality as how,

...individuals, subjects, microintensities, blend with, connect to, neighborhood, local, regional, social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic relations directly, not through mediation of systems of ideology or representation, not through the central organization of an apparatus like the state or economic order, but directly. (Grosz, 1994:180, emphasis added)

The neighbourhood in which a migrant finds herself can deeply impact place-making. One woman in my study called her neighbour to borrow some tomatoes while preparing a meal for us to share. Another woman mentioned how her neighbour was an important resource to learn about the grocery system in Canada,

Our neighbours...third day we live in Canada, he took us to [the grocery store] and [local halal store]...He teach us. I remember the day five years ago, we need potato for morning time and we want to buy a few potato. He said, 'no, ten pounds is cheaper - \$3.00 or something like that - and you can take it and it will stay with you one or two weeks. This I remember the day, I learned if we buy more bigger, then a little bit cheaper and it will stay with us long time. (Fatima)

Neighbours willing to offer assistance in various ways were crucial to feeling at ease in one's neighbourhood. Having understood the confusion that comes with arriving in a new country, Fatima mentioned returning the favour to other new immigrants and showing women who recently arrive in Canada the things her neighbours taught her.

Appadurai argues the link between locality and subjectivity in that a *sense of place* grounds one's sense of identity (Butcher, 2010). It can be seen that locality is not only about one's social network but also about the physical landscape itself. One migrant, interviewed two months before her return to Egypt, spoke about aspects of Canada she will greatly miss,

But after spending long time, they like here, they like Canada...We will miss the trees. We will miss the flowers...Canada is a beautiful country – clean country – and we had good experience here. I have to be honest. I like Canada and we spend good time here. (Huda)

Equally valued with nature and physical landscape was close distance to amenities and workplace/school,

One of the reasons my husband chose this building is because it is close to the mosque...You know, it's a good one [building] because it is close to the University and close to the mosque, especially for Ramadan. You can go quickly without having to ride the bus. (Amani)

Another woman mentioned taking one of her daughters to a daycare within walking distance, which was convenient since her family has one car. The close proximity to amenities (*e.g.*, groceries, workplace, daycares/schools, etc.) can ease the transition to Canada where migrants often have to learn to balance their many domestic duties without the help of nearby family.

3.4 Affect and Transnational Connections

3.4.1 Sense of Citizenship

Citizenship is often cited in migration studies as a tool to define those who belong from those who do not (Gilmartin, 2008). In some cases, obtaining citizenship and the associated rights develop a sense of national identity toward the host country (Lam and Yeoh, 2004; Lucas and Purkayastha, 2007). After spending several years in Singapore, some Malaysian migrants identified with Singapore and chose to take out Singaporean citizenship. Having a Singaporean passport also offers more freedom and mobility which is convenient for travel to and from nearby Malaysia (Lam and Yeoh, 2004). Some Canadian citizens working in the U.S. through a work visa became acutely aware of the status term *resident alien* being emphasized post-9/11, suggesting that non-American citizens who have legal right to reside do not belong. These individuals are reminded they are not American and, therefore, do not think of the U.S. as being home (Lucas and Purkayastha, 2007). Some migrants feel a sense of belonging by obtaining legitimacy in the eyes of the host country's citizens, thus resulting in the adoption of proper social norms and language of the host country, as examples (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011).

Many politicians, scholars and host country nationals express an expectation that immigrants are to sever ties to their homelands and feel a sense of duty and a national pride

toward their host country (Staeheli and Nagel, 2006). Immigrant women who speak out against the host nation are, even in defense of national ideals, considered ungrateful for the nation's hospitality. Ahmed (2004) describes how Sunera Thobani was attacked personally after speaking out against the 'war on terrorism' at a conference in Ottawa shortly after the 9/11 attacks (168-169).

This expectation of host country assimilation causes great conflict for migrants with a strong connection to their country of origin,

It [the revolution] encourages us to go back. Because, now, we believe that Egypt needs us, needs people from well education perspective and well education standards, I can say. If we, as Egyptians, living outside of Egypt are getting the benefits from getting good education and being doctors or whatever in Europe or North America, then who is living in Egypt? People who can't live, who can't support themselves, living on \$2 per day. So, we feel like it's our duty. Our duty towards our country to go back. (Aisha)

Aisha, however, was the only woman in my study who exhibited this type of nationalistic connection to Egypt. As Staeheli and Nagel (2006) discovered when examining Arab-American activists in the United States, transnationalism has led to a 'topography of citizenship' which is not tied to a single place but constructed through connections between home and host countries (1603). Therefore, there is a constant 'push and pull' felt by migrants between a desire to return to their homeland and reaping the benefits of their legal status in the host country,

I understand too why Christians want to come to Canada. I think Muslims will come too. There [in Egypt] Muslims are not happy as well. There are many YouTube videos of women wearing hijabs insulting and spitting on Morsi's picture. He is, in my opinion, not good. He is not doing anything at all. Not even Muslims are happy. (Hanan)

But, umm, apparently for now we don't want to go back...the situation there [in Egypt] is not safe at all...when I came here first, I thought we're coming, taking the PhD...and I'll get back to my country. This is what I was thinking and, to be

honest, ah, sometimes I feel like I want to go back. But I'm not feeling safe...I think it's more convenient to stay in a place that promises your children of a better future, promises your husband of a better future. (Sarah)

It is clear that significant political instability in the homeland further exasperates Staeheli and Nagel's theory on the topography of citizenship as the women in my study learn to navigate their personal sense of belonging and the responsibility for the future of their family. Furthermore, many of these women must negotiate feelings of guilt at leaving their extended family in Egypt,

My mom and dad, they came for a visit last summer. They like it so much but, you know parents, when they get old, they can't change. My father kept saying how can I change my house? My attitude? If I came here, I wouldn't find work that suits him. He's old now...My brother and sister are willing [to immigrate to Canada], but there is no way now. But they are wishing that things would get better and they could come. (Sarah)

All the women in my study referred to a feeling of helplessness from watching their home country deteriorate from afar, unable to institute change or help their family immigrate to Canada. This helplessness coupled with fear for the situation in Egypt has made the future questionable – whether they will stay abroad or return to Egypt - a state of being that would make anyone feel uneasy and negatively affect one's *sense of place*.

3.4.2 Social Obligations

The Egyptian culture is a collectivist society and, therefore, the women in my study feel a profound sense of duty and responsibility to family abroad. Yet, there were many somewhat contradictory anecdotes relating the importance of physical distance between a migrant and their extended family,

My dad doesn't like us leaving the house too much, only once a week. Here, we go out every day, morning, night. They tell me, if our grandfather was here, he would say 'no!' (Hanan)

[H]ere I think it [the spiritual experience of Ramadan] is stronger. Yeah, because, for example, in Ramadan, umm, it's very traditional, common there for the family to invite each other on iftar [breaking fast]. And you have to invite them back. Most of the days, especially weekends, we are going somewhere. Umm, so yeah this actually takes you away from the main purpose of the month which is praying and reading Quran. (Amani)

This 'taste' of freedom experienced as a result of immigrating into an individualistic society has caused the subsequent embodiment of a new social norm, a personal space that these Egyptian migrants have now become accustomed. In witnessing a society where this personal space is respected by all, including family, these women have adapted this freedom into their own ethos and enforce it within their own family, both locally and abroad,

You see, I usually, when we get to a problem or something, I get to take my mom's opinion. He gets to take his mom's opinion. See, when we came here, there's no one except us... We, ahh, got closer. And even my mother-in-law, she keeps talking. In the beginning, she kept giving us many phone calls, 'how are you? how's spending? how's the things?' She kept, she was trying to – until my husband got exhausted from this...Even I've got some issues, I have to do some tests and things that I didn't want anyone to know because I was afraid of something. I told him, 'secrets and secrets' and he told me, 'of course'. And, this I realized that coming here to Canada and being all alone sometimes its better. Not because they are creating problems, they love us. I love my mom-in-law and he loves my mom so much and we're close. But, it's better to get closer to each other sometimes. You need to be with your husband on your own with all your problems. Even if you can't solve all your problems, you need to sit down and feel that you're one. So, I felt that coming here benefitted me. I don't want to go back so no one will interfere. (Sarah)

When you are raised in Egypt, you are not free. Everyone can control whatever you are doing, even your teacher, your parents, your Sunday School servant. And everybody got to have an opinion about what you are doing. But here, I remember the first breeze when I get out of the airplane. It smells like freedom...Since I landed here, I don't do anything I don't like to do...Even with my sister, she doing the celebration for St. George after two weeks. I usually go and help them cooking and everything. For the last celebration, it was during my two week break...I slept over there and I helped [them]. But was too exhausted. She asked me if I will come. I told her I have stuff to do and I didn't enjoy my time...No, I'm not going to waste my time and spend time with people I hardly know because you asked me to do so. I would never do that in Egypt, I couldn't. I remember my mom, because I

wasn't working, she used to go to the market and grab huge cabbages. Too big. Just come knocking on my door with no warnings, 'we're going to make you and your sisters mashie'. She said, 'what? you don't have anything to do. You're not working.' Can you imagine spending the whole day doing mashie?... She's my mom, I love her, but I hate that. (Elizabeth)

This act of refusing to help a sister in food preparation goes hand-in-hand with the importance of prioritizing and streamlining domestic tasks for a migrant woman who is trying to negotiate all her roles (*e.g.* mother, wife, worker, etc.) without the help of family nearby. This disciplining of the body through modifying daily routine to establish bodily comfort will be covered further in a later chapter.

3.5 Concluding Remarks on Affective Migration

In this chapter, I have covered the groundwork for discussing migration through affective response. By beginning with the theory of affect, we understand that the interaction of subjects as well as objects and subjects, both past and present, result in the 'sticky entanglements' that produces affective response. Not only are these entanglements in constant flux, but they are also localized and subjective.

Using a social phenomenological approach and examining broad scales as the host country nation, local and transnational connections, it is clear that migrants in my study strive to feel 'at home' in order to create a *sense of place* in their host country. Negotiating a new culture and associated national expectations, immersing one's self in a religious community, coming to terms with future insecurities, and embodying a new sense of freedom are all examples of ways the body must be disciplined in a new country and how, both, affective responses of comfort and discomfort play an integral role in place-making.

The discussion of affect, the body and migration will be further analyzed in subsequent chapters by examining the scale of the individual herself within the migrant house. Considering the visceral as a significant ‘sticky entanglement’ which informs affective response, I will focus on the visceral experiences of food in order to understand the personal experiences of transnationalism within the Egyptian cultural context. I will discuss emerging themes in my data beginning with the way in which migrants must discipline their bodies to adapt to their host country and then exploring how migrant bodies evolve over time in Canada.

Chapter 4: Disciplining the Body toward Balance and the Homing Desire

4.1 Introduction

Elizabeth Grosz challenges the mind/body dualism by proposing a complex set of models to understand embodied subjectivity and psychical corporeality. She writes,

[T]he constitution of the subject as an integrated and functional psychical totality is an active ingredient in the constitution of the body, for it provides the subject with a body which has particular, socially distinctive, and culturally determined attributes and abilities, individual idiosyncrasies and styles of behavior [sic].
(Grosz, 1994: 27)

Her inside out approach is founded in psychoanalysis where the ego traces the body and develops one's topography of subjective experience, including sensations, intensities, and affects, to create the internal image of the body (Grosz, 1994). This approach explores how the "mind" or psyche situates itself in relation to the social meanings attributed to the body. As a result, the natural body is continually changed by history, experience, and culture.

Grosz's outside in approach perceives the body as a social object, a blank canvas to be inscribed by institutions, various powers, and a series of linkages among other objects and processes (Grosz, 1994). This is a superficial examination of the body which sets aside the psychological and the 'deepness' of an individual and places significance on external policy, procedures and powers to produce the body's identity. Neither of these two approaches, the inside out or outside in, is adequate to fully understand the body individually, but rather it is a combination of these two approaches that offers a holistic picture in understanding the body, identity formation, and affective response.

Affective response to change in landscapes and dislocation requires an assertion of belonging to the new locality which involves incorporating aspects of former spaces of comfort into the cultural space of the host locality (Butcher, 2010). Ahmed writes, “turning away from the object of fear here involves a turning toward home” (Ahmed, 2004:74). Place can feel more like home if the environment feels ‘sufficient’ and ‘friendly’, versus uncertain or threatening (Nowicka, 2007: 82). In Asia, for example, highly mobile professionals from Australia gather with other expatriates and develop a ‘Western bubble’ that helps ease transition to a new culture (Butcher, 2010: 27). As previously discussed, migrants may engage in religious communities to develop a space of comfort that reminds them of home. But at a more individual level, migrants must often discipline their bodies in order to adapt daily customs to bridge the gap between their country of origin and their host country.

