

**FROM RESERVES TO CITIES (AND BACK): THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
RESERVES IN REGISTERED INDIAN WOMEN'S MIGRATION**

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By

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ABSTRACT

The migration of Registered Indian people to and from their reserves has attracted much scholarly attention over the decades. A significant theme in early literature suggested Indian people migrated back and forth between their rural homes and urban destinations because they could not cope with life in the city and their movement in between the two places was seen by some as urban failure. To some extent Indian peoples' authenticity was challenged if they chose city life. In later years scholarly literature began to explore the notions that many Indian people were quite capable of succeeding as urban dwellers, but there was still no rich understanding of migration patterns. Some scholars cautioned other scholars not to misinterpret federal statistics that lack in qualitative detail which may result in misinformed policy and program initiatives. There was a call for more qualitative studies to explain the statistics and present a better understanding of Indian migration patterns and hence population changes in cities and on reserves. Additionally, there was sufficient evidence that more Indian women were migrating to cities than Indian men, a phenomenon that required some attention.

Interviewing Registered Indian women about their migrating experiences was an attempt to provide additional detail and understanding of the migration patterns between rural origins and urban destinations. The interviewees in this study clearly revealed that the circular migration of Registered Indian people to and from reserves showed the significance a particular migrant has to their home reserve. This significance should not be understood only as an a reflection of inability to succeed in the city as many registered

Indian women return to their reserves with higher educations to work in their communities, only to leave again for further education. Some women leave their reserves to escape domestic problems, only to return to try to work things out with their partners. Many women end up leaving again. But economies, educations, domestic problems etc. are not the only influences on migration. The sanctity of the land and the many years of history that are symbolised by reserves are also factors of circular migration between reserves and cities.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Migration ¹ studies have become increasingly popular within academia since the Industrial Revolution. In the late nineteenth-century, Ravenstein, a German-born cartographer produced eleven laws of migration he derived from an analysis of census data (Boyle et al., 1998). Ravenstein's laws/hypotheses have since been the foundation for much of the research conducted on migration studies, and although he is credited with producing a foundation for migration research, researchers have since recognised that migration involves more than just distance and numbers of people. More current studies have given much consideration to qualitative studies that provide details at the individual and family level (Boyle et al., 1998). While migration studies have evolved considerably to include personal characteristics of migrants and potential migrants, they may not provide a useful framework for understanding the migration patterns of Registered Indian ² people between reserves and cities. This is partly because Registered Indians have

¹ Johnston (2000; p. 504) defines migration as “[a] permanent or semi-permanent change of residence by an individual or group of people. The distance traveled to make the move and the time spent at the new destination are determining factors defining *migration*”. Boyle et al. (1998; p. 35) says that it is impossible to define migration in a way that all researchers would agree upon, so therefore, common sense needs to be applied. Obviously, says Boyle et al. (1998; p. 34) those traveling to a destination for an extended summer vacation are not migrants. For the purpose of the proposed study, *migration* will refer to those who have moved and traveled from their origin to a destination place with the intention of remaining at the destination place for a period of time.

² Registered Indian people are registered under the Indian Act and are generally people of First Nations (North American Indian) descent. Many writers prefer the use of the term “First Nations” to “Registered Indians.” Because First Nations include individuals who do not have access to reserve residency, this thesis uses the more limited term “Registered Indian.”

unique geographies of rights and status, and reserves are unique kinds of places with a particular legal status and cultural meaning. Prout (2006; p. 21) pointed out that traditional migration models cannot adequately explain the spatial distribution and demographics of Aboriginal migration: “Firstly, they often privilege economic rationality [(i.e. pertaining to mainstream society, usually referring to career changes that provide higher incomes)] as the primary movement predictor... [and] [s]econdly, they exclude circulation (i.e. forms of movement that do not involve a permanent change in residence) or relegate it to a transitional status”. Prout is saying that traditional migration models favour economic rationality which mostly pertains to mainstream society, and it may not describe or fit with Aboriginal people. As well, Prout is arguing that circular migration is not sufficiently recognised as an important migration pattern of Aboriginal people and it should be.

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the significance of reserves in Registered Indian women’s decisions to migrate and leave their reserves for urban places. Theories about types of migration (for example; primary, return or circular migration) assume something about the nature of origins and destinations. These assumptions may not necessarily apply to the migration of Registered Indian people. Registered Indian migration patterns have been interpreted in different ways in the literature, some of which have cast Indian cultures as incompatible with city living; assuming that migrants must reject their own cultures for that of mainstream society in order to succeed off their reserves. The extent to which general migration patterns and theories apply to the situation of Registered Indians is unclear.

While Registered Indians have a high rate of circular migration (i.e. back and forth movement) between reserves and urban areas, there is minimal understanding as to why this is so. Cooke (1999) stated that economic models may not be suitable to explain Aboriginal migration, as a migrant's return home may have always been the intention regardless of economics. The gaps and unanswered questions in the literature clearly indicate that the role of reserves in making decisions to migrate is complex and often contradictory. The significance of reserves in Registered Indian women's migration is worthy of attention.

The available literature indicates that more Registered Indian women leave their reserves than Indian men, yet Indian women have received little scholarly attention regarding their migrating experiences. The *Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat* (1999) stresses that Aboriginal³ men and women have very different experiences as workers, parents, and members of their communities. Perhaps, as suggested in the literature, colonial powers initiated and facilitated the erosion of Indian women's roles in their reserve communities, and if so, it may be that reserves mean something different to males and females (Peters, 1998). The largely aggregate information available on Registered Indian people makes it difficult to understand their migration. While it is beyond the scope of this research to compare Indian men and women, the study will contribute to understanding the situation of Indian women and their migrating experiences.

Indian Affairs demographer, Mary Jane Norris (2003; p. 58) suggested that reserves are a very important aspect of Registered Indian migration. Not only are they unique to Registered Indians, but also the movement of Registered Indians that takes

³ The term *Aboriginal* refers to the Indigenous people of Canada; Registered and non-registered Indians (First Nations), Métis, and Inuit.

place between reserves and other places is unique. A consequence of European migration to North America was the eventual annexing of North American Indian lands. In what is now known as Canada, various treaties were negotiated between the Indian and non-Indian people, resulting in the creation of most (not all) Indian reserves. Historically, only Registered Indians were permitted to live on reserve, but in 1985 legislation was passed that gave bands control over membership. The Band Council governs band membership, but that does not include all Registered Indian people. Only those who have applied and have been accepted by the Band Council are considered band members. This thesis focuses on Registered Indian women who are band members. Band members living on the reserve are entitled to such provisions as free housing, tax-free employment, tax free merchandise, tax free tobacco, tax free fuel, free elementary and high school education, and other educational programs. Also, depending on the availability of band funding, a post-secondary student or potential student may be granted financial assistance for a post-secondary education off reserve.

Most of the First Nations people in Canada are Registered Indians and it is important to understand their migration. The 2006 Canadian census enumerated that 81% of the total First Nations population are Registered Indians (Norris and Clatworthy, 2009). Simply, of the 698,025 First Nations people only 133,000 are not Registered Indians. In contrast to common perceptions that reserves are being depopulated as Registered Indians move to the cities, census records show that reserve populations are growing consistently (Norris, 2000; 2003; Norris and Clatworthy, 2009). The analysis of origin and destination data from 1996 and 2001 censuses revealed that reserves are

experiencing net gains⁴ of Registered Indians through migration, which is a continuation of earlier trends (Norris, 2003; p. 62). For decades Indian reserves in Canada and urban places in Canada have been experiencing net gains of Indian people, while net losses have been experienced by rural (non-reserve) places. According to the 1996 census however, the net gains experienced by urban places had apparently stopped; in fact, other than the prairie city of Saskatoon, all western cities experienced net losses of Indian people through migration (Norris, 2003; p. 64). A preliminary analysis of 2001 Census data showed that it appeared the earlier migration patterns of Registered Indians were continuing with little or no change Norris (2003; p. 73).

I am a Caucasian Canadian woman with an honours undergraduate degree in Native Studies. While I have a very good knowledge base of the histories and current affairs of Canada's Aboriginal people I wanted to seek a deeper understanding about the meaning of reserves and to contextualize that understanding. I felt the best way to obtain that information was by doing field work through interviews. With my interest in Native Studies and my interest in Geography I chose to focus on the migration of Registered Indian women between their reserves and urban places with the anticipation that my participants, having left their home reserves, would be able to articulate what the migration process was like for them. My thesis is not representative of all Registered Indian women, only of the women I interviewed, but nonetheless their comments, concerns, and life stories may be suggestive of the experiences of other Indian women.

While I was reading about the migration patterns of Indian people in Canada my interest was sparked by the notion of circular migration; back and forth movements

⁴ Net migration/gains refers to the numerical difference between in and out migration. Reserves are experiencing growth through natural increase, but they are also experiencing growth through positive net migration.

between origins and destinations, and more specifically between reserves and urban places. There was scarce literature on this topic and I wanted to explore it further. Some of the questions I wanted insight on included the following; was a specific gender migrating more than another? Was circulation a common migration pattern among Indian people? Why were people repeatedly moving back and forth? How did they feel about their communities and reserves as a whole? Did the geographic location of reserves have any bearing on migration? Were the landscapes of reserves significant enough to draw people to and from? These questions along with the fact that there was little scholarly literature available on the migration of Aboriginal women (which include Registered Indian women) led me to my thesis. I wanted to make a contribution to the literature and to Indian women so their migrating experiences and patterns would be better understood in academia, in policy, in speculations of their futures, and in other potential movers. As Linda Alcoff said (1991; p. 29) “It is not *always* the case that when others unlike me speak for me I have ended up worse off, or that when we speak for others they end up worse off. Sometimes...we do need a messenger to advocate for our needs.”

The following chapters include; Chapter 2: Literature Review. This chapter discusses what literature is available on the migration of Registered Indian people and how main stream migration theories and models do not necessarily fit with the migration of Registered Indian people. Chapter 3: Methods. This chapter describes the methods used to guide the research process, as well as some of the difficulties encountered. Chapter 4: Leaving and Returning to the Reserve is the first analysis chapter that addresses the migrating experiences of the participants which provides insight about the significance of origin reserves. Keep in mind that a significance may be positive or

negative. Chapter 4 also includes some quantitative data accompanied by qualitative descriptions. Chapter 5: Significance of the Reserve which is the second analysis chapter provides a context for how participants described aspects of their home reserves which related to their communities and their migration away from those communities. Chapter 6: Conclusion, concludes with a review from each chapter and the conclusions for each of those chapters. As well, Chapter 6 addresses some of the challenges faced throughout the research project and discusses some ideas for further research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Migration from rural to urban areas is an international phenomenon. In the late 1800s over eighty percent of Canada's population lived in rural areas. Rural statistics vary depending on how "rural" is defined. Statistics Canada's Rural and Small Town Canada (RST) definition of rural includes all communities that have less than 10,000 residents (Beaujot and Kerr, 2004). According to the 2001 census statistics only 20% of Canada's population lived in rural areas (Beaujot and Kerr, 2004). The 2006 Canada Statistics stated that 19.8% of Canada's population lived in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2006). This means that over eighty percent of the total Canadian population lives in urban places.

In most countries there is a growth in the population of cities (Boyle et al., 1998). The United Nations projected, and correctly so, that by the year 2005 the world's urban populations would be the majority (Felmann et al., 1999; p. 395). While growing cities can be partially attributed to natural increase, migration from rural to urban places has also been a key contributor to urban growth. Whether individuals are seeking employment, higher wages, cleaner water, better health care, or housing accommodations, they all reflect the want and need for a better quality of life (Boyle et al., 1998; p.129). Urbanisation therefore, is typically seen as an attempt to enhance the quality of one's life regardless of where one lives or the economic state of a particular place.

Often urban and rural areas are depicted as polarized places; the countryside being seen as unexciting while the city and bright lights are perceived to be thrilling and entertaining. Viewed as a mark of civilization, cities are seen as places to express one's self in ways that are not possible in the "suffocating" countryside, which some believe hinders freedom and individualism and draws most people away from it rather than towards it (Boyle et al., 1998; p. 129; Short, 1991; p. 37). In contrast, cities are seen as a "...dense mesh of opportunity and of stimulus" with better prospects than the countryside (Robson, 1998; p. 56). Robinson, V., (1990) claimed quality of life considerations lure people from rural to urban places usually resulting in net population losses in rural areas.

Although the literature suggests that many migrants prefer urban to rural living it is not clear whether this research applies to all groups in society. Much of the available literature on migration and urbanisation focuses on the majority population. Robinson (1990) used the prairies of North America as an example to illustrate rural population losses, but it is unknown if Robinson considered the urban migration of Registered Indian people of North America's prairies in the research. The reserve status and unique circumstances of Registered Indian people sets them apart from any other cultural group.

The following sections summarize several bodies of literature that provide a background for studying Registered Indian women's migration from reserves to urban areas. The first section below describes the various models of migration (primary, return, and circular) which are typically associated with urbanisation. Counter-urbanisation, another migration pattern, (which is not the reverse of urbanisation) is also addressed. The second section addresses ways that Registered Indian migration to the city has been described and interpreted.

2.1 Types of Migration

The migration literature has emphasized three main migration patterns associated with urbanisation; *primary*, *return*, and *circular*. *Counter-urbanisation* is another migration pattern which refers to the movement of urban residents to places outside the city. According to Boyle et al. (1998; p. 35) counter-urbanisation is a selective migration experience whereby urban dwellers choose to leave the city for a life in the country, it is different from the return migration pattern of urbanisation. Primary migration is defined by Boyle et al. (1998; p. 35) as the first move a migrant makes from their origin to a specific destination. Return migration is defined as a type of migration that takes place when individuals move to a particular place, only to return to the place they once left behind (Boyle et al., 1998; p. 35). Circular migration, coined “circulation” by Zelinsky (1971) refers to multiple moves between two places. The following sections discuss each migration pattern/theory and evaluates whether these patterns can be applied to migrating Registered Indian people.

2.1.1 Primary Migration

The fact that the world is becoming primarily urban and rural places are apparently experiencing population losses indicates that urban growth cannot be attributed to natural increase alone. While primary migration can include migrants who move for the first time to various places (such as rural to rural or urban to urban) a large part of the literature pertaining to primary migration focuses on the migration that takes place between rural to urban places. This stands to reason as statistics reveal a staggering phenomenon of rural to urban migration. In fact “...rural to urban migration...is even more massive than international migrant flows” (Felman et al., 1999; p. 83).