The concept of disciplining the body is rooted in Michel Foucault’s analysis of political mechanisms of power which centred on the management of life, which he terms *bio-power* (Foucault, 1977; Grosz, 1994). *Bio-power* is a disciplinary power which targets the human body as an object to be manipulated and trained. This power was first cultivated in various institutional settings (e.g. medical, educational, militant) and was gradually implemented in techniques of social regulation. Constant surveillance subjects the body to continuous control. The goal of this power is to enhance the body’s capacities, skills and productivity (Foucault, 1977).

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault describes how the spread of *bio-power* is connected to discourse on sex and sexuality as a means of managing life at an individual and population level (Foucault, 1978). At this time, sex was becoming understood as a biological drive with strong attachment to identity. With healthy and pathological forms of sexual instinct defined, governments began to treat and rehabilitate those considered sexual

deviants. Thus, Foucault suggests that the behavior of individuals and groups is increasingly controlled through standards of normality as determined by normative knowledge such as psychology and criminology (Foucault, 1978).

Foucault's theories of power, the body and sexuality have piqued feminist interest for a number of reasons. His treatment of disciplinary powers overlaps with the feminist approach to the micropolitics of personal life including the mechanics of patriarchal power within a women's experience (Bordo, 1988; Grosz, 1994). Analyzing the body as a target of power is useful when understanding contemporary forms of social regulation of women's bodies and minds. For example, Susan Bordo uses Foucauldian insights in her analysis of eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia (Bordo, 1988). When an anorexic woman goes to an extreme in order to conform to cultural norms of an ideal feminine form, she is in fact disciplining her body. This power and self-control required to achieve her desired body reveals the way disciplinary power is linked to social control.

Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) translate the Foucauldian framework of discipline to the migrant journey, "When migrants arrive at a new place there are new ways in which their bodies are disciplined, including through food and eating" (2009: 335). This discipline of the body is subjected to many forms of power such as the connection to one's culture, the struggle to satisfy family preferences, and the pressure to assimilate to host country society and norms. Living out a traditional cultural gendered role in a new country without the support afforded in the host country, the Egyptian women migrants studied here must find strategies of self-control and organization to become efficient and successful in all aspects of their lives, reminiscent of Foucault's discussion of disciplinary power as a means of optimizing bodily capacity and productivity.

This chapter examines how migrants negotiate their desire for comfort while maintaining desired traditional visceral experiences. Migrant women in this study actively create new domestic routines and break traditional gender roles by delegating domestic tasks to husbands in order to balance their multiple life roles. Many of the participants in this study mentioned at least one family member suffering from a health issue that required monitoring diet. Modifying how traditional foods are prepared directly affects visceral experience, a decision made readily by the women interviewed for the sake of their family's health. Although the women cite making a personal decision to compromise authentic taste in order to maintain a manageable schedule and the health of their family, if the authentic taste desired is not available in the local environment then place-making is negatively affected. The discussion concludes with an analysis of 'home' as understood through the affective response and feeling 'at home'.

4.2 Creating New Domestic Routines

Learning to adjust to the pace of life in Canada is often cited as the first step in adapting to life after migration. As migrants learn to live in a new country, they develop and alter their ethos and bio-cultural taste. Food, in particular, is a sensual challenge for the recent migrants with whom I spoke. Egyptian cooking takes time that they do not have to invest in the kitchen and they find themselves struggling to balance their many roles – wife, mother, worker, and/or student – with their food preferences and traditions,

Yes, I am organized. I try as much as I can because I have so much on my plate and I really cannot afford to be not organized. I try to put the stuff in alphabetical order. I try to be organized as much as possible but I have too much on my plate between two works...and I do all the housework by myself. I do almost everything for my son by myself...if I really want to be successful in all of them, I need to be organized. (Helen)

Some of these women are in graduate school (as well as their husbands) and have three or four children; therefore, multitasking and saving time are high priorities for them,

We have in Canada falafels at the Arabic store. It is half-fried. It is easy. But it doesn't taste the same. I can do it from scratch and its tasty and my kids like it. But it takes a lot of time. I make things less from scratch now. It's available and it is easy. Making things from scratch is a special occasion now. (Mariam)

From learning how to prepare the multiple steps of *macaroni bil béchamel* simultaneously to omitting the chickpeas in *koshery* because of the requirement of overnight soaking, the bodily comfort arising from shortcuts and organization outweighs authentic taste.

Utilizing conveniences available in Canada goes hand-in-hand with scheduling adaptations,

Here, the cooking is easy because everything is frozen and prepared. In my country, I prepare everything...so it takes more time to cook in my country than here...I like to make a big pan of macarona bil béchamel and put it in the freezer. So when I want to eat it I find it is ready. We didn't do that in Egypt, we only have a freezer with the fridge and a small stand up freezer. The apartments in Egypt were not so big like this one. (Hala)

Conveniences are afforded a distinction here because it reflects how these migrants have embraced the comforts of the host country. The use of ready-made items has become an acceptable substitute for more time-consuming traditional cooking techniques. Thus, there is balance struck between available time to cook and the visceral aspect of authentic taste.

Similarly, the use of new amenities such as a larger freezer allows the opportunity for the hours put into the time consuming techniques to be enjoyed for a prolonged period of time. Essentially, a system of checks and balances of hours in the kitchen is developed on an individual level in order to establish a manageable daily schedule.

4.3 Breaking Down Gender Roles

Finding themselves overwhelmed and learning to balance all of the household responsibilities, many of the women begin to break down traditional cultural gender roles by delegating domestic tasks to their husbands,

My mother-in-law, she make food and when we marry she give to us. When we come here, I says 'I'm sorry, I'm sick, I can't do dishes' then he [my husband] say he will do them. What should I do, he has to help me. He go to study and I go to work, you know. We equal. In the morning, today, I was late for work. In the mornings sometimes I can't make his sandwiches, I put his bread here [on the kitchen counter] and jam and cheese and everything and say you make it. He has to understand the city we live and the culture and everything. We are alone, he is studying and I am working. (Fatima)

Yes, sometimes he [my husband] will come and make food when he wants it a certain way. I used to argue with him, you got to do it my way. But now, I don't have any energy to argue or anything. If you are going to help me, do it your way I don't care. But it wasn't like that in Egypt. This [the kitchen] was my area, step away from my area. You know, he used to work for long hours and wasn't home before seven. And he only got one day off. There was no time to do any cooking. (Elizabeth)

This delegation indicates that both women and men must adapt to domestic routines in Canada, which is significant since Egyptian men often have no previous experience with domestic activities and no expectation to participate in these duties.

The shift in cultural gender roles in domestic duties can also be seen in the relationship between parent and child. Traditionally, it is only young Egyptian daughters who eagerly watch their mothers cook in the kitchen to learn the culinary skills of the culture. However, the Canadian experience seems to have shifted that perspective in these migrant women's eyes,

Yes, traditionally the woman cooks. If the woman has a problem, then the husband helps. Cooking is our role. I taught my son how to cook because I want him to know. I don't want him to be negative. I taught him how to clean the dishes... But, in the past, they didn't learn – the boys – I don't like this idea because I like boys

to help and have the same responsibility, there is no difference between boys and girls. He has to learn to be a help for other people they live with him. (Hala)

Yes, I have to teach him [my son] everything. Clean up after yourself, help momma do stuff. You know, right now we are in a different society and no one will tolerate doing everything for someone else. I don't think if he ever got married, his wife or girlfriend – I don't know, Egyptian or not – there is no girls in this era willing to do everything from A to Z for their husbands. (Helen)

Helen is an immigrant who has made a life for her family in Canada and wants to teach her son domestic skills in order to 'fit in' with Canadian society. Hala is a migrant returning to Egypt after completing her doctoral degree yet she is still adamant in teaching her son basic domestic skills, insisting that he help around the house. She was not the only migrant who was determined to teach their sons to share in domestic responsibility demonstrating how the shift in gender role perspective has the capacity to affect migrants' lives upon return to their country of origin.

4.4 Disciplining Bodies toward Healthiness

Most studies addressing migration and health utilize an epidemiological approach. A phenomenon termed 'healthy immigrant effect' – where newly arrived immigrants are on average healthier than the native-born – is widely accepted with contested explanations. Some studies attribute this effect to recipient country migrant health screening, immersion in ethnic communities in the host country, healthy behaviour prior to migration with a steady adoption of less healthy behaviours, and immigrant self-selection where migrants tend to be the healthier and wealthier (Kennedy, McDonald and Biddle, 2006; McDonald and Kennedy, 2005; Hyman et al., 2002). Health studies on migration reveal that most migrants from non-Western countries exhibit an increased risk of hypertension, obesity, coronary heart disease, and some cancers over time in Canada (McDonald and Kennedy, 2005; Hyman et al., 2002). Few studies examine personal

stories of migration to better understand the reasons for these lifestyle changes at an individual level.

Although there is significant research regarding determinants of healthy eating of immigrants in the general population in Canada, there is little literature to address these determinants for new immigrant woman (Hyman et al., 2002). Access to new foods and tastes, for example, comes with a host of health-related complications. When Helen first arrived to Canada, she noted the affordability of extravagances such as steak and began to purchase these foods more regularly. As a result of her family's change in diet, her husband's health began to suffer,

My husband got sick. I don't eat or buy – we used to eat steak every day. It's just his favourite thing. So, we go buy steak and every day the BBQ is on and we BBQ steak, every day, every day. No wonder he got a heart attack. I don't buy it anymore. I know if it is in the fridge I am going to eat it. So, right now I have lots of vegetables in the fridge, fresh vegetables. I have lentils, lots of beans and lentils. And I have fish. And that's it. (Helen)

Catherine spoke about how her health changed during her pregnancy and the resulting ways she has adjusted her diet,

Umm, after I got [my daughter], my blood pressure was really high, so I had to cut out all the salt from food... we spent maybe 6 month with no salt at all. At all. In anything. It was yucky. With [my son], my blood sugar was high. So, we cut all the carbs and sugars. This is all temporary but I should take care after I gave birth, even if I am done having children, because right now my possibility to get back to high blood pressure or diabetic is more than a healthy person. (Catherine)

Many of the women in my study commented on how they learned about healthy eating when they came to Canada,

Our food has become less fatty, less oily then we used to do in Egypt. We use olive oil and less oil then before. I think it's healthy, especially for the kids when they grow up to be healthier than before. I learned from Canadians here. And we try to include all the values in our food, the protein, carbohydrates, calcium. But in

Egypt you are not aware of this. No public health knowledge, we just cook based on tradition and on taste. I try to balance between the taste and the healthiness. (Huda)

So, I'm going to cook with Becel™. My husband had a heart attack recently, so – ahh – at the Heart and Stroke Foundation that's what they told us to use. Don't use oil, just use the minimum, as small as possible. So, I use Becel™ most of the time. He's 35, he's a little bit older than me but not that old. (Helen)

He was picky in Egypt, yeah, but when he came here and he went to the doctor once and he had a very high blood pressure. And he told him you have to follow a diet, you have to lose so much weight, you have to care of what you eat and don't eat. He started to be more picky. He was like that in Egypt. When he came here he was fat and he didn't like when the doctor told him that you are in the risk area of getting a heart attack because he's father already got something. (Sarah)

In light of seeing the changes in their body and the bodies of their immediate family members, these women took action to discipline their family toward a healthier lifestyle. When Hyman *et al.* (2002) conducted a literature review of nutritional articles over a 16 year span, it was discovered that culture was a key determinant of food choice, “Food provides a mechanism for expressing ethnic identity” (126). Yet, despite the impact on traditional food preparation and tastes from the homeland, the participants in my study cited family health as one of the most important factors to consider when preparing food. It is the richness in data collected through personal experiences of transnationalism which outlines the importance of family health over cultural identity for new immigrant women – data that may not be captured through a quantitative health study.

4.5 Lack of Authenticity

Staeheli and Nagel (2006) write, “[I]n leaving home, immigrants must make a new home, and they must negotiate the contradictions of both homes, even as they may feel they belong to neither.” (1599). Consider the migrant who, upon leaving her home country, finds her in an overwhelming wonderland of new sensual experiences, where the fundamental object of food in

her new context cannot be understood and familiar tastes cannot be replicated. In this case, it is not a question of personal choice to compromise visceral satisfaction for a more comfortable schedule or healthiness. Instead, there is a profound dislocation in the absence of familiar culture and evocation of home (Butcher, 2010; Nowicka, 2007; Law, 2001).

While scheduling and conveniences are important to bodily comfort despite compromising taste, a level of bodily discomfort was expressed as a result of the unavailability of desired authentic tastes in the local environment,

In Egypt, we eat this dish with rice or as a soup with bread. This is really nice with the bread typically made in Egypt, aish biladi. Here we eat it with rice. There is a place in Toronto that makes the aish biladi like Egypt. But I never made it to Toronto, but my friends who live in Toronto order a large quantity and keep it in the freezer. (Mariam)

I like feseekh. There is no feseekh here in Canada. I miss that. And the bread, aish biladi. There are a variety of cheese in Egypt not here. Cheese are more expensive than in Egypt. We didn't try to find imported cheese. (Huda)

Although the availability of certain authentic foods exists, the unmatched flavour of these dishes leaves the visceral experience lacking,

Another thing I miss is shawarma in Egypt. You can find it here, but it does not taste the same. When I go to Egypt, I definitely take time to enjoy some shawarma. We try to grill the meat here, but it is not the same. My kids complain it is not the same. (Hala)

For example, I like ducks. Okay the ducks here are not the same, different type or different breed, they don't really taste the same. So, I don't always make ducks. I crave ducks a lot, I want to do it, I want to eat it. It would be my typical at Christmas. But, here, turkey is more available. I don't like turkey but lots of times I just cook turkey because it is available, it is everywhere. Other people like it. You just substitute what's there. Also, pigeons and quails are good substitutes but they don't taste the same. They are not close to the same bird. But they taste the same. (Helen)

[S]ausage in Egypt is more spices and onion flavours. You know what, the Italian sausage is kind of similar except they add oregano or basil. So, if they removed

oregano or basil, it would be similar to Egyptian. We tried something from the Arabic store but it was not the same. (Elizabeth)

In fact, eating these lacklustre foods reinforces the longing for one's country of origin which can hinder the establishment of comfort in the host country, leaving migrants with a constant longing for 'home'. Amani described going to great lengths, including driving for over an hour, to find authentic traditional foods and experience a taste of 'home'.

We used to have much more stores making fish in different ways. Like, here, you always find the fried ones mostly. You don't find barbecued. I really missed it here because no store except one we discovered very lately in Toronto in downtown. It makes the same, its Egyptian store, I really enjoy. Finally the same traditional way we used to back home. (Amani)

The opportunity to create sensual experiences of home, despite the inconvenience, was significant to Amani's place-making in Canada.

Understanding bodily comfort as one measure of how migrant women feel 'at home' after a transnational leap means challenges to feeling comfortable in Canada are a necessary post-migratory area of study. The unavailability or lack of authenticity of traditional foods in the local environment is one challenge encountered by Egyptian migrants. Maintaining tradition can also lend itself to challenges, particularly for Muslim women who must consider religious compliancy. Muslims can only consume halal food, of which the definition is far-reaching. For more lenient individuals, halal food can be as broad as not eating prohibited foods (*e.g.* pork, alcohol) and ensuring compliant types of meat are slaughtered in the name of God. The Qur'an states that "The food of the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] is lawful for you as your food is lawful for them." (Surah 5:5). Some women are, therefore, comfortable taking their children to any restaurant with the assumption that the meat was slaughtered by someone who falls under "People of the Book" as they consider Canada a Christian country. However, the

Dhabiḥah clearly outlines the prescribed method of slaughtering an animal in Islamic law, including the utterance of the words “Bismallah”, (or “In the Name of God”) during the slaughter (Sayyid Abulqasim al-Khoei, n.d.). One Muslim woman clearly voiced her difficulty locating religious compliant foods,

And for restaurants, yes, there is some but not a lot. The one I trust is called Kismat. There is another but you don't know because some Muslim said it is halal food and they mean by that it's not pork. But at the same time it is not halal the way we understand it. It is supposed to be slaughtered with certain words said. And they might use beef that is not halal and say that it is beef so it is halal because it is not pork. Some say that if it was slaughtered by a Christian or Jew then it is okay. Others will say you need to know how this animal was slaughtered. Some Muslims will go to McDonald's and say it is okay because it was slaughtered by a Christian or Jewish person. But we don't know because Canada is multicultural. It is a level of precaution. (Hala)

Therefore, the personal level of strictness regarding religious compliancy can strongly impact the transition to a new country. Hala mentioned that her family was tired of repeatedly going to the same restaurant. She did not want to go elsewhere because she was embarrassed by the continuous need to ask, “Do you have this? do you have that? check this for me, check that for me” (Hala). This embarrassment was exacerbated if the restaurant was crowded as she didn't want to inconvenience the already frantic staff. So, as a result, she has opted to make everything at home.

The limitations of food consumption in the Islamic faith can also be problematic if detailed information about food content is not provided:

We need change from typical dessert. Like birthday cake – the one in the store has gelatin and lard. Sometimes there is no details of the ingredients. Even gum, it's difficult. At Bulk Barn, I asked about the ingredients but he spent a long time looking for ingredients and couldn't find them. It's hard to feel like home. It would be good if we could get the information. (Hala)

As Hala clearly communicates, the inability to access information about foods to determine religious compliance impacts *sense of place* and the process of feeling ‘at home’ or comfortable in a new country.

4.6 The Homing Desire

I began my research with the intent of understanding how Egyptian women who recently migrated to the Region of Waterloo use the embodied experience of cooking and consuming food to create a home for themselves in their new country. However, just as Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) found studying eleven migrant women in New Zealand, the term ‘home’ was perplexing to both the participants and me, as the researcher. Although all of the women referred to Egypt as ‘home’, they realized that their experience in Canada had affected their view of the homeland,

I feel so happy when I go back to Egypt because I see my parents. But I feel frustrated because I don't like the traffic there, I don't like the pollution there. I'm used to traffic here; the traffic here is very good. So when I see the traffic there I see the difference. I didn't see that before I came here. I think 'I can't survive here [in Egypt]'. (Hala)

These discursive accounts revealed that the word ‘home’ held significant meaning to my participants. It is a term used temporally and spatially. It referred to a time and place where their view of the world had only the experience of living in Egypt, unadulterated by the experience of elsewhere. In a new country, these women are constantly bombarded by new stimuli and adapting to a new culture. Blunt and Dowling (2006) describe how the typical diasporic home is not a static site, but rather these spaces are transformed as practiced and surrounding traditions and cultures intersect. This intersection results in the adaptation of the body in ways that makes the homeland feel strange and uncomfortable,

Unfortunately now, like when I went to visit Egypt, I felt like a stranger in many, many ways...For example, travelling from place to place, I find it very hard there than here. And, umm, like yeah, when I went there and the traffic wasn't much control. And we heard there are lots of thefts because it was after the revolution and police wasn't spread...I just felt that some things got worse and some things have stayed the same. But I got different like I responded to them differently now, I see things differently now. All of families, of course, want us to come back as soon as possible. Yeah, I don't want to upset them. (Amani)

Since I came here, I went to Egypt once...The only thing I found different was the traffic and the weather and the cleanliness. Once we came out of the airport, I felt like 'are you crazy? what are we in the middle of?' Cars were driving into each other. It was only one year that past, but I felt like something was wrong. And once we leave the airport, I felt my hands were covered in dust and dirt. I was really disgusted. And when we first got into the car to go home, the people where everywhere. It was one year, but I felt a big difference. (Catherine)

The feeling of neither belonging 'here' nor 'there' is not limited to the emotional, but also felt fundamentally at a physical level in ways my participants did not anticipate. This unfamiliarity with one's body further exasperates the confusion of 'home' and the efforts to re-situate place amidst the migrant's inner conflicts.

The notion of home has been conceptualized in many ways in the social sciences. For geographers, defining home is confounded by the desire to attribute a geographical location. The idea that one's home is fixed, bounded, and characterized by powerful place-attachments stipulates a *sense of home* grounds people to a particular place. Over the years, the fixed concept of home has been challenged by the capacity for people and places to extend and connect across space and time defying conventional boundaries. In understanding the process of home-making for immigrants, David Morley argues,

[T]he conventional contrast between traditional, place-based notions of home...and the contemporary experience of globalisation in such a way that we might see this not as a contrast between presence and absence of an experience of homeliness but rather as two different modalities of this experience. (as quoted in Ralph and Staeheli, 2011: 519)

Through studying the transnational paradigm, it is observed that both place of origin and host country can strongly impact the routines of daily life for immigrants (Lucas and Purkayastha, 2007; Ralph and Staeheli, 2011).

It was clear that the women in my study felt a deep connection to their roots and that Egypt would always be considered home. That is not to say that the route to Canada does not form roots. Over time, as these migrants interact with the local environment and become accustomed to life in their host country, they describe a progressive feeling of comfort. Although they may not refer to Canada as ‘home’, they do hold significant meaning for it,

I like Canada as well, it is my second country or something – yes, my second country – so I like Canada so much. But the only problem I have, I think, is that I’m far away from my family. (Hala)

Some of the women, particularly those who will not return to Egypt, have hope that Canada will feel like home once they are settled,

After having my own job and settle down with everything, I will feel this is my home. But for now, for the time being, I cannot say that this is home. (Elizabeth)

Although there is compromise to be had regarding daily practice and the visceral experience, this is not a cause to lose hope for a migrant’s successful transition. As everyday life in the host country competes with transnational connections to a migrant’s previous home for limited physical and mental resources, the place in which one currently resides begins to count for more over time (Kivisto, 2001). The longer migrants live in their host country, the stronger their network, the surer their routine, and the more comfort in exploring new experiences (Butcher, 2010; Kivisto, 2001).

Here we come back full circle to the concept of ontological security, defined as the trust in one's local surroundings (Noble, 2005), and its essential role for migrants in their new country. Comfort comes in many forms including material, affective, symbolic, and interpersonal qualities. But all these aspects play a role in developing stability grounded in routines and familiar spaces of daily life. A sense of safety, security, and independence is required to feel 'at home' (Noble, 2005). The women with whom I spoke described feeling more comfortable once they learned to navigate the local system.

You know, pregnancy with studying and new country and the kids and doing all this stuff at the same time, it was very hard...[T]he winter in 2008 was very terrible...And, you know, in Egypt there is no snow, no this weather...It was very hard to be familiar with how we wear coats and scarves...And we had no car to go to the University and no car to take the kids to the school, it was very hard to follow the buses...He [my husband] stay at home and he didn't like to do that. All of this together made us unhappy. But after that, when spring came, when we buy car and get our baby, we see good things. We forgot all the bad times. (Huda)

The 'homing desire' is not the same as one's desire for the homeland. People re-make identity and home by drawing on multiple cultural repertoires, essentially creating a hybrid identity. Based on the discursive accounts uncovered in my study, I realize it is not a question of 'where is home' for these women but rather a question of feeling 'at home' or, using a word commonly used by my participants, *comfortable* in the place of settlement while retaining significant identity outside it,

You know, when we spend long time we'll be more comfortable. And you can taste the food, taste the life and enjoy the life. I think all the other [Egyptian migrants] have the same comment and same experience, not only on food but on the life as a whole. (Huda)

Being able to find ingredients to make our food helped us feel comfortable here. (Hala)

To be honest, my home is the place that my children feels comfortable...even if you have asked me that question a year ago, I would have told you, of

course my home is in Egypt...But the kids grow up and you think that they are the ones who are important...when I talk to my friends [in Egypt], I feel that they even when they lift their kids from schools and drop them to schools that they don't feel safe. So far, yeah, okay, I feel that [safety] here [in Canada]. (Sarah)

Encounters with strangeness can enhance understanding and sociality with our locality as much as it can increase alienation and hostility (Usher, 2002). An individual's attitude can, therefore, affect their sense of comfort while attempting to re-construct home. Migration has been likened to a journey with a scale of crisis evaluated by an individual's break in homeland relationships as well as their social and cultural reference points (Regalia, 2007). I have observed that one's attitude toward change and migration also shapes this scale – does the migrant consider migration an opportunity for growth or a perceived risk? Elizabeth, a mother of two, describes her attitude toward coming to Canada,

I remember a friend of mine was asking me, 'why are you immigrating? Your husband having great job and you're living in a nice apartment and you are having your own car...You'll be working in very bad jobs...[a]nd instead of living nicely in your house, you'll be like a servant.'... I told her, 'I don't mind if even they ask me to clean washrooms. For the future of my kids, I'll do it.'...And the first job here in Kitchener was with my friend's coffee shop...I remember the first time, she was teaching me how to clean the washroom, I said, 'Oh my goodness, thanks God. I said I would be cleaning the washroom for the future of my kids and now I'm doing it.'...I will be thankful because I am here and I know I'm not going to clean the washroom for the rest of my life here. But for me, I didn't feel emotionally hurt. I didn't feel I'm ruining myself or I'm degrading myself, no. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth decided to view the opportunity to come to Canada as hopeful, despite leaving her upper middle-class lifestyle to work jobs that others deem humiliating. She sees these sacrifices as valuable for her children. This hope has seen her through many difficult jobs, a layoff and, now, completing her college degree. This is a testament to the effect an individual's view on strangeness and migration can have on their affective response to their new locality.

4.7 Understanding Discipline, Balance and the Homing Desire after Migration

Establishment of routines, repetition of habitual interactions, and the memories in one's head contribute to finding home in a new country (Butcher, 2010; Kivisto, 2001; Noble, 2005; Nowicka, 2007). Migrants move from the space of comfort provided by their country of origin, a space where one does not feel oneself as separate from one's surroundings, to a place where one feels out of place and unsettled (Ahmed, 2004). One must become familiar with a new place, understand the culture and norms, and re-establish daily practices in order to diminish the boundary between body and environment. In essence, migrants must discipline their bodies in new ways to create place from space. In struggling to fulfil a traditional cultural gendered role in a new country without the support afforded in the host country, the Egyptian women migrants studied here must find strategies of self-control and organization to become efficient and successful in all aspects of their lives while negotiating various forms of power including cultural preservation, family politics and the influence of the host country. This discipline of the body is suggestive of Foucault's concept of *bio-power*.