Primary migration is largely seen to be occurring in young adult migrants between the ages of 18 and 29 (Cooke, 1999; p. 24), and although economic motives are dominant in this age group they do not represent the complete picture of primary migration (DeJong and Gardner, 1981; p. 43). Aside from migrating for improved employment opportunities, health care services, housing availability, social services, and politics, Shaw (1975) believes primary migration also interests young adults because they have more years to earn a living and more time to change their life-plans if so desired. Also, younger adults are more likely to relocate because they probably do not have a lot of assets, and probably fewer social/community ties than an older person who has lived in the community longer (Currie and Halli, 1989; p. 485). While these considerations seem to apply to most of the general population we have to acknowledge that they may not apply to all cultural groups. Registered Indians may access services more easily on reserves than in cities and this may affect whether or not they decide to move away permanently.

2.1.2 Return Migration

A large amount of the literature that addresses return migration focuses on people who move internationally seeking employment. There is however, substantial return migration that takes place within internal borders and it may or may not be premeditated (Boyle et al., 1998; p. 35). Unforeseen circumstances such as failure to find employment at the destination point may leave a person with no choice but to return to their place of origin. In contrast to this, premeditated moves such as retirement are also reasons for return migration (Boyle et al., 1998; Gmelch, 1983; Bogue, 1969). This of

course assumes that the migrant has the means by which to retire, most notably, financial security.

Macro-level studies (using aggregate statistics) generally relate low income and unemployment to return migration. Micro-level studies (of individuals and families) have found that return migrants often have varied reasons for returning to their origins. DaVanzo (1976; p. 21) found that although a large percentage of return migration occurs for non-economic reasons, return migrants tended to be seeking higher incomes. This is an indication that personal and economic reasons are a combination that often fuel return migration. Gmelch (1983; p. 51) found that the people who had left their homes in rural Newfoundland and Ireland returned to be with family and friends, but the main reason for returning was economic in nature. As well, Lee (1974) found that return migration was largely fueled by available economic opportunities. Lee (1974) suggested that places with poor economic opportunities, which experience net out-migration, usually experience low return migration as well.

While return migration research indicates there are a variety of non-economic reasons for this particular movement, these studies emphasize economic reasons. This raises questions about the suitability of models of return migration for explaining urban to reserve migration for Registered Indians. The depressed situation on most reserves suggests that there would be relatively few employment opportunities available for return migrants. Reserves are also important culturally, for many Registered Indians and those perspectives are not well addressed in the return migration literature.

2.1.3 Circular Migration

Although circular migration was characteristic of the late nineteenth century (Anderson, 1982) it is only recently that circular movements have been recognised as an important migration pattern (Boyle et al., 1998; p. 23). Zelinsky (1971; p. 228) described this type of movement as "... a great variety of movements, usually short-term repetitive or cyclical in character, but all having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long-standing change of residence". Geographers Boyle et al (1998; p. 33) explained that until recently, the importance of circular migration has largely gone unrecognised and should not be underestimated. They suggested that in some cases the value of connections is symbolised by circular migration that takes place between urban and rural places, "... [whereby] urban dwellers remain loyal to a rural home" (p. 134). Prout (2006; p. 23) explained that studies from Canada and Australia speak to the importance of Aboriginal circular migration and suggested that this movement should be significant in policy making decisions for Aboriginal peoples. Most of the research on Registered Indian migration patterns have been statistical, and as a result it is not clear whether their movement patterns are characterized by a lack of intention to move permanently, or whether they represent attempts to maintain connections with community and culture.

2.1.4 Counter-Urbanisation

Counter-urbanisation is discussed in the literature as "highly dependent" upon a lucrative job or some other means of secure income at the rural destination (Boyle, 1998; p. 143; Ilbery, 1998; p. 150), but Bolton and Chalky (1989; p. 249) found that reasons migrants choose to leave the city for the country are varied and plentiful and are not

necessarily dependent on a lucrative job. As well, scholars Boyle et al (1998; 146) suggested that counter-urbanisation is "...very much a white phenomenon". The available literature suggests that counter-urbanisation does not explain the migration of Registered Indians between reserves and urban areas.

2.2 Registered Indian Migration

The bodies of literature reviewed here pertain to the migration and urbanisation of Registered Indian people and how those movements from rural reserves to urban places have been perceived (sometimes incorrectly) by mainstream society. Also discussed is the notion that Registered Indian migration may depend on factors such as the distance between origin and destination, and whether that distance influences migration or not. Consideration is also given to the idea that the circular migration that occurs between reserves and cities may be representative of how a migrant feels about their reserve community.

2.2.1 Significance of Reserves

While there are various reasons a migrant chooses to return or move back and forth between origin and destination, it seems the significance of the reserve community has largely been discussed in the literature with an emphasis on family relations and community. Leslie and Maguire (1979) and Cardinal (1969) suggested that reserves have come to represent more than just homeland and that they have become important symbolic sites of resistance for First Nations people. Indian treaty signatories did not foresee the impact being confined to reserves would have on the Indian people. "Some of the contemporary significance of reserves emerged from decades of resistance at attempts to assimilate First Nations people and in the process, to dissolve reserve communities"

(Leslie and Maguire, 1979). Cardinal (1969; 29) said that “[f]or many First Nations peoples today, the meaning of the reserves includes their significance as lands which First Nations peoples ‘reserved for themselves’ during Treaty and other negotiations”. In this context then, the continued existence of reserves may represent decades of resistance and perhaps resilience. The circular migration that occurs between reserves and urban areas may in part be a measure of how a migrant perceives their reserve and hence its significance or role in the migrant’s life.

According to Micmac Grand Council Member Kep’tin John Joe Sark (1992) Indian peoples’ relationship to the land was the foundation from which Indian societies, nationhoods, communities and governance formed. Chief Allan Happyjack (1992) said that Aboriginal people all over Canada strive to maintain the connection between land, livelihood, and community.

...For some, the meaning of that relationship is much as it was for generations past; for others, it is being rediscovered and reshaped. ...The maintenance and renewal of the connection between land, livelihood and community remain priorities for Aboriginal peoples everywhere in Canada – whether in the far north, the coastal villages, the isolated boreal forest communities, the prairie reserves ... or in and around the major cities.

Chief Happyjack reminded us that the significance of Indian lands and territories is as prevalent today as it was in the past. For some, rediscovering and reshaping the meaning of the relationship to reserve lands and other traditional territories may be a renewal of the connection to the land. The high rates of Registered Indian migration to and from reserves and cities may very well be an indication of the reshaping and/or rediscovery of their connection to their reserve.

2.2.2 Patterns of Migration

In the 1940s, relatively few Registered Indians lived in cities. Since then the urban Registered Indian population has increased steadily. The increasing number and proportion of Registered Indians living on reserves has been interpreted to mean that Registered Indians are abandoning reserves and moving to urban areas. However, the reality is more complex.