For the migrant Egyptian women interviewed in this study, being organized and creating cooking shortcuts to reduce the time in the kitchen is the most cited way of disciplining the body in their new place. Foregoing tradition and, at times, authentic taste to reduce time in the kitchen becomes a valued endeavor. All my participants mentioned a close connection with family when living in Egypt to the point where domestic duties were shared across households, a situation typical in collectivist societies. Often, many women from the same family would get together to make a large quantity of time consuming dishes (*e.g. mashie*) to then divide the cooking amongst all the households. In Egyptian culture, relational dimensions around family are of utmost importance, and the emptiness left after leaving family is a recurring theme across the interviews.

When these women moved to Canada, they had to learn to manage all aspects of their lives without the assistance of family. Once these women created a manageable daily routine, a place of bodily comfort was established and the urgent yearning for family lessened which allowed them to feel more settled in Canada.

In order to obtain this manageable daily routine, many of the women spoke about breaking cultural gender norms and delegating domestic work to husbands and sons. Fatima described how she taught her husband how to do simple cooking tasks like fry an egg, make rice, or prepare a salad. She also mentioned that if her mother-in-law ever knew what her son was doing, she would cry! This shift in gender roles is significant as Egyptian men often have no previous experience with domestic duties. Therefore, men also must discipline their bodies in new and foreign ways, and agree to do so, in order to establish their wife's sense of comfort after migration. Additionally, the expectation for equal gender contribution in household chores is being passed down to sons in Canada, whether the family is permanently living in Canada or returning to Egypt. Perhaps this is a sign of the influence of globalization on Egyptian cultural norms.

Immigrant health studies cite culture, access to information, availability of healthy food, poverty and acculturation as determinants for healthy eating (Hyman et al., 2002). Accessibility and affordability of extravagant foods (*e.g.* steak, processed foods) has the potential to change migrant family diets and raise issues regarding health. Several women mentioned at least one member of their family was diagnosed with a medical condition that required altering their diet. These conditions coupled with the new knowledge obtained through public health initiatives (*e.g.* Canada Food Guide, school information sheets) have resulted in changing food preparation methods (*e.g.* less salt and fatty ingredients) regardless of the impact on authentic taste. Despite

immigrant health studies emphasizing the importance of ethnic identity in food consumption (Hyman et al., 2002), disciplining the body to new diet regimes is a testament to the importance of family health over the necessity to replicate traditional foods and authentic sensations.

Voluntary adjustments to the visceral aspect of food and the subsequent compromise of taste are deemed acceptable for the sake of balancing all women migrant roles – wife, mother, worker/student – while maintaining a manageable schedule. This was often not an issue in Egypt because these women either did not work, were employed but not in school, or lived near family that assisted with domestic duties,

Of course, it would be easier to have kids if you had family around. Definitely... And even babysitters, I really don't feel safe to leave a baby who doesn't know how to talk and tell me what happened unless it is someone I know. So, if there is family, say you have an interview or work or important meeting and you are not prepared to have a babysitter, or something came up, if your mom around or family around easy to call and ask for someone to come stay with the kids.
(Catherine)

Even after getting married, I stayed there [near my parents] for awhile and depended on my mom for many stuff. (Sarah)

However, when the choice to compromise taste was forced upon them (e.g., when no authentic ingredient or product was available in their local environment), this situation resulted in bodily discomfort and a constant reminder that they were away from the homeland. The evidence in my study reveals that Egyptian migrants are perpetually disciplining their body in ways to create a balance between desired visceral sensations of the homeland and a sense of comfort through manageable daily routines as a means of place-making in their host country.

Surrounded by the aromas, and savouring the taste of the fruits of their labour and organization alongside the tactile experience of cooking created an ideal research environment to

produce richness in the responses of my participants. The fluidity of the cooking process spoke to the establishment of manageable routine and strategies toward a sense of comfort and place. The interactions between husband and wife over food seasonings highlighted the breakdown of gender roles over the visceral experience of food. During my interview with Elizabeth, I watched as she and her husband, cooking in the kitchen together, challenged the other's authority on flavouring *kofta*. It is clear that evidence presented here is a direct product of the visceral approach within the interview process.

Bonnett speaks eloquently about the importance of place in migration studies,

Although many academic critics disparage the need for place-based communities, over the past hundred years maintaining community and a sense of place (or even just hanging onto the hope that such things are possible) has been a hard but necessary struggle for people uprooted and relocated. (2008: 79)

As he attests in the above quote, migration involves situating one's self in a new place by understanding local social, cultural, economical and political systems. This transition has the potential to erode place-bound experiences of community and belonging from both places of origin and arrival (Albrow, 1997). The reoccurring theme of feeling 'at home' versus 'home' as told through the discursive accounts described in this study problematizes the concept of 'home'. Thus, migrants can find themselves between 'here' and 'there', no longer comfortable in either place. To regain a sense of comfort, migrants negotiate the micropolitics of their personal life and discipline their bodies in new ways, including through food and eating (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho, 2009). This discipline of the body is subjected to many forms of power such as the desire to remain connected to one's culture (*e.g.*, attempting to replicate authentic taste), negotiating traditional gender roles (or breaking them down to create a manageable domestic routine), and the pressure to assimilate to host country society and norms. Through accepting

how the body familiarizes itself with the local environment, migrants can begin to create a *sense of place* in their host country.

Chapter 5: Evolution of the Body with Exposure to the Host Country

5.1 Introduction

In his infamous publication *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin explains how contemporary species are descendants of earlier life forms which evolved from even earlier life forms and so on (Darwin, 1909). He describes mechanisms of ‘descent with modification’ that involves three principles: individual variation, the proliferation of species and individuals, and natural selection. A close examination of these mechanisms is beyond the scope of this study; however, there are three important postulates to his theory. The first postulate is that a collection of minute individual variations can eventually lead to species differentiation or, in other words, diversity. The second postulate involves the tendency toward overabundant rates of reproduction which can lead to hostile, competitive environments allowing for greater diversity and natural selection (Darwin, 1909). The third postulate describes natural selection itself, “This principle of preservation, I have called, for the sake of brevity, Natural Selection; and it leads to the improvement of each creature in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions.” (Darwin, 1909: 104-105). In summary, evolution is affected by inheritable attributes as well as environment.

What is most significant, and often overlooked, is that Darwin does not differentiate between the evolution of natural and cultural systems, but rather attributes the same fundamental theory to both,

The formation of different languages and of distinct species, and the proofs that both have been developed through a gradual process, are curiously the same...We find in distinct languages striking homologies due to community of descent, and analogies due to a similar process of formation...Languages, like organic beings, can be classed in groups under groups; and they can be classed either naturally according to descent, or artificially by other characters. Dominant languages and

dialects spread widely to lead to the gradual extinction of other tongues. A language, like a species, when once extinct, never...reappears. The same language never has two birth-places. Distinct languages may be crossed or blended together. We see variability in every tongue, and new words are continually cropping up; but as there is a limit to the powers of the memory, single words, like whole languages, gradually become extinct...The survival or preservation of certain favoured words in the struggle for existence is natural selection. (Darwin, 1901: 137-139).

The 'origin' of language follows the same processes of evolution, namely natural selection and temporal dispersion, as the origin of species. Therefore, evolution functions from the simplest of species to complex cultural and intellectual activities. Grosz eloquently states the impact of Darwin's view of culture to the feminist approach,

[W]hat has occurred to an individual in the operations of a milieu or environment (it matters little here if it is natural or cultural) is the force or impetus that propels that individual to processes, not of remediation (remediation literally involves undoing what cannot be undone) but of self-transformation. The struggle for existence is precisely that which induces the production of ever more viable and successful strategies, strategies whose success can only be measured by the degree to which they induce transformation in the criteria by which natural selection functions. (Grosz, 2008: 40-41).

Thus, Grosz challenges the long-standing debate of nature versus culture by reconceptualising nature and culture as complex, yet related concepts governed by the same evolutionary principles. Furthermore, she elaborates that both the natural and the cultural have evolved together over time and will continue to do so, each affecting the other. Thus culture is not static, but a dynamic force; the natural is no longer considered passive and unchanging (Grosz, 2008). My discussion of the evolution of the body within a transnational context thus becomes a nod to Darwinism coupled with Grosz's reconceptualization of the nature/culture paradigm. In this light, we can understand how the migrant body can be changed and evolve as it is spatially dispersed from the home country culture into a new environment with a new culture. The subsequent introduction to new cultural experiences such as tasting new foods and learning of

alternate ideals can challenge an individual's visceral and ideological past as well as future decisions and lifestyle.

We must return here briefly to Grosz's interpretation of the body as mentioned in Chapter Four. Her inside out approach to the body is founded in psychoanalysis where the ego traces the body and develops one's topography of subjective experience in order to create the internal image of the body. Grosz's outside in approach perceives the body as a social object, a blank canvas to be inscribed by institutions, various powers, and a series of linkages among other objects and processes (Grosz, 1994). In combining these two approaches, Grosz examines the ways in which "the body can be understood as the site of the intermingling of mind and culture...[and] the symptom and mode of expression and communication of a hidden interior or depth" (Grosz: 1994: 116). My examination of body is, therefore, not limited to treating the body as an object or a series of biological processes. The body in my research is an agent, a site of resistance, and a "communication of a hidden interior". While the visceral realm is one aspect of the body, how the mind perceives its surroundings and subsequently alters the perception of self is also part of understanding the body.

This chapter outlines how the migrant self evolves to accept new tastes, new experiences, and new family dynamics over time and with exposure to local environment. Exposure to new food through social interactions and children's experiences ultimately changes a migrant's sense of taste, a bodily evolution that emphasizes how they now differ from their peers 'back home'. An individual's attitude toward the strange can be a stumbling block to immediate place-making upon migration if an individual is not open to new experiences. Adapting to migration is also impacted by a move from a collectivist to an individualist society which strengthens the nuclear family in order to feel a sense of belonging lost upon migration to Canada. The issue of raising

children in Canada was confounded by religious background. Muslim women wanted to return to Egypt in order to raise their children in a conservative society whereas Christian women preferred to stay in Canada to give their children the opportunity for a better future.

5.2 Changing Taste and Tasting Change

The Region of Waterloo offers migrants the opportunity to interact with other cultures and explore non-traditional visceral experiences. The growing diversity of the Region has opened the market for ethnic food outlets, and for the expansion of ethnic food sections in local grocery stores. These food-related societal changes also provide increased opportunity for interactions with individuals from other cultures. These opportunities not only offer greater accessibility to traditional foods and ingredients necessary for traditional dishes, but also greater exposure to food from a variety of cultures.

The affective response to strangeness, however, is a question of individual attitude towards something new or different. Ahmed (2004) states that fear reads openness as the potential for danger and pain, whereas hope reads openness as the potential for desire and joy. Fear is sustained through the threat of life; the fear of future injury dictates the present. Some migrants, for fear of losing tradition and culture, may refuse to try new things resulting in reduced mobility and the body shrinking. “Fear might be concerned with the preservation not simply of ‘me’, but also ‘us’, or ‘what is’, or ‘life as we know it’, or even ‘life itself’” (Ahmed, 2004: 64).

The Egyptian women I spoke to exhibited two types of approaches toward new cultural visceral experiences. The first is what I refer to as the ‘determined traditionalist’, a person who avoids trying new food in Canada. A person with this approach will constantly compare anything

foreign to the experience ‘back home’. Helen spoke about how her determined traditionalist mindset was an internal source of struggle when interacting socially with members of other cultures over food,

Yes, I cook non-Egyptian dishes. When I first came to Canada I wasn't open at all to any type of food. Everything looked and smelled funny...And then, they [my co-workers] taught me how to eat those things. (Helen)

Initially she was not open to trying new foods until her co-workers taught her how to appreciate new foods. These determined traditionalists, however, gladly profess their conversion to the ‘Canadian mind’, which is described as being open to different cultures, traditions and foods,

You try one bite of this and that - oh, I like this – then I know every time I go to the Chinese place, that's what I'm going to ask for because that's what I like the taste of. And from there, I started. It is also the Canadian mind. (Helen)

As length of stay in Canada increases, the distance between these migrants and their environment progressively diminished as they allowed themselves to ingest food from their local surroundings,

So I think it's a matter become familiar with the life here. You know, when we spend long time we'll be more comfortable. And you can taste the food, taste the life, and enjoy the life. (Huda)

Yes, my taste has changed. And I can see the difference when my mom comes here. She came to visit me only twice, all in all. And I can see that she's surprised at what I can now eat. 'How can you eat this? Tastes really strange.' Yeah, I like it. (Helen)

By broadening their consumption experience from traditional foods, these women begin to familiarize themselves with a host of flavours that expand their palates. These new flavours then become a continued desired embodied experience. In fact, this is not limited to visits to restaurants or acquaintances of different cultures, but rather an active effort to recreate these enjoyable visceral experiences within their own kitchens,

I used a few new things in Canada. Lasanga. There is a tofu, you know soy. Ya, I like it. Paneer cheese. Actually, I don't eat this much pizza in my country but I eat it a lot here. (Fatima)

Openness to the foreign and non-traditional is the second type of approach to new cultural visceral experiences - the 'culinary adventurer'. A person with this approach is willing to try new food at the initial exposure without hesitation and immediately tries to replicate the enjoyed palatable experiences at home,

I tried to make Canadian food. Some people invited us for dinner and made Canadian food and I liked it. I take the recipe from them and I try to do it. (Huda)

Huda, who was returning to Egypt two months after our interview, discussed how she enjoyed the new tastes she acquired in Canada so much that she is determined to continue cooking and consuming these foods when she returns to life in Egypt,

Yes, I think I will cook Canadian food when I go back to Egypt. I learn many dishes here and I took the recipe with me because my kids like it. And also Pakistani food, not just Canadian. They use basmati rice – I make a dish called biryani, I learned to make it and I will make it when I go to Egypt. I think I will find everything in Egypt. (Huda)

The impact of changing taste is, therefore, not limited to adapting to life after moving to a new country but has the potential to change traditional concepts of domestic life for these women no matter where they settle geographically. The impact is far-reaching as the migrant women in my study return to their country of origin and expose members of their social circle to their new tastes.

No matter which type of approach these migrant women initially embodied, each of them explained that they eventually began to feel more 'at home' once they felt comfortable experimenting with new food. Describing their change in taste preference is a clear bodily imprint of adaptation to life in Canada. Even when they return 'back home' to Egypt, they notice

that their tastes do not match those of their Egyptian peers and find themselves viscerally living 'here' and 'there'.

The inspiration for new culinary adventures is not limited to a migrant's social encounters. All the women interviewed had children who either attend university, school, or day care, and their experiences in those settings also influenced exploration of new food within the private space of the home.

I think the way we eat daily would change a little bit if we didn't have children. I usually try to make something they like because I want them to eat. If they like what I like, then I would do what I used to do in my country because I like it so much. But I'm changing that and doing what they like. (Hala)

Sometimes they [my kids] like Egyptian food, sometimes they like Canadian. When they see their friends at school bringing Canadian food, they ask 'what is it?' then they come to me and ask 'Mom, can you make this for us?'. I get the recipe from the Net or my friends. I didn't try new things like that in Egypt. (Huda)

During the meal, I observed a variety of family members' reactions to food, from young children complaining about the traditional meal served and being offered alternative food options, to a son in his early-20s leaving the house and returning with food from McDonald's. Nevertheless, eating as a family was important to all the participants,

Yes, we all eat together. We eat when my husband come back. But me and my son we have something between because he – my husband – spend long time outside...And we wait for him, you know, culture. You know, for me, I can't eat by myself. I don't feel good. I can drink tea, eat seeds in front of the TV. But food, I like it with my family, like back home, and with my husband here too. (Fatima)

We do not eat as a family. That's the sad part. I eat with my kids sometimes. My husband has different work schedule...It is a nice tradition to eat as a family, it is important to eat together. We just never managed to do it. (Mariam)

Thus, food preparation and consumption becomes a delicate balancing act of eating desired traditional foods, feeding one's children, and keeping the family unit united for a small portion of the day.

5.4 Bringing Family Migration to the Forefront: Evolving Ideals

In the past, studies surrounding family migration had been grounded in the human capital theory which views migration as an investment taken if the value of the benefits outweighs the cost. Within this framework, economists began to focus primarily on the 'trailing wife' effect where women were perceived as passive migrants tied to their spouse's movements (Cooke, 2008:256). More recently, geographers have taken a more pluralistic approach to understanding family migration by focusing on other aspects such as life course events. In Thomas J. Cooke's review of the literature of family migration, he calls on researchers to bring family migration beyond the scope of economics and into the forefront of migration research (Cooke, 2008).

5.4.1 Examining Family Migration as a Nuclear Family Unit

The political instability in Egypt as a result of the uprising in 2011 is one particular life course event which has the potential to strongly influence an Egyptian citizen's decision to migrate. When the situation became oppressive and inhibiting, some of the women in my study decided it was better to leave their homeland,

In brief, if I can say, it was going from bad to worse in Egypt. And nobody knows where we are headed to. And you can tell the corruption is everywhere and the future for my kids are very vague. Everybody fears that Islamists and fanatics would be in the power and that's exact what it has been now. (Elizabeth)

I thought that my future is just bright and happy in Egypt and I never thought of anything like leaving. But, sure enough, I was the first one to leave and I left

really young... I grew up sheltered than the boys. Once they tried to go out, find a job, just deal with the people and his first name is Mina, his first name is Michael, his first name is Mark – this is just too harsh of a reality to deal with. Someone will ask you a simple question, ‘what’s your name?’ and you reply back saying ‘Mark’, it’s bad. So the paperwork you’ve come to finish today is not going to get done. So for sure, these things and dealing with it make them think more and more about coming to Canada. (Helen)

Helen is describing how difficult it can be to complete standard tasks such as obtaining official government paperwork when your name categorizes you as a Christian. This discrimination strongly impacted how she viewed her family’s potential future in Egypt. The instability in Egypt has only made matters worse in her mind.

With an unsure future in Egypt, there is a growing trend of Egyptian citizens migrating to Western countries (Hafez and Ghaly, 2012). In discussing family migration, it is second nature to consider the potential ramifications of relationships as a result of uprooting one’s family and migrating to a new country where one’s future is uncertain. Such is the case when Elizabeth speaks second-hand about the family discord she observed as a result of family migration,

When I compare my story to my friends’ stories, I’m way better than them. Our process, our transition was much easier at least our relationship between me and my husband didn’t get damaged. Some friends, the immigration experience damaged their marital relation. That’s really hard because it’s stressful for the two of them. (Elizabeth)

Despite Elizabeth’s recount of her friends’ stories, I noted quite the opposite familial reaction to migration. The women in my study discussed how migration brought their nuclear family closer together and the re-construction of family dynamics within the house was crucial to place-making in a foreign country,

Yes, sometimes he [my husband] will come and make food when he wants it a certain way. I used to argue with him, you got to do it my way. But now, I don’t have any energy to argue or anything. If you are going to help me, do it your way I don’t care. But it wasn’t like that in Egypt. This [the kitchen] was my area, step away from my area. You know, he used to work for long hours and wasn’t home

before seven. And he only got one day off. There was no time to do any cooking. So, even if he was in the vacation or anything. But he used to cook kibda, very good one. Everybody in the church knows about it. He still does it here. And he's very good at doing it, I admit it [laughs]. (Elizabeth)

In studying Mexican migrants to the U.S., Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) reasons that migration can be better understood through changing gender relations. When males left Mexico to migrate to the U.S., women became responsible for running the household and the rural economy changing the dynamics of what was previously a patriarchal household. Men also had to adapt by performing traditional female roles such as cooking and washing clothes (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

The most enlightening insight from Hondagneu-Sotelo's work is her critical dissection of the 'household strategy' approach to migration. She argues that households are not harmonious and reveals the tensions between sexes and generations. Most significantly, she shows how migration leads to egalitarian positions between the sexes. Women tend to improve their positions by joining the workforce, equally contributing to household decisions and participating in social networks outside the home while the men lose mobility, power and authority (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

In Egypt, traditionally the man makes major family decisions without consultation. However, in Canada, Fatima has observed how both husband and wife contribute to household decisions.

You will get in more trouble if you marry an Egyptian man because his mind, doesn't matter Muslim or Christian, they are same culture... When we come here, I says 'I'm sorry, I'm sick, I can't do dishes' then he [my husband] say he will do them. What should I do, he has to help me. He go to study and I go to work, you know. We equal...He has to understand the city we live and the culture and everything. We are alone, he is studying and I am working. (Fatima)

Fatima plans on returning to Egypt and have her husband share in the housework and talk through family decisions in a compromising manner as she learned to do in Canada. This adoption of an egalitarian position between sexes is an example of how the Egyptian woman's body evolves when spatially dispersed from the patriarchal culture of Egypt and immersed in a culture that values a more democratic household structure. This shift in household structure involves more than joint decision-making. The husbands are expected to contribute to cooking, cleaning, and childcare which ties back to breaking gender roles in the previous chapter but extending the argument to understanding how familial relationships evolve after migration.

5.4.2 Examining Family Migration and Raising Children

The migrant family dynamics is also affected by children. Many of the women I spoke to mentioned immigrating or potentially not returning to Egypt in order to offer their children a better future,

My daughter Canadian citizen, I born my daughter here. The school better from Egypt. Everything better than Egypt... The first day I go to their school, I smiled. I was so happy, a lot, a lot. Their school is so nice. Big different from Egypt school. I feel this school is a good reason for me to come here. (Hanan)

I told her, 'I don't mind if even they ask me to clean washrooms. For the future of my kids, I'll do it.' (Elizabeth)

Although this conflict embodies many factors associated with the host country such as quality of education, earning potential and career growth, and civil rights, it is further exasperated by the political instability in Egypt,

Although, when I came here first, I thought we're coming, taking the PhD because [my husband] needs to take it and I'll get back to my country. This is what I was thinking and, to be honest, ah, sometimes I feel like I want to go back. But I'm not feeling safe. It's not safe anymore for my children. Not for me, for me I'm going to struggle it's okay. Many people are struggling over there. But, ah, I think it's more convenient to stay in a place that promises your children of a better future,

promises your husband of a better future. Here where people are not struggling. People have to work, I understand, everywhere. But you are not struggling to feel safe. That's the point. (Sarah)

Interestingly, there was a discrepancy between Muslim and Christian participants' responses when it came to the future of their children. Many of the Muslim women wanted to return to Egypt for the tradition and culture,

We are not really willing for him [my son] to get into the school [in Canada]. We have our reasons. We don't like schools here. It's not just from the conservative perspective. Its, I don't know, from traditions. And the other thing is if he doesn't get into the school, it will be easy for him to go back to Egypt. It's just from the beginning, go to schools in Egypt, get used to the system – I know it's the worst system ever – still. I don't know, our parents raised us in Egypt and we were fine in the schools, although they were bad. It won't be easy for myself to raise my kids here. (Aisha)

I don't think leaving them in public school is an option. I don't know, for my daughter she's really stubborn one. Yeah, I'm gonna have really hard time with her, she's really influenced with her friends and everything. Sometimes I feel she's teenage already. She start questioning lots of stuff. ..They [our kids] are the reason we want to stay and the reason to go back. Schools there are very much more expensive than here and still they are not that good. Like, even if, although you may pay for 20 000 pounds a year, it doesn't get that good education that you wish or expect. Plus, of course, if the school is far from home, he will have to spend lots of time with the traffic. So, lots, lots of issues. When we think about going back, this is one of the biggest problem. But, yeah, still we can't stay here forever because of them. I don't know if we found a really good Islamic school which is convenient, I'll think about it. (Amani)

Despite the benefits of life in Canada, it is preferable to these women to raise a family in a Muslim country within a conservative society. In Canada, these women were not prepared for the type of questions their children ask (e.g. what is double dating? can I have a boyfriend?) and the level of rebellion commonly experienced when raising children in a Western society. As a result, despite their admission that Egypt has a lower standard of education, they wish to return to a country where raising their children is considered easier. This insight reveals an enforced

limitation for ideological, cultural, and ethical evolution and the breaking point that initiates the desire to return.