Table 2.1: Net Migration Patterns by Location. Registered Indians 1986-2006

	1986-1991	1991-1996	1996-2001	2001-2006
Urban (Large)	+ 5,540	- 6,150	- 430	+ 3,570
Urban (Small)	- 8,405	- 6,270	- 4,095	- 135
Rural Areas	- 6,675	+ 205	- 6,430	- 13,350
Reserves	+ 9,504	+ 12,215	+ 10,995	+ 10,995

Source: (Norris and Clatworthy, 2009; p. 15 -16)

Table 2.1 describes net (the difference between in and out) migration by Registered Indians between 1986 and 2006. A large urban place consists of one-hundred thousand or more people and a small urban place consists of less than one-hundred thousand people. These data are derived from the special cross-tabulations of the Canadian census question on where individuals lived five years earlier. While rural areas and small urban centres mostly had net losses during these years, large urban areas experienced increases between 1986–1991 and 2001– 2006. What is of particular interest for this thesis is that reserves had large increases for every time period. Despite expectations that reserves would eventually be abandoned as Registered Indian moved to urban areas, and media reports that suggest this is the case today, the data demonstrate

that reserves remain important in Registered Indian migration patterns, and that they continue to receive more migrants than they lose.

Social Anthropologist, Yngve Lithman (1984; p. 57) observed in a prairie Indian community that the migratory movements of Indian people are part of the process of staying in the reserve community, not of leaving it. For Lithman, Indian migration was temporary and did not depopulate reserves; it only decreased the reserve population at particular times. Native and Political Studies academics Barron and Garcia (1999) agree.

Whether reserves serve as origins or destinations they increasingly facilitate the “churn” to and from cities (Norris, 2003). This “churning” or circular movement between origin and destination that occurs regularly is demonstrated in the case of Winnipeg (although not limited to Winnipeg) a Canadian CMA³ Norris (2003) says:

Between 1991 and 1996, 27 percent of Registered Indian migrants moving to Winnipeg during this period came from reserves, while some 47 per cent of Registered Indians who left Winnipeg had moved to reserves.

Norris (2003; p. 63-64) suggested that the high rate of circular/ back and forth movement into and out of cities should not be ignored, as the high rate of movement has given the impression that urban places are increasing in Registered Indian populations, which is not necessarily the case. False impressions and misinterpretations may contribute false information to policy and program initiatives. Seeking to understand how Registered Indian people interpret the significance of their reserve in their decisions to relocate may help to explain the patterns and high rate of Registered Indian migration

2.2.3 Interpretations of Registered Indian Urbanisation

Registered Indian patterns of movement have been interpreted in various ways in

³ Canadian Metropolitan Areas (CMA's) are large urban areas with 100,000 or more population.

the literature and much of it has cast urban Indian culture as incompatible with city living. Lurie (1967; p. 80) reported that non-Indian people tended to interpret any Indian movement to the city as a “rejection of [their] former identity”. Newhouse and Peters (2003; p. 6-7) documented that Aboriginal people who chose to migrate and live permanently in urban places were accused of “turn[ing] their backs on their culture,” in favour of assimilating into mainstream society. Consequently, Aboriginal people have been cast (by some) as being non-authentic Indians (Peters, 1996; p. 55; Flynn, 1995; p. 53). Indian “authenticity” has been typically associated with historic time periods and rural locations (Peters, 1996; p. 55) and therefore, not associated with the city; any city living was seen to imply a rejection of one’s Indian culture (Peters, 2002).

Flynn (1995) said urban Indian people do not reject their cultures because they are living in urban places. In fact, urban Indian people strive very hard to maintain their cultures amongst the “hostile” cities. The urbanisation of Indian people has fueled a scholarly discussion about Indian identities and how those identities are challenged daily in cities (See Frideres and Gadacz, 2001; Lobo and Peters, 1998; Peters, 1996; Flynn, 1995; Peters, 1998). A reoccurring theme in the literature is that urban Indian people must maintain contact to the land whether physically or cognitively if they are to retain their Indian identities. For some that means frequent trips back to their reserve, for others it means a personal connection and identity to the land even if it is not their origin homeland but rather an urban place (Flynn, 1995). Wilson and Peters (2005; p. 395) suggested that the idea of one’s identity being stretched out across different places is potentially useful for studying the urbanisation of Registered Indian people, as existing

studies have challenged scholars to review the assumptions about what place and identity mean in migration.

Although permanent moves to the city may entice some people to challenge Indian “authenticity”, Denton (1972), Frideres and Gadacz (2001), Peters (1996), and Travoto et al (1994) suggested the return of a migrant to his/her reserve from an urban place has been seen as an indication that the migrant has failed or was unable to cope or adapt in the city. Other authors suggested that while some Indian people may find it difficult to adjust to city life or are unable to find employment this does not necessarily mean failure or incompatibility with city life. Clatworthy and Hull (1983) suggested that a move back to the reserve may represent a premeditated plan to return to the reserve after a certain amount of time spent in the city may be the case. Flynn (1995; p. 52) reminded her readers that retirement, family, and the peacefulness of the land were three valid and real reasons some Indian people choose to return to their reserves. Cooke (1999; p. 128) reported that Indian people returned to the reserve for many different reasons, and many repetitively left and returned.

The circular movement of Registered Indians from reserves to cities and back has largely been addressed in the literature in conjunction with return migration (Cooke, 1999; p. 19). Norris (2003; 63-64) suggested however, that repetitive moves back and forth such as the circular movements into and out of cities are a migration pattern worthy of its own consideration because it has many implications. Cooke (1999; p. 128) noted that the participants in his research mentioned circular migration before they were even asked any questions about it. This perhaps suggested that some Aboriginal people perceived circular migration as an important pattern of their mobility. Cooke and

Belanger (2006; p. 153) noted that multiple moves between places may indicate a migrant's disconnection to one's reserve rather than a connection. The repetitiveness of moving back and forth between one's reserve and the city could indicate an uncertainty or unsettled feeling a migrant may feel toward their reserve community.

Early studies by Dr. Lurie (1967) suggested that urban/reserve migration of Indian people in the past was largely circular. Considering Norris' (2003) and Cooke's (1999) research, the same appears to hold true today. Lurie's observation then is not outdated, and further consideration of Lurie's work may contribute to the contemporary understanding of Indian migration. Lurie (1967; p. 79) suggested that the frequent travel Indian people made back to their communities was simply movement within the much larger territories that once was theirs and that Indian people were seeking benefits and sustained livelihood from different parts of their traditional territories, just as they have in the past. Monture Okanee (1992) asserted that her traditional Mohawk territory far exceeds the borders of Ontario, Canada, extending south and east into what is now known as New York State. Monture Okanee (1992; p. 129) argued that a distinction between those who live on the reserve and those who live in the city is a false distinction. American Cultural Anthropologist, Susan Lobo (1998; p. 93) said, "...for many Indian people the urban areas are visualized ... as an extension of home territory. Peters (1996; p. 261) noted "[t]here was little recognition that most cities are on Aboriginal peoples' traditional territories...", and "[u]nlike ... other migrants[,]...many Aboriginal people are traveling within their traditional territories (Newhouse and Peters, 2003; p. 6). Lurie (1967; p. 79) argued there was a link between urban/reserve movements because both communities existed on traditional Indian territories. Cooke and Belanger (2006; p. 151)

said that two of their participants suggested that the contemporary migration of Aboriginal people in Manitoba, as elsewhere in Canada, are continuing patterns of Aboriginal traditional migration.