5.4.3 Single, Male Migrant vs. Family Migration

I was contacted by a Coptic Orthodox Egyptian male wishing to participate in my study and I must admit that my curiosity was piqued. Mena is single and has spent the last two years in Canada completing his Masters degree. He lives with two roommates. For the interview, Mena prepared *moussaka* the way he watched his grandmother make this dish but with a few modifications,

Well, my mother doesn't add green peppers or tomatoes. Maybe tomato paste, but not fresh tomatoes. So, I'm trying to experiment. I'm not doing something really mad, but I'll be experimenting. Usually when this is done without the ground beef, they add the pepper and the tomato. This is how I've seen it at least, and it tastes good. So, I'm trying to add some new stuff and see how it tastes. (Mena)

Having exhibited the attributes of a culinary adventurer, I asked Mena how or where he learned to cook. With parents working late hours, cooking began as a chore and slowly developed into something more,

But because me and my sister used to stay alone in the house for long time when we were little, so we used to experiment without our parents looking over us. Of course, they knew we were cooking. They didn't know we were experimenting. Yeah, I think it started with necessity then it grew up into a hobby. When you really like a dish and mom is back from work and doesn't have the effort to cook it and you've been craving for it for so long, then either you help her, encourage her to do this dish or you don't eat it! (Mena)

However, Mena was quick to point out the rarity of Egyptian men in the kitchen,

Like [to cook]? Like me? I don't know any males, no. But many here [in Canada] started cooking because they had the necessity, they had to cook. Just eating outside is not an easy thing to do and it's not always as tasty as you are used to. (Mena)

As the cooking session continued, it was clear that cooking was an enjoyable part of Mena's day and he looked forward to the opportunity to exert his creativity. He spoke about learning new recipes from the German and Polish friends he met at University. Now, since it is fall, Mena has decided to experiment with a new type of produce – pumpkin,

Umm, for example, currently, its Halloween season and everyone is buying a pumpkin. So, I bought one. I already did, one of my friend's wife helped me when, ah, cooking it. Yeah, it came out nice. We did it with béchamel, like puree and adding sweet béchamel for it and put it in the oven. And I like it. But, umm, I said, 'hey, why not buy another one?' So, I bought another one and I'm planning to do it as pudding, pumpkin pudding. I was looking for it [the recipe] right before you came, online. (Mena)

Although it is clear Mena has developed a taste for food not available in Egypt, time constraints associated with being a graduate student restrict his opportunity to experiment in the kitchen. As a result, he has limited cooking to a task that must be completed within half an hour each day,

I have everything already ready, all I have to do is maybe do some rice and that probably takes - for what – thirty minutes...For a while, the easiest thing to do [regularly for dinner] is to do some ground beef, add some tomato paste to it and keep them in the fridge. Every time I come back home, I boil some macaroni and put this on that and just eat it...Before, I had more passion, I have my kitchen, my tools, I can make whatever I like. At first, I had more time to cook, I'd said. So every weekend or two, I would cook something new – macaroni bil béchamel, mousska, or turkeys, chicken, beef. (Mena)

Despite his boredom at the repetitiveness of his meals, Mena must balance his role as a graduate student with his desire for traditional meals. As a result, traditional meals became a weekend treat and a way to combat the blandness during the week.

When I asked Mena if he missed his family, he mentioned how the local community helped to alleviate the distance from his family,

Yes, I love it here in Canada. I think I will miss the friends that I am having here. But, I'd say I am lucky because there is such a nice group here...Yes, I would say that the community I have here helps with missing my family. I don't think that I have this issue as normal people because I used to spend long times away from them. Because I had three years of military service. so, I was spending long times away from them. (Mena)

The mandatory military service in Egypt for the oldest son meant that Mena had spent three years away from his family before coming to Canada. Military experience can, therefore, mitigate the feeling of loneliness after migration by forcing a separation from one's family while living in Egypt.

Despite his father being a doctor, Mena did not consider the health aspect of food until he migrated to Canada,

Umm, I didn't use to think that [about healthiness] when I was in Egypt but, when I came here, because many of my friends – because, at first, I tend to go shopping with friends – and I seen them reading the nutrition labels and I would say my awareness for the healthiness of what I eat increased when I came here. Umm, I started avoiding fried stuff. I, ahh, try when I cook to avoid using much oil or grease. (Mena)

Being alone in Canada has brought its challenges in living a healthy lifestyle. Mena mentions how there was no one here to say “‘you have eaten too much of that’ or ‘you should change your diet’”. In Egypt, his mother would comment on his eating habits but in Canada it was up to his own self-control to govern his food intake. As a result, Mena began eating more chocolate and soda in Canada because it was more affordable and available.

Coming into this interview, I was very curious about Mena's thoughts about his role in the kitchen after getting married. When I asked him about this, he responded,

Well, it depends on the circumstances then [when I am married]. I'm not sure I'll be that much into cooking then or not. But I'm sure, at least, once a week or once a month I would like to cook...Well, I'm not married yet but what I believe that,

*you know, it's a good thing to help in the kitchen. Afterall, it's a life of sharing.
So, it's good to share tasks too. (Mena)*

Despite his passion for cooking, Mena anticipates cooking infrequently once he is married and settling into a more conventional gender role in his marriage. Mena jokingly mentioned that his friends tease him that he will have a difficult time because “your wife will have trouble getting to your standards because you cook good and it usually takes awhile for people to learn” (Mena). As he laughs about this comment, he made it clear that if he doesn't have time to cook, he will not be picky about what is offered to him!

One male participant can be very informative to an exploratory study of Egyptian migrants within the Region of Waterloo, both in triangulating data captured from the women in my study (especially with regard to gender roles) as well as to better understand the male perspective. Mena mentioned he did not know any other males that cooked, a fact that corroborates the information gathered from the women in my study about breaking gender roles in Canada as males began to participate in domestic duties, something they were not accustomed to in Egypt. Mena's childhood circumstances with busy working parents shed light on how an Egyptian boy may obtain traditional culinary skills. Interestingly, despite his passion for cooking, Mena mentioned that he would expect to cook significantly less when he got married and take on a more traditional gender role in his marriage.

When understanding how Egyptian migrant women discipline their bodies, it was noted that a system of checks and balances was created where ready-made items and shortcuts that affected the authenticity of taste was acceptable in order to establish manageable domestic routines. Mena describes similar time management strategies for cooking as he balances being a graduate student with his desire to eat traditional meals. Limiting his time in the kitchen and

occasionally cooking Egyptian dishes on the weekend was Mena's strategy to maintain a manageable domestic routine while allowing him to enjoying the visceral connection to the homeland.

The women in my study noted that they learned about healthy eating during their time in Canada. Mena also described how he learned to read nutritional labels after migration. Nevertheless, his diet changed to include more unhealthy foods such as chocolate and soda citing he had difficulty controlling his intake without a motherly figure telling him, "That's enough!" (Mena). This supports the findings that most of the Egyptian women in my study were the family members who instigated a change toward healthy eating.

Despite disciplining his body to perform traditional female roles and produce manageable daily routines and the evolution of his body with new visceral experiences in Canada, paralleling the women in this study, Mena still expects to assume a patriarchal household that is typical in Egypt once he is married. This expectation speaks volumes to the impact of migrating as a family unit versus migrating as a single individual. This supports Hondagneu-Sotelo's findings that it is the tensions within a household that ultimate produces egalitarian positions upon migration. The women in this study struggled to negotiate and breakdown gender roles in order to create a manageable routine and a comfortable environment in Canada. Mena, as a single male migrant, does not perceive a need to share in domestic duties despite living through these women's challenge with balancing domesticity with other roles in their life. Perhaps his perspective would differ had he migrated to Canada with his wife – it is difficult to consider such a complex scenario without interviewing more men in this same situation.

A significant challenge of this visceral approach is identifying more men to interview because most Egyptian males simply do not cook. The women I interviewed made this point and Mena, himself, pointed out that he did not know any other males that cook. However, I believe that an important future direction of this study would be to include more men and build on the themes presented in this section.

5.5 Understanding the Evolution of the Body within the Host Country

Having settled in the diverse, multicultural area of the Region of Waterloo, the migrant women in this study have the opportunity to interact with their local environment and unfamiliar visceral experiences. Through personal social interactions and through their children, these women are exposed to new tastes and traditions which they bring into the private space of their own kitchen. This exposure imprints itself on these women's bodies as they realize that their tastes have changed and they no longer fully identify with their Egyptian peers when they visit 'back home'.

The affective response to strangeness is a question of individual attitude towards something new or different. In the previous chapter, we examined how Elizabeth embraced migration as a hopeful endeavor for the benefit of her children. In this chapter, we see how one's approach to food preparation and consumption, whether a culinary adventurer or a determined traditionalist, can impact the early process of place-making in the host country. Determined traditionalists found they had to overcome their initial fear and inhibitions to fully engage with their local environment whereas culinary adventurers were able to adapt more quickly and eat themselves into a new *sense of place* upon arrival to Canada.

In responding to Cooke's call for migration scholars to focus on the family unit (Cooke, 2008), I observed that moving from a collectivist to an individualist society strengthens the nuclear family in order to feel a sense of belonging to a family unit that was lost upon migration to Canada. Alongside this strengthening is an evolution of family dynamics to a more egalitarian position between sexes in domestic duties and decision-making. The issue of raising children in Canada was confounded by religious background. Most of the Muslim women in my study wanted to return to Egypt for the ease of raising children in a conservative society whereas the Christian women wished to stay in Canada to give their children a better future. The Muslim women's response to Canada's liberal culture reveals a conscious boundary imposed on the evolution of their ideals and this resistance reinforces the desire to return to Egypt.

Through Grosz' reconceptualization of nature and culture, we have seen how the body can be changed and evolve within the host country as new cultural experiences can challenge an individual's visceral and ideological past affecting their future decisions and lifestyle. Through investigating the affective response of comfort and place-making, understanding how the body is disciplined to adapt old routines into new manageable ones, and examining how the body evolves through new cultural experiences, we begin to form a holistic impression of the personal cultural experience of transnationalism. Essentially, a hybrid identity is created at the intersect between host and home country where a sense of comfort is achieved in the migrant's new environment.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Methodology

6.1 Introduction

Understanding eating rituals as meaningful and meaning-making prompts consideration of how women who prepare food come to know and experience themselves as knowers through their participation in these rituals. Acts of making food, performed in the spaces of kitchens, reveal a sense of owning and embodying knowledge attained through hands-on experience. (Mathee, 2004:438)

This quote is a succinct description of the premise of my research. Food is significant on many levels: its vital importance to survival, its impression on the tongue, its role in cultural and religious traditions to name only a few examples. When interviewing immigrant women in New Zealand, Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) noted that although these women enjoy many aspects of their new lives, they nonetheless, “miss the tastes and aromas of home and so attempt to recreate them...in their ‘new home’.” (340). The consumption of food is powerful and can be a means of situating one’s self in a new place and creating a *sense of place* – at a gut level. Focusing on ‘being in’ the kitchen rather than being asked to think about the kitchen abstractly engages both the mind and the body – in a term, *embodied subjectivity* (Brown et al., 2011, Holtzman, 2006). Understanding how migrants use visceral experience to adapt to their new environment after migration is both understudied in geographical literature and of great personal interest.

Elizabeth expresses why food is an ideal medium to understand the Egyptian migrant experience,

When you think about it, food for Egyptian is the only source of joy. Because we [middle class Egyptians] cannot afford to go on expensive trips. We don’t have these beautiful nature. We don’t have these beautiful parks. So, for us, its only food that makes you feel good or, at least, enjoy the taste. That’s why they do it. (Elizabeth)

The importance of food permeates various aspects of life for the Egyptian migrant women interviewed. Reading bodily imprints of visceral experiences in Canada helps tell the story of migration, transition, and place-making for these migrants. Although Egypt will always be considered ‘home’, the route to Canada can lead to new roots through familiarity with locality and lifestyle and establishing a sense of bodily comfort.

Examining migration through the embodied experience of food is a very informative approach. Using the body as an instrument of research allows access to stories that may not be at the conscious forefront of the mind during stated accounts. When asked ‘where is home to you?’ my participants gave the knee-jerk response ‘Egypt’. Identifying roots of origin as ‘home’ is common among migrants. However, if one reads the stories of their bodies, it is realized that the route to Canada has led to many adaptations and reformation of identity and routine, even to the point where these individuals’ bodies have slowly become ill-accustomed to their country of origin. As one of my participants explains,

Maybe I also changed. I could not handle the summer [in Egypt]. I was super fine with the summer before. I don’t think that the weather changed in Egypt that much. I was fine. The one time we went with [my son], I was dying as if I am not Egyptian like those people. (Helen)

This is a clear example of the imprints of embodied experience that can uncover levels of consciousness and unconsciousness not easily accessed through stated accounts.

This chapter will cover the successes and challenges in the visceral interview approach utilized in this study. First, I will discuss my positionality in this research as an unencultured insider and the importance of maintaining a field journal in the development of this method. Second, the challenges in implementing this methodology will be examined including the

difficulty in obtaining male participants for this study. Third, the process of *theoretical saturation* and the variation in participant responsiveness and interview length will be addressed.

6.2 Unencultured Insider

Establishing positionality is necessary to ensure what Shenton (2004) refers to as the ‘trustworthiness’ of qualitative research data. My family origin is Egyptian and I am familiar (peripherally) with the culture, food, traditions, and language. These are all factors that build strong rapport with my participants. Yet, I am somewhat removed – I married a non-Egyptian and have little interaction with the Egyptian community – and I approach this research with a level of naivety that is ideal for grounded theory work. My position seems to encourage my participants to take on the natural role of teaching me like they would their daughter, sister or friend,

[Hala] told me you are Egyptian and I said ‘very good’. She said you can talk to her, she’ll ask you and you can ask her... Actually, because you know some information about the food, that’s why it is easy for me and you can understand me so quick. Maybe some people Canadian they come here and ask ‘how you do this?’, ‘how many spoons?’. But really it is good you come. (Fatima)

I thought the interview would be difficult than this but no. I didn’t feel anything. I felt like I am talking with my sister. I didn’t feel like I was in an interview or something. No, no, no, honestly, I didn’t feel anything. (Sarah)

Essentially I am what Spradley refers to as an “unencultured ethnographer” with the benefits of being somewhat of an insider (1979: 50).

By interviewing participants in a private space, such as their own kitchens, and observing their activities as they perform the natural task of cooking, I take on the role of an ethnographer. I can relate to Spradley’s description of an ethnographer’s role:

I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand? (1979:34)

My field journal has thus been of utmost importance in capturing non-verbal cues and general observations which add to the information collected during the interviews. In addition, my journal is a place where I can scribble thoughts, feelings, memories, further questions, and revelations as they emerge, regardless of their possible relevance. Through this reflexive commentary, I noted that one participant's daughter, who was trying to help in the kitchen, shyly asked her mother if she could offer me tea as is customary in Egypt. The daughter's role was later corroborated in the interview when the participant acknowledged "cooking is our [women's] role...I find my daughter has a motivation to learn more than my son. Maybe because she saw me as the same gender." (Hala) I also noted during the interview that the children were not keen on eating traditional food. Alternate food was offered to one 9-year old boy who would have otherwise not eaten. Another participant's son in his late-teens left the house and bought McDonald's instead of sharing in our meal. These observations would not have been captured in the interview transcriptions.

It was clear during my first few interviews, through both my field notes and audio recordings, that I often offered verbal cues to indicate that I was engaged in the participant's story which I found had the potential to disrupt my participant's current thought. This was especially the case for my participants less familiar with the English language. Therefore, I modified my interview technique to offer non-verbal cues. Additionally, while I tried to answer participant's questions about my life, family and background to build rapport and satisfy participant curiosity, I noted that it was easy to go off on tangents and stray from the purpose of

the interview. Therefore, I took steps to ensure a balance between establishing personal rapport and staying true to the purpose of the interview.

6.3 Methodology Challenges

While familiar with the language, my lack of fluency in Arabic had the potential to pose a problem for the interview aspect of this method. While it was initially challenging to engage participants who spoke primarily Arabic during the interview, I did find the language barrier became less of a hindrance over time as I was immersed in dialogue regularly. The more I spoke Arabic, learned new words from my participants, and translated interviews, the easier it was to communicate in the language. However, translating interviews from Arabic to English was very challenging at times as metaphors and cultural sayings were difficult to translate in meaningful ways. In some instances, I translated the meaning of these phrases and in other cases I left the words in Arabic. I believe my familiarity with Arabic and the Egyptian culture was an asset to this method for several reasons. First, there were many times I could easily translate a word for my participant so they would not lose their train of thought. Second, my participants did not feel uncomfortable or self-consciousness if they accidentally switched to Arabic in mid-sentence. Third, I did not need to bring along a translator who would be yet another stranger who may have complicated the researcher-participant dynamic.

A challenge to the visceral aspect of this method is that of my personal taste and bodily affective response. Cross-cultural studies have noted that disgust is not necessarily a voluntary response (Longhurst, Ho and Johnston, 2008) and, therefore, there was a possibility that I may perceive food offered as undesirable. Although this was never the case, I had to restrict my schedule to one interview per week because my body was not accustomed to eating such fatty

foods nor the amount of food consumed at one interview event. After almost every interview, I had a stomach ache that would last one to three days depending on what was served. During the last six interviews, I had to explain to my participants that I was pregnant in my first trimester and that I could not eat large quantities of food at one sitting. The women were very understanding and shared their own personal pregnancy stories regarding food avoidances. The biggest challenge at this time was the nausea associated with the smell of cooking which I had to overcome in order to continue my research. In this case, my body also became an instrument of research!

Religious seasons confounded the scheduling aspect of this method. For Muslim participants, Ramadan is filled with spiritual observance from sunrise to sunset followed by a frantic time of breaking fast with family and friends. No one wished to participate during this month. For Christian participants, fasts are practiced with a vegan diet. Fasts include every Wednesday and Friday as well as extended times before major church feasts (e.g. seasons of Advent and Lent). Only Helen invited me during the fasting season but she commented that she would have rather served me a non-fasting meal,

I wanted to make quails with buckwheat or fraeak. But we're fasting so I'm not going to do that. That's my favourite dish. (Helen)

This limiting schedule made arranging interviews challenging at times.

Although I used snowball sampling to connect with my participants, I did not personally know them and so I implemented a system to ensure my personal safety. I always told two different individuals about my whereabouts. I contacted them every two hours and when I completed the interviews. The one male participant I interviewed (which I will discuss in the following section) was single and lived with roommates. Therefore, I brought my husband along

for this session. Being a lone female researcher was a significant concern associated with this method.

6.4 Discussing Theoretical Saturation

As discussed in Chapter Two, *theoretical saturation* is a fundamental characteristic of grounded theory. Throughout this method, I actively searched for negative cases which contested emerging themes. Theoretical saturation was achieved when additional data failed to yield new insights or themes and no new falsifications arose (Bowen, 2008). One negative case involved Mariam and her knowledge of non-traditional produce such as avocados and mushrooms while she lived in Egypt. When I probed about this knowledge further, it became evident that she was exposed to these food items because she lived in a tourist driven district of Cairo called Ma'adi. A few other participants I spoke to mentioned that non-traditional types of food exist in Cairo but it was all a matter of travel to find it. When I worked in Egypt, I lived in an area called Heliopolis and that is where many of the teachers at the American International School lived as well. The grocery store nearby had an eclectic mix of foods to cater to both global and local tastes. Catherine spoke about having sushi a few times while in Egypt, while Helen spoke about the strangeness of seeing and eating sushi for the first time in Canada. Therefore, exposure to non-traditional foods in Egypt seemed to be a product of residential location in Egypt as well as one's openness to search, explore and try new things.

Most of the women in this study mentioned that their husbands did not have any skills in the kitchen. There were, however, a few exceptions. Sarah's husband tended to contribute to cooking when he could not eat what Sarah made for the family because of health reasons. He is comfortable in the kitchen because he came to study in Canada when he was single and,

therefore, learned to cook out of necessity. He occasionally cooked for the entire family mainly when Sarah was working long hours. Sarah felt the stress that put on her husband and family and ultimately decided that it was not worth the money she was making and so she quit her job. Aisha's husband also came to Canada alone as a student and learned some basic cooking skills. Now that they are married, he too rarely cooks anymore and offers simple dishes when Aisha is sick or was overwhelmed with their newborn. This is consistent with Mena's statement that he expects his wife to do most of the cooking once he is married despite his skill and enjoyment of cooking. These are some of the examples of the negative cases uncovered, the rationale to understanding these cases, and the resulting conclusion of theoretical saturation.

6.5 Concluding Remarks on the Visceral Approach

It is clear to me in the manner of conversation, the length of time I was invited to stay, and the warm embraces I received upon leaving that I built a positive rapport with the women I interviewed. The deep intimacies shared with each dialogue made it known that I was perceived as a non-judgmental observer and even as a dear acquaintance to some. I, too, had to be candid and share my own personal experiences which left me feeling vulnerable and, at times, emotionally drained. However, it would be hypocritical if I did not reveal myself in the same ways my participants revealed themselves to me which created a bond between myself and my participants. I still connect with some of my participants through social media.

It should be noted, however, there was some variation in participant responsiveness and interview length. The most obvious sign of comfort during the interview was whether the Muslim women wore their hijab while I was present. The first few Muslim participants wore their hijab while the others following did not. This change in behaviour is likely the result of

information about me and my project being shared within the community. As mentioned above, Fatima felt comfortable with me once Hala (my first Muslim participant) told her about me and my project. Decreased responsiveness and shorter interview length occurred most often due to prior commitments. Aisha had to reschedule a number of times due to school work, volunteer commitments, and medical appointments. We finally arranged a time to meet but she only had two and a half hours before an appointment. Amani was able to meet me after class but for only two hours before she had to pick up her daughter from daycare. On the other hand, several women scheduled an interview and mentioned they could only meet for a few hours and we ended up talking even after their kids fell asleep! Mariam was the only participant who had a shorter interview time without prior commitment. I believe this is in part due to her introverted personality and because her adult daughter was present which may have censored her dialogue somewhat.

Even if the women seemed tentative at the beginning of the interview, all but one of the women shared very personal stories about themselves. A number of women told me about their issues during pregnancy and how they are currently having issues conceiving. All the women either alluded to or spoke directly about their frustrations with their husbands, children and the Egyptian culture in general. For example, Fatima was comfortable telling me, “You will get in more trouble if you marry an Egyptian man because his mind, doesn’t matter Muslim or Christian, they are same culture.” Hanan was able to open up to me about her difficult marriage and the hardships of being a divorced woman in Egypt. All these shared intimacies indicate that my participants felt comfortable and able to divulge freely about their personal experience of transnationalism.

Although traditional interview methods may take place in natural settings, such as the migrant kitchen, the traditional approach is one of a researcher interacting with a subject under study by asking questions of interest. The results are largely influenced by the interview questions. On the other hand, ethnographic research can be described as an in-depth study involving participant observation over a lengthy period of time to fully grasp a specific group's cultural, political, and social systems (Winchester, 2005). Participant observation in this case can be variable, ranging from the passive observer to an active participant, allowing "the researcher to be, at least in part, simultaneously 'outsider' and 'insider', although differences in social status and background are hard to overcome." (Winchester, 2005: 9).

As Longhurst, Ho and Johnston (2008) eloquently state, "Bodies produce space and knowledge, and space and knowledge produces bodies. Being and knowing cannot be easily separated" (208). Through my status as an unencultured ethnographer who was perceived as an insider, I was able to build rapport and create a research atmosphere that allowed my participants to express themselves with ease and comfort. With the flexibility of using their first language and relying on mutual understanding of Egyptian cultural and societal norms, my participants were free to delve into personal meanings, connections and experiences without hindrance.

The visceral approach used in this study draws on the performative act and sensual experiences of cooking and consuming traditional ethnic foods. As an active participant in the research, I am invited into the migrant house where I interact with family and friends and together we create visceral experiences which evoke vivid details in response to prompting questions and natural conversation regarding migration to Canada. This approach allows the researcher to engage and understand the phenomenology of daily life, producing ethnographic data within the period of time of a traditional interview.

This sense of ease and familiarity with me, as the researcher, combined with the evocation accompanying the visceral experience of the interview, demonstrates the level of richness within the data attainable using this type of approach. Given the comfort with the length of the interview process, the breadth and depth of the experiences covered and the details stirred up by the sensual experiences of preparing and consuming food within the private space of the migrant kitchen, I would argue that using the visceral realm accessed knowledge, experiences, sensations and moods that would not have been obtained through the traditional interview process. Thus, this study adds further support to Gielis' (2011) argument for the use of the migrant house as a site for ethnographic study in migration research.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Reflection

7.1 Reflections on the Visceral Approach

Although eating can be analyzed metaphorically, there is a beauty in the simplicity of its literalness. For example, the power structure of elderly widows in a small Australian town can be defined by who makes the best scones (Walker-Birckhead, 1985). In this study, it is clear that talented cooks like Fatima become a mother figure for new migrants who are not as skilled in Egyptian culinary arts and find themselves alone in a new country without their mother to teach them, “People who new learn, like [my friend] – she write everything. She make a cookbook. I think she write my name in it too. ‘Fatima’s kofta’” (Fatima). Thus a teacher-student relationship is created within the Egyptian migrant community through food.

Probyn acknowledges Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) argument that our identity can be linked to our taste but that eating can also instigate change,

In the end, it is the ways in which eating reveals us at our most vulnerable, hungry, solitary and needy, as it simultaneously brings us together in permutations of commensality. As Bourdieu so famously argues, we are our tastes, yet, contra Bourdieu, eating demonstrates our taste for change. (Probyn 2000:9).

It is this ‘taste for change’ that makes food and the body informative tools of research. For example, the migrant women interviewed in this study demonstrate the evolution of their bodies as they adapt to living in Canada through new taste experiences and obtaining health information. In the most basic sense, food is ingested, digested, and excreted and each time this process occurs our bodies are affected.

7.2 Future Steps

This study of Egyptian migrants settling in Canada is exploratory in nature and is intended to initiate a conversation about the personal experience of transnationalism and the value of the body as an instrument of research. While there was a significant richness of data presented here, I will propose some future steps that would further develop the emergent themes as well as the methodology utilized to gather the data.

The male perspective described in this study is the product of one male participant. It is difficult to analyze emerging themes and triangulate the data based on only one participant. Therefore to obtain a more holistic picture of the Egyptian male's personal experience of transnationalism, it is vital to find more Egyptian men to participate in this study. Based on the discursive accounts of both the man and the women I interviewed, finding Egyptian men who regularly participate in preparing meals will be a challenge.

Another step to develop the richness of data as well as data triangulation would be to invite all participants of this study to come together and share a meal to discuss the themes presented. This meeting would be an open discussion that would be audio recorded. The data collected in this focus group setting would be added to the analysis presented here. At this gathering, I would cook a traditional Egyptian meal for all my participants based on what I learned from our interviews together. I believe this would be most significant to my participants who taught me about cooking Egyptian food during our time together.