While there is not much migration going on between cities in different provinces (Clathworthy, 1996), the migration between reserves and cities (provincially) obviously involves a degree of distance, which could be a factor to a migrant or potential migrant. Cooke and Belanger (2006; p. 151-154) stated that it was not surprising to find from their participants that "...the distance between reserves and cities has important effects on both the likelihood of migration and the types of migration". Having said that, however, they stated that choosing a destination was somewhat influenced by the presence of friends or family, and was also largely dependent on economic factors.

Although there is an obvious acknowledgement by scholars that urban places were built on traditional Indian territories it remains unclear whether these 'urban traditional territories' have any bearing on contemporary Indian urbanisation/migration. Research on Registered Indian migration patterns has gradually moved away from an assumption that migrants intended to assimilate when they moved to cities and that a return to the reserve meant failure, but there is little known about the circular movements of Registered Indian people and what the contemporary significance of that movement may be.

2.3 Summary and Conclusion

It appears that the main types of migration; *primary*, *return*, and *circular* are shared by Registered Indian people and by mainstream society. The difference that needs to be considered, however, is that the models thus far are rooted in the movements of

mainstream society and may not apply to Registered Indian people who may have personal and cultural connections to rural reserves. Counter-urbanisation, which is migration from the city to the country, may not significantly apply to Registered Indian people as the majority of migration is from reserves to cities. Moch (1989), Beaujot and Kerr (2004) agreed that the key to fully understanding urbanisation processes is to look beyond simple urban and rural migration figures and delve deeper into individual characteristics.

While there are some commonalities between existing migration literature and Registered Indian movements, each type of migration pattern raises questions about the suitability of applying mainstream migration theories to Registered Indian people moving between reserves and cities. Some existing studies have challenged scholars to produce rich qualitative data to better understand the migration of Registered Indian people and to accompany and explain the statistical data that overwhelms the available research. Scholars have challenged academia to consider the assumptions about the meaning of place and identity in migration. At present, research suggests that circular migration is a better description of Registered Indian migration patterns.

The high rate of circular migration between reserves and cities is largely explained statistically and as a result we are not sure whether Indian people are characterized by a lack of intention to move permanently, or whether they represent attempts to maintain connections to their reserve. Unlike media reports that suggest reserves will eventually cease to exist and Registered Indian people will largely be urban dwellers, the data demonstrate that reserves continue to receive more migrants than they lose.

CHAPTER THREE METHODS

3.0 Methods and Context

This research sought to gain an understanding of how Registered Indian women interpret the significance or role of their reserves of origin in their decisions to migrate away from their reserves. In order to acquire in-depth personal accounts and experiences of the migrants, a largely qualitative approach was essential for this research. This chapter discusses the methods that guided this research process. First, I discuss my research setting and why I chose this particular location, then I address the research design and data collection; what choices I might make if I could do it again. My analysis section provides a description of the steps I took through the analysis process while employing some thematic analysis, which some scholars support as a method of its own and as a relatively easy method for beginning researchers and others to employ. I then address my positionality within the scheme of my research and conclude with a brief summary of the chapter.

3.1 Research Setting

The research was conducted in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Not only did it make financial sense to conduct the research in the same city as I (the researcher) lived and studied, but in addition, Saskatoon also has a relatively large Registered Indian

population (Statistics Canada, 2008). According to the 2006 census almost 11,000 Registered Indians lived in Saskatoon. Of Canadian CMA's, only Winnipeg and Edmonton had larger Registered Indian populations (Statistics Canada, 2006). Siggner (2005) found that Saskatoon was one of the CMA's that had a net in-migration of Aboriginal people between 1996 and 2001. Many of these in-migrants would have been Registered Indians. The issue of migration from reserves to cities is therefore important to Saskatoon.

3.2 Research Design and Data Collection

In quantitative migration research, broad patterns of migration are studied employing the analysis of large data sets, such as census statistics. These aggregate studies have the ability to describe and predict broad patterns of movement. Qualitative studies however, attempt to explain migration at an individual level. Qualitative studies have the potential to produce rich details of an individual's migration process and ultimately inform quantitative migration studies, as well as offer an understanding of migration that may improve and inform policy-making decisions (De Jong and Gardner, 1981). De Jong and Fawcett (1981; p. 44) argued that quantitative studies appear to be more useful for public policy making because they involve "broad processes that public policies would seek to influence". However they also pointed out that "...descriptive usefulness is not the same as prescriptive usefulness." This suggests that quantitative studies are limited in their ability to prescribe policy-making decisions without the richness of qualitative studies.

Regarding the migration research of Registered Indian people and other

Indigenous peoples, Prout (2006; p. 55) explained that within the migration literature there is a consensus among scholars that suggests both quantitative and qualitative approaches have their own strengths and constraints, which often complement each other. She also suggested that in the context of Indigenous peoples, quantitative methods “are able to provide a great breadth of analysis...[and] qualitative methodologies can provide a great depth of analysis...” For this research, although some percentages have been employed to describe Registered Indian women’s migration, qualitative methods have been emphasized to gain the richest possible description of Registered Indian women’s migration from their reserves to urban places.

For this study, I interviewed fourteen Registered Indian women. The sample size in qualitative research is not as important as the quality and richness of the research data (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2000; Robinson, 1998; Bryman, 2001). The size of the group is more relevant in a quantitative study than it is in a qualitative study, yet with either method it is usual that only a portion of the people or phenomena is studied (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2000; p. 44). The size of the research sample in a qualitative study is not intended to represent the entire population or phenomena, but rather the “emphasis is usually upon an analysis of meanings in specific contexts” (Robinson, 1998; p. 409). The original intent was to interview twenty-five Registered Indian women about their migrating experiences from their reserves to urban places. However, it became challenging to secure participants for interviewing as the participants had few people they knew who they thought would be comfortable with being interviewed. This limited the effectiveness of the snowball technique.

Participants were selected through a combination of snowball and criterion

sampling, whereby all participants were selected from people who knew other people (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2000; p. 44) yet they had to meet specific criteria. For this research, the participants had to be Registered Indian women 20 years of age or older and must have migrated to an urban place from their home reserve as an adult of 16 years of age or older. Snowball sampling has attracted widespread attention over the years (Bryman, 2001; p. 98); it is seen as an effective way for this research to build up layers of contacts as the recruiting process gained momentum. One of the strengths of the snowball technique is that it helps researchers to gain the trust of their participants with greater ease (Bryman, 2001; p. 116), as the snowball technique requires people who know other people (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2000; p. 44). It also allows researchers to seek out participants who fit the criteria for their work, without too much difficulty (Valentine, 1997; p. 116). While it was not difficult to secure participants who fit a specific criterion for my research, I did not foresee that it would become increasingly difficult to secure interviewees who felt comfortable enough to be interviewed. Hence, my original intended sample size went from 25 to 14 participants.

The age group of women suited the research as general migration theory states that younger women in their twenties tend to move more than older women; this is also true of Registered Indian women (Cooke, 1999). The older women were thought to offer more experienced insight to the research than younger Indian women, and the younger Indian women were thought to offer a clearer/fresher recollection of their migrating experience than that of older women. There does not seem to be much discussion in the literature regarding whether or not certain ages of Indian women are more suitable for qualitative research involving their migrating and urban experiences. Peters (1998; p.

668) said there has been little attention given to this topic, but she does not define the ages of the women in her discussion. While Williams (1997) agreed that studies dealing with urban Aboriginal women are rare, she did not address the age range of the women in her research; we know them only as “lone parents.” Cooke (1998) interviewed Indian men and women for his research on return and circular migration; his participants ranged in age from 20 to 59. The research presented here sought to interview Registered Indian women 20 years of age or older which was in accordance with the scholarly literature.

A semi-structured interview model was employed for this research (See Interview Guide Appendix A). The questions asked in a semi-structured interview are content focused and address issues deemed relevant by the researcher (Dunn 2000; p. 61). Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer flexibility when asking questions whether it is changing the order of questions or adding questions as the interviewer draws on various themes that develop. Dunn (2000; p. 61) claimed that flexibility and open-end questions were best for qualitative interviewing. This relaxed way of interviewing not only allows the interviewer to discover what is relevant to the informant, but also allows the researcher to work through the themes he or she seeks to cover in the interviews (Valentine, 1997).

All participants were given the choice of being interviewed anywhere in Saskatoon (as long as the interview place was deemed safe by both parties), or participants had the option to participate via telephone interview. I gave my participants suggestions of where a good place for an interview would be i.e. quiet and non-distractive places such as a library, the participants’ home, my home etc. Every one of the women chose to go through the interview process at my home; nobody was interested in doing a

telephone interview or meeting anywhere else. Each participant was provided transportation by me to and from my home. All participants were offered a choice of tea, coffee, water, or juice, and I also provided a light snack.

All of the women signed a consent form for the interview (Appendix B) and also a transcript release form after they read their transcript (Appendix C). The participants were each reminded of their right to stop the interview process at any time for any reason. On one occasion a participant stopped the interview to have a cigarette. This prompted me to then make a point of asking the remaining participants if they would like to take a short break about half way through their interviews.

The women were each asked thirty questions (five of which were demographic) regarding their migrating experience from their home reserve to their urban destination. I anticipated the interview process would take approximately one-and-a-half hours. The majority of interviews were an hour long and only one interview exceeded the anticipated time frame. While I was particular about asking participants each question, there were times (as expected with semi-structured interviews) that one thought or response lead to one or more questions for further explanation or clarification of a response. In hindsight there were a few questions I would not have asked but replaced with other questions simply because I did not get the depth or richness of a response I had anticipated. At the end of each interview my participants were given a small monetary honourarium. After I had completed an interview with one of the older women she asked me if I had a roast to give her as well as the honourarium. Her request somewhat surprised me but made me smile. I offered her a pork roast from my freezer and she happily accepted.

3.3 Analysis

While there are several software programs available to support researchers with the processes associated with interpretations and textual analysis there does not seem to be one particular program that leads the industry (Bryman, 2001; p. 407) Although I originally employed ATLAS.ti in the preliminary stages of my analysis to aid me in coding, annotating, and comparing elements, I soon recognised that because of the smaller sample size of my research it would be easier and more efficient to employ a manual thematic analysis by going through the responses to the research questions in sections. I divided the questions and corresponding responses into three sections; one section focused on the questions and responses that pertained to the participants leaving and returning to their home reserves (chapter four), another set of questions and responses focused on the participants' feelings, connections, and perceptions of their reserves leading to Chapter 5 which focuses on the significance of the reserve. The third section was simply the responses that were demographic in nature.

The transcribed responses the women gave were copied and pasted in accordance with each section of questions. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants each participant was represented by an assigned number. These numbers do not represent the order in which the women were interviewed. Once the responses were grouped with their corresponding questions, the process of thematic analysis began. It is important to note here that themes and ideas were drawn from the responses and information the participants gave, not from any preconceived notions from the grouping of questions. In consistently checking back to the transcriptions, I maintained the relationship of each

quote within its context. There were times when answers addressed more than one theme and it was difficult to separate the response for analysis.

Thematic analysis quite simply is a qualitative method of analysing, identifying, and reporting your findings in rich detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006; p. 79). Although thematic analysis is an often and widely employed method, Braun and Clarke (2006; p. 80) suggested that it is not as adequately credited as some of the other qualitative methods available. They strongly “argue that a lot of analysis is essentially thematic...” and that “thematic analysis should be considered a method in its own right” (Braun and Clarke, 2006; p. 78). It “...should be used to illustrate/support an analysis that goes beyond their specific content, to make sense of the data, and tell the reader what it does or what it might mean” (Braun and Clarke, 2006; p. 94). With this in mind, my research sought to interpret the data by relating it to the available literature.

3.4 Positionality

It is important to consider how my social position may have affected my interpretation and how participants responded to me. I am a Caucasian Canadian woman born to parents of German and Ukrainian descent who were also born in Canada. I grew up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and I have lived here my entire life. I originally applied to the University of Saskatchewan with the intent of pursuing a degree in social work, but after taking one Native Studies class I soon became interested in the history of Indian people in Canada. That history was certainly a different perspective than that of my Grandfather who was born when some Indian people still lived in teepees on the prairies. My Grandfather was of the understanding that the Indian people tried to take away ‘his’ land. While there was no way to change my Grandfather’s mind about the ‘real’ histories

of Indian people, I chose to pursue an honours undergraduate degree in Native Studies to better inform myself. While pursuing my undergraduate degree I met a lot of Aboriginal people who became my friends and who taught me so much about their different Indian cultures, histories, and protocols. I learned valuable information from my Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors, and I facilitated Native Studies tutorial classes for three years in order to keep abreast of the current literature and to help keep discussions ongoing. So while I feel I had a good understanding of Aboriginal people's histories, concerns, triumphs, political views, and religious beliefs I am nonetheless an outsider in the sense that I am not Aboriginal.

Geographer, P. Jackson (2001) suggests that the researcher's positionality in relation to the research participants is an integral part of the research process. Who am I? Did it affect the research process? How did the participants respond to me? How did it affect my interpretation of things? I was aware of my position as an outsider interviewing minority Indian women about their migrating experiences, which largely included in-depth accounts of their personal lives. Some scholars believe that outsider researchers are not capable of seeing 'things' from the perspectives of their participants (Brayboy and Deyhle, 2000) while it is possible that insider researchers may overlook things they take for granted, as they are so closely connected to the community/people they are interviewing. It stands to reason though that as an outsider one would not be able to completely and holistically understand a culture unlike your own, just as it is so that all people are different. "...[W]hat is said turns out to change according to who is speaking and who is listening" (Alcoff, 1991; p. 12). In other words we all hear, see, think, and listen differently than anyone else.

I think being a Caucasian woman in academia somewhat hindered my efforts to recruit participants. One Registered Indian woman who was not part of my study blatantly told me that she did not think it was appropriate that the university (as an institute) or myself (as a student) should be researching Aboriginal people. She expressed her views on institutional racism quite strongly. Another older woman declined after she asked me if I was white.

As an undergraduate student of Native Studies I have extensive knowledge of Saskatchewan reserves, and I believe that knowing the geographic location of reserves and being knowledgeable of those landscapes helped me engage in conversation with my participants about their communities, which in turn helped to make my participants feel comfortable. Also, I think being a single parent and going through university gave me common ground with my participants; while I am not a minority person, I am female, a lone parent, and going to school, and I shared those commonalities in conversations with my participants. All of the women who agreed to take part in my research did so graciously and without apprehension. I was humbled and grateful to have had this experience.

3.5 Summary and Conclusion

Due in part to the large Aboriginal population, Saskatoon was chosen as the research setting for this research. Saskatoon was also where I (the researcher) lived and studied and where all the participants lived, temporary or permanently. Qualitative methods were the main foundation of this research. Fourteen Registered Indian women were recruited to participate. There were some challenges with recruitment but overall the process went smoothly. As insight would have it I would have changed or replaced

some of the questions (as discussed in the conclusion chapter), but for the most part I was privileged to obtain data that exceeded my expectations in richness. Some women cried, some laughed a lot, some women vented their dislike for others or places, and some said my questions really made them think about some aspects of their lives they had not thought about so consciously before. The old woman who asked me for a roast - she has been making me bannock ever since.

CHAPTER FOUR LEAVING AND RETURNING TO THE RESERVE

4.0 Introduction

Fourteen Registered Indian women were asked similar open-ended qualitative questions regarding their migration to and from their origin reserves and urban destinations. These experiences provide insight into and clues about the significance of their reserves in their migration. For example, a migrant who moves back and forth between their reserve and urban destinations this may indicate that the reserve, for the most part, is still important to the migrant who left. This chapter first presents some quantitative data of the participants' migration, as some statistics help to provide a context for interpretation of the participants' responses. While there are plenty of statistical analyses available from the existing literature, there is little that explores how Registered Indian women interpret their migration. Because the choice of participants was not based on random sampling their answers are not representative of all Registered Indian women. However, the information from the interviews provides some valuable information that contributes to our understanding of Registered Indian migration.

The sections below address migrating details of the participants' migration. For instance I inquired about whether the number of moves participants made between their reserves and cities made any difference in where they chose to move. The number of times participants visited their reserves after leaving is also addressed, and whether or not knowing someone in the city (prior to the participant relocating) had any impact on

reserve to city migration. As well, the multiple reasons the participants gave for leaving their reserves for urban places are also addressed.

4.1 Migration Characteristics

4.1.1 Number of Moves from the Reserve

According to the available literature on migrating Registered Indian people, there is a high rate of back and forth (also known as circular or churn) migration between reserves and urban places (Norris, 2003). This research found the same to be true of the participants interviewed. Not only did thirteen of the fourteen participants claim that back and forth migration was evident in their communities but eleven of the fourteen are contributors to this phenomenon.

In Table 4.1 the participants have been sorted according to their current age and the number of moves they have made from their reserves to urban destinations since they left their reserves for the first time. Note that participants who moved from their reserve to the city more than once obviously had to move back to the reserve each time before they could move back to the city. There is considerable variation. For example, one woman in the age grouping 20–29 has only left her reserve once and has thus far remained in the city, but two women in the age grouping 40–49 have left their reserves four times; migrating back and forth between cities and origin reserves. All participants were living in the city at the time of the interviews. Of the fourteen women interviewed, one woman was in her thirties when she left her reserve for the first and only time. Another of the fourteen women said she left her reserve for the first time when she was fourteen years old. The remaining twelve research participants stated that they moved away from their reserve when they were in their late teens or early twenties; this

coincides with the existing literature on Registered Indian people and the existing literature on other groups as well, that shows most moves are made by people in this age group.

Table 4.1: Number of Moves from Reserves to Cities

Number of Moves Participants Made from their Reserves to Cities						
Ages of Participants	1 Move	2 Moves	3 Moves	4 Moves	5 Moves	6 Moves
20 -29 n=4	1	1	2			
30 -39 n=3	2			1		
40 - 49 n=4			1	2		1
50 – 59 n=1			1			
60 – 69 n=2		1		1		

As Illustrated in Table 4.1, we see that eleven of the fourteen women interviewed have made two or more moves to and from their reserves to urban destinations. The three women who have thus far only made one move from their reserve to the city claimed they will one day return to their origin reserve permanently. Table 4.1 clearly demonstrates that the women interviewed for this research show characteristics of circular migration that is common among Registered Indian people. In fact, if we recall from chapter two, circular migration is currently said to be the best migration pattern that describes Aboriginal peoples from Canada (and Australia) (Prout, 2006). While these findings concur with Aboriginal migration studies, the migration of Registered Indian women may not be captured by the migration models presented in the mainstream literature which emphasises permanent rural to urban migration, and is now only scarcely acknowledging circular migration as an important phenomenon of migration.

4.1.2 Distances between Origins and Destinations

The research participants were asked if the distance between their reserves and urban destinations was a concern to them in their migration, i.e. did distance matter in their migration away from home? One migrant said that she declined an opportunity to study law at an institution that she felt was too far away from her reserve. She said “I didn’t go; being so far from my family and being so far from that support, that’s why I didn’t go” (#5). Instead, she chose to pursue her education closer to her home-reserve: “I can go home quite easily and they (family) can come here quite easily, so it’s always been a level of comfort for me to know that they’re so close” (#5). For this woman, the short distance between her reserve and the city was an important consideration in her decision to leave her reserve, as she did not want to live too far from where she grew up.

In contrast, two of the women who were interviewed said they preferred a longer distance between themselves and their home communities. One woman said she had the option to move to a city relatively close to her reserve but she chose not to do so because she did not want the distractions of family and friends to hinder her success for a higher education (#4). The other woman said she and her husband also moved to a city far away from their reserve; they welcomed the distance between themselves and others because they anticipated being asked for money and/or tobacco from people who knew they would be receiving a monthly living allowance through student loans.

There are too many people that we know and they would be interrupting ya know...always somebody wanting to borrow money or something...or having someone asking for a pack of smokes and I don’t like to be rude, but they know that we would have money going to school... (#9).

The remaining eleven research participants indicated that the distance between

their reserves and urban destinations was not a concern for them; four of the eleven women elaborated. For one woman the distance between her reserve and urban destination was not a concern at all, achieving an education was her primary goal. “I would have gone anywhere to have an opportunity for education” (#1). One other woman was focused on providing a better way of life for her and her children; “The distance didn’t bother me...I had to move for myself and my children” (#6). One of the elderly women simply said, “No, it didn’t matter how far away from the reserve I lived, I wanted to move” (#8). Another participant who also was not concerned about the distance between her reserve and urban destination indicated that the goals she aspired to achieve surpassed concerns of ‘distance away from home’ and she suggested that technology helped to bridge the distance between the reserve and the city. “Distance was never a factor in all the moves I made; I think I was always thinking about what I wanted for myself...and there is always a phone to make a call home” (#12).

The research participants were asked how far they moved away from their reserve when they left for the city. With the exception of one participant, all participants measured the distance between their origin and destination according to the time it took to travel one way, via road vehicle. The women migrated from all directions and no direction was found to be notably more prominent than any other. Below is a simple table that shows eight women, at the time of the interviews, were living a five hour drive or more away from their home reserve, five women were between one and four hours away, and one woman was less than an hour away from her reserve.

Although the majority of the participants in this study indicated that distance was not a factor in their decisions to leave their reserves, Cooke and Belanger (2006; p.151)

noted that distance between reserves and cities does affect the possibility of migration. From this we can conclude that matters of distance between reserves and cities do not necessarily concern every migrant, as with other factors in the migration process, matters of distance are personal.

Table 4.2 Travel Time between Origins and Destinations

Number of Women	Travel Time Between Origin & Destination
8	5 hours or more
5	1 – 4 hours
1	Less than 1 hour

4.1.3 Frequency of Visits

In Table 4.3 we see that six of the fourteen participants claimed that they do not visit their home reserves. Five participants reported visiting their home reserve occasionally, and three said that they visit their home reserve frequently. Measuring the participants’ visits back home is another way that Registered Indian women might maintain connections to their reserve, which ultimately speaks to the significance of their reserve in their migration.

Table 4.3 Frequency of Visits

No Reserve Visits	Occasional Reserve Visits	Frequent Reserve Visits
6	5	3

The three women who said they make frequent visits to their reserves also said they would visit their reserves even more if they had the financial means to do so. Frequent visits, according to these three women, seemed to constitute visiting their reserves at least once a month, but if finances were favourable, travel would occur more often (no matter what the distance). Quoted here are two of the three women who claimed they make frequent visits home: “Once a month for sure I go. I’d like to go

more but sometimes I can't afford the gas" (#9). Another woman stated, "Me and the kids go home every four or five weeks, but I wish I could afford to pack them up and go every weekend" (#4). All three women who stated they are frequent visitors of their reserves also stated they would likely return to their reserves to live permanently.

Additionally, one woman said the frequent visits are not just for her own sake, but for the sake of her children's cultural identity as well. She said some of her children are small and they need to go back to the reserve regularly so they do not become "urban" and ... "so they have a sense of belonging somewhere and so they will fit in with their community when they eventually return home" (#4).

Of the five women who reported visiting their home reserves occasionally, none stated they would move back to their reserves to live permanently. An occasional visit, according to these five women seems to constitute an average of three to five times a year. "I usually go to the reserve on special weekends; if someone is getting married or if someone dies, but usually just on some long weekends, I'd say no more than four or five times a year I go there" (#8). Another woman stated: "Oh I'm not sure how many times I visit there, probably three or four times a years, mostly in the summer though" (#11).

One woman spoke of the different lifestyle in her home community that makes visiting difficult for her and her family, and as a result she rarely visits her reserve, and if she does visit her reserve she never takes any of her children anymore.

The community is alive at night and they sleep during the day and my kids are not raised that way. So when we go visiting there and I go visiting during the day, there's nobody to visit and then they try come visit us in the night and we're sleeping so it just doesn't work. I don't go there with my kids anymore and I don't go there much myself anymore either (#14).

The women who claimed to visit their reserves occasionally and the women who

said they rarely or never visit their origin reserves have also migrated back and forth between their reserves and cities, so even though they do not wish to return to live on their reserve permanently and they do not visit frequently, their reserve is still significant enough that they periodically move back.

4.1.4 The Importance of Friends and Family in the City

The research participants were asked if they knew anyone from their reserve that lived in the city prior to their arrival and whether or not it made a difference in their decision to leave their reserve the first time. Half of the research participants knew someone in the city prior to their first migration away from their reserve and the other half of the participants said they did not know anyone in the city before they left their reserve the first time.

Although none of the research participants claimed to have moved away from their reserves for someone at an urban destination, three of the participants said they would not have migrated to the city had they not known someone of comfort who lived in the city already. One participant reflected, “I don’t know if I would have moved here had my sister not lived here; I was scared at the thought of moving here [to the city]” (#9). Another participant compared her first time move to a small city where she did not know anyone to a second move to a bigger city where she knew someone: “The first time I moved it was quite a scary experience, but the second time I moved it made a big difference knowing someone, I had somebody there to protect me” (#7).

Two other participants said they knew family, friends, and acquaintances in the city prior to their arrival, but they said knowing someone in the city was not an influencing factor in their decision to leave the reserve; “Yes I knew people here but it

really didn't matter, I just wanted to start over and meet new people" (#13). Another migrant said, "I have a cousin and his wife here but I still would have come if they weren't here, I still would have been here" (#14).

Seven of the participants indicated that not knowing anyone in the city prior to their arrival was not enough of a concern for them to remain on their reserve. One participant's response to this research question appropriately represents the general comments of the other six participants who did not know anyone in the city before they arrived. "I didn't know a soul...In retrospect it wasn't easy but it was something I had to do" (#1).

The difference in migration preferences conveyed in this particular discussion suggests that while people may have similar, if not identical aspirations, they also have different comfort levels in their migration.

4.1.5 Gender Differences in Migration Patterns

According to the literature on Registered Indian migration, women are more likely to move to urban places than men; some of the participants spoke about this in their interview. According to the participants of this study Registered Indian women are more likely to take risks than Registered Indian men, and some participants said the women have stronger desires to make changes for themselves, leaving the reserve with their children as single parents. In Table 4.4 we see that eleven of the fourteen women interviewed left their reserves with their children as single parents, two participants had no children when they moved to the city and only one participant moved with her husband and children. Even for a small sample size of fourteen participants, eleven migrated alone with their children and in half the cases the women had three or more

children. This, then, speaks to the literature and also to the women themselves who claim the same to be true.

Table 4.4 Gender Differences in Migration Patterns

Status of Women When Leaving the Reserve for the City	Single	Single Parent	With Partner and Kids
n=14	2	11	1

When one of the research participants was asked why she thought more women leave reserves than men, she indicated that the men may be more depressed than the women and the men become comfortable in their depression and they do not feel compelled to make changes for themselves. In fact, she suggests that some of the men may be a hindrance to women who want to leave the reserve and make changes for themselves.

...women want a change in their life...Men seem to be more depressed and they seem to hold back other people, whereas the women are more healthy; they'd rather do stuff to help themselves ...you know, they make goals, whereas men they just lay back... They get comfortable in their environment I guess...where women want a change for the better (#13).

One other participant suggested that the women are more likely to take the initiative to change their lives and relocate, and in this way the women are leaders.

Ordinarily it's usually the women that decide to move. A man will follow a woman who decides to come and continue her education, but it doesn't work vice versa (#1).

Another woman also said that it was her initiative that brought her and her husband to the city as well, however, unlike the woman who believed some men seem to hold back others; this participant said her husband was in favour of her aspirations.

I got the idea to move because of school and my husband said

“ya, that is a good idea” ...I wanted to get educated and get a good job so I could leave something for my kids instead of debt (#9).

One other woman explained that more women move because they have a greater responsibility to their kids (#5), or as another participant expressed, “It’s because more women are breadwinners in their families, and sole breadwinners”(#10).

While leaving the reserve for the city is a personal choice there seems to be a consensus among scholars, as also indicated by the participants in this particular study, that more women (with or without children) leave their reserves for cities than do men. These interviews showed that women saw their own initiative as contributing to these gender differences.

4.2 Reasons for Leaving the Reserve

The research participants were asked if there was one specific reason that caused them to move away from their reserves or if there were multiple reasons, and if so, to explain their comments. While most women had a primary goal in mind when they left their reserves, all participants gave multiple reasons for moving away from their reserves, and some speculated on why others move as well.

The reasons