Research on migration shows that the longer migrants live in their host country, the stronger their network, the surer their routine, and the more comfort they felt in exploring new experiences (Butcher, 2010; Kivisto, 2001). In order to further the longitudinal capacity of the information gathered in this study, I propose a two-step process. The first step would be to

interview immigrants who have settled in Canada for ten to twenty years and compare these findings with the themes that emerged in this study. The comparison between newer and more established immigrants will highlight some of the changes in body, affect, comfort and *sense of place* that develops over time in Canada. The second step would be to interview the migrants in this study five years later and examine how they have adapted over time.

7.3 Conclusions

The 1980's marked a turn in human geography as it became clear that a highly quantitative approach to the discipline did not capture all the nuances and intricacies of the migrant experience. Since then, there has been a trend toward using a feminist approach to migration studies in order to understand migrant identities and subjectivities, particularly through ethnography, in-depth interviews, biographical information and participant observation (Gilmartin, 2008). Using these tools, researchers from a variety of disciplines began to dissect the migrant experience, although most have focused on the social (re)production of identity and belonging over a broad range of scales from citizenship to the home.

Ethnic consumerism is one scale thoroughly researched by migration scholars. Studying Chinese immigrants in Toronto, Wang and Lo (2007) discovered that strong ethnic identity led consumers to travel to more distant Chinese stores instead of conveniently located mainstream options. The distance travelled indicates that economic factors alone cannot explain consumer behaviour. In Germany, customers of smaller, ethnic stores routinely returned despite higher prices because of perceived freshness, language of service and the social setting which invoked a sense of nostalgia for their country of origin or a lost era (Everts, 2010). Israeli Arabs as an ethnic minority group in Israel tend to shop at ethnic food outlets, although mainstream grocery

stores meet their food product needs (Goldman and Hino, 2005). These studies are informative, but often they do not delve into the migrant's deeper, personal motivations of their behaviour. Memories of home, cultural and social interactions, as well as economic factors tend to be examined while the senses, the body and affective response are often overlooked.

There is a growing interest across the humanities and social sciences in studying how migrants cope with the transnational leap to a new country. This exploratory study of Egyptian migrants in Canada has identified several mechanisms that migrants use to establish a *sense of place* in their host country, most notably the affective response of comfort weaving a thread through many of the themes that emerged from the data. Evidence presented in this paper supports Appadurai's co-constitutive model which links both locality and subjectivity, indicating a *sense of place* is critical for identity re-formation in a new country. In the context of migration, locality is not limited to the individual, nor the individual's immediate neighbourhood, community, and social network. Scales as far-reaching as the nation play a part in developing a migrant's sense of identity, comfort, and home in a host country. Therefore, when answering the research question, "what role does the body's affective response of (dis)comfort play for Middle Eastern migrant women attempting to create a *sense of place* in Western countries?", the answer must be grounded in a multi-scalar approach.

At the national level, policies, social norms, and religion can all have a profound impact on an Egyptian migrant attempting to re-situate place in a new country. The expectation for conformity places pressure on migrants to 'fit in' which can conflict with personal and religious beliefs, resulting in the feeling of being out of place. Middle Eastern migrants' bodies have become a sign of disgust and hate as a result of the events of 9/11. This stigma perpetuates the boundary between self and other, a constant reminder that one is an alien in one's new country.

Deleuze and Guattari's intensities and flows model examines body production as a way of 'becoming' through interactions at a local level, or what has direct contact with the body (Grosz, 1994). The migrant transition is expressed through the intensity and flows of one's own body but also that of the specific locality. Locality is about the physical landscape as well as social networks such as religious community and neighbourhood. These networks are important to alleviate longing for family, to help establish individual daily customs, and become familiar with the local system. A migrant's community plays a role in mediating some of the discomforts that arise at the national level by fostering a place where one feels ontological security, or a trust in one's surroundings (Noble, 2005), and encouraging the development of comfortable daily practice to re-situate place after migration.

Transnational familial relations are critical to feeling a sense of belonging and depict home, not as a fixed location, but as a localised reiteration of social processes and relationships with humans and non-humans. (Blunt and Varley, 2004; Lam and Yeoh, 2004, Ralph and Staeheli, 2011). This is a rather interesting aspect of the transmigration experience as transnational family ties had the potential to both positively and negatively affect *sense of place*. In a study of Chinese-Malaysian migrants, those migrants with family ties existing within their birthplace or childhood town in Malaysia had reinforced attachment to their country of origin which resulted in difficulty feeling 'at home' in Singapore where they immigrated (Lam and Yeoh, 2004). On the other hand, members of Lebanese diaspora globally cited maintaining constant communication with family or friends in Lebanon made them feel connected to their homeland while living abroad, thus fostering a positive *sense of place* in their host country (Abdelhady, 2008). In this study, the migration from the Egyptian collectivist to the Canadian individualist society resulted in the embodied sense of freedom from social obligations and,

consequently, produced stronger bonds within the nuclear family unit in order to feel a sense of belonging lost upon migration to Canada. Additionally, the women and their husbands developed a more egalitarian position and moved toward a joint participation in domestic duties and household decision-making. What people see, hear and taste can evolve not only their affective response to visceral stimuli but also their ideologies and sense of self.

Affective response to change in landscapes and dislocation requires an assertion of belonging to the new locality which involves incorporating aspects of former spaces of comfort into the cultural space of the host locality (Butcher, 2010). By answering the research question, “In what ways does the visceral experience of food affect the transition to the host country and the subsequent place-making process?”, I access discursive accounts from migrants which reveal how bodies are disciplined after migration to achieve a sense of comfort in their host country. Establishing practical routines to negotiate a woman’s multiple responsibilities, breaking traditional gender roles, and creating authentic taste experiences are some of the ways the migrants in this study felt ‘at home’ in Canada. Many of the participants mentioned medical conditions that warranted an adjustment to food practices and disciplining the body through self-control. Despite altering the visceral experience of authentic food for time-management and health reasons, the lack of some desired authentic tastes in Canada heightened the longing for the homeland and negatively impeded place-making.

An individual’s attitude toward migration and one’s new country can be crucial to feeling at ease. Being fearful of new and strange experiences can result in the body shrinking and restricted mobility (Ahmed, 2004). Having an attitude of hope and seeing the potential for desire and joy offers a positive outlook on new experiences that facilitates situating identity and place in a new country in the face of adversity. Whether the women I interviewed began with the

attitude of a culinary adventurer (open to new foods) when it came to cooking or a determined traditionalist (prefer to eat familiar foods), each participant described eventually trying new foods and embodying new experiences, thus bridging the gap between the body and the local environment. Migrant bodies evolve over time in the host country through a subsequent change in taste through these new experiences and family influences such as children's exposure through daycare/school. Essentially, a hybrid identity is created at the intersect between host and home country where a sense of comfort is achieved within the migrant's new locality.

As length of stay in Canada increases, the distance between these migrants and their environment progressively diminished for a number of reasons. Over time, migrants allowed themselves to ingest food from their local surroundings and enjoy their host country. The longer migrants lived in Canada, the stronger their local network became (*e.g.* religious community, neighbourhood, etc) strengthening their sense of belonging.

Other than length of time in Canada, the only other factor that influenced the personal experience of transnationalism within my participant sample was religion. Muslim women wanted to return to Egypt in order to raise their children in a conservative society whereas Christian women preferred to stay in Canada to give their children the opportunity for a better future. Interestingly, whether a migrant expected to return to Egypt or remain in Canada did not affect place-making strategies in the host country. No matter the settlement situation, migrant's strived to make Canada a place of comfort for whatever the expected duration.

In creating a research environment within the migrant kitchen, we consider the research question, "Does implementing a visceral approach within the single-site of the migrant kitchen obtain information, experiences, sensations and moods otherwise not readily accessed through

the traditional interview process?” The visceral realm was a critical part of the interview process which evoked thoughts, memories and experiences that may not otherwise be ‘at the tip of the tongue’, so to speak.

This concluding overview may give the impression that place-making can be packaged into clear-cut, thematic categories. Do not be fooled by simplified definitions and isolated examples. This is how researchers try to put order to the messy, mobile, boundary-less, confusing moving target that is home. From the national view of migrants and Middle Eastern bodies, to established local networks, to individual management of dislocation, it is clear from the evidence presented that a complicated network of multi-scalar influences impacts affect, comfort, body and *sense of place* for Egyptian migrant women settling in a Western country. Although this study examines many scales, the intimacy and personal are not only inhabitants of the private, domestic sphere but are contextual in nature taking on specific social, cultural and political meanings or, in a single term, the *global intimate*. This framework challenges the global/local dualism and rather than viewing the global as a “god’s-eye view” of the world (Pratt and Rosner, 2006:17) and the intimate as the tactile experience, the *global intimate* views bodies and objects “not as an opposite to the global but as its corrective, its supplement, or its undoing.” (Pratt and Rosner, 2006:17). Here we see the significance in studying personal experiences of transnationalism.

It is important to remember that “home is no longer a dwelling, but the untold story of life being lived.” (Berger, 1984:64). It is in the power of the storyteller to share these lived experiences in ways that are truly representative of the individuals who graciously welcome us into their lives in order to better understand something they often cannot describe in words for us – where is home?

APPENDIX

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY - INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Project: Transitioning Bodies - Migrant Tales of the Visceral and the Physiological

Researcher: Mary Neil, MA Candidate, Laurier

Advisor: Dr. Bob Sharpe, Laurier, bsharpe@wlu.ca / (519) 884-0710 ext. 2684

You are invited to participate in a research study, which is for my masters degree in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University.

The purpose of this study is to understand how immigrants use the visceral (sensual) experience of preparing and consuming food to make connections between their home country and their new home. I will be focusing on the Egyptian community to better understand their immigration experience. Additionally, I will ask questions regarding changes in food habits and perceptions as a result of moving to the Region of Waterloo. I am looking to understand how you use food to help make you feel at home in this Region and how immigrating has changed your diet.

INFORMATION

Participating in this study involves preparing a traditional meal of your choice in your kitchen and sharing this meal with me. During this time together, I am interested in hearing about what food means to you and how that has affected your life here in the Region of Waterloo. Some of the things you could talk about include the reason you chose this meal, where you find your ingredients to cook with, what you think about when you are preparing your meals.

1. The interview will begin with a description of my research and a chance for you to ask questions, sign consent forms, and receive copies of my research information sheets.
2. I will then ask a few demographic and contextual questions, such as: when did you come to Canada?; why did you come?; who do you live with?; where are your family?; what did you bring with you when you came?
3. Moving into the kitchen, I will ask you to describe the meal they are preparing and why you selected this meal. Please feel free to speak freely about whatever comes to mind during this time.
4. During the meal or after, I will ask you questions to understand how your food habits and perceptions have changed since you moved to Canada.

Please note that due to the interactive nature of this study, I will digitally recording the sessions as a record of the interview. I anticipate that the interview will likely take between two and four hours to complete.

There will likely be ten (10) individuals participating in this research.

RISKS

This is a minor risk that you may recall a negative experience when participating in this interview. Should this occur, I am willing to talk things out with you. If you experience long-lasting distress, please connect with Mosaic Counselling and Family Services at (519) 743-6333.

BENEFITS

The lack of literature regarding the experience of Arab immigrant women in North America and the transnational experience of immigrants, in general, are reasons I am conducting this study. My hope is to publish and present my findings to inform immigration and health policy with respect to immigrants to the Region of Waterloo in order to ease the transition to their new home.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will be using direct quotes from the interview in publications and presentations. To protect the identity of the participants, I will use a pseudonym in place of your real name any quotes used from your interview in publications and presentations. I will keep the consent forms with your name in a separate place and locked. You will be given the opportunity to review quotes from your interview that I will be using before publication.

participant's initials

COMPENSATION

In appreciation for your time and participation, you will receive a \$30 gift card to a local grocery store to compensate for the expense of offering the meal for this study.

participant's initials

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mary Neil, at Wilfrid Laurier University by telephone (519) 884-0710 ext. 3507 or by email mneil@wlu.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 5225 or rbasso@wlu.ca

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

participant's initials

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The findings from this research may be presented at research conferences and published in scholarly journals. The data from this study will be used for my Masters thesis. I will provide all participants with a summary report of my findings.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Name (please print) _____

Participant's signature _____

Date _____

Investigator's signature _____

Date _____

Interview Guide

Contextual Questions:

When did you come to Canada? Kitchener-Waterloo?

Why did you decide to immigrate?

Why do you currently live with?

Where is the rest of your family that is not in Canada?

What did you bring with you when you came?

Are you currently working? If so, what are you doing?

Where did you live in Egypt?

What dish are you preparing today? Are you willing to share the recipe?

Prompting Questions:

Do you enjoy cooking?

Who taught you how to cook Egyptian food?

Can you find the ingredients to cook Egyptian food? Do you find the ingredients authentic?

Why did you pick this meal?

Where is “home” to you?

Change in Diet Questions:

Has the way you eat changed since moving to Canada?

Do you find you have to balance between Egyptian and Canadian cooking?

Do you feel you eat healthier here or in Egypt?

How do you feel about fasting here?

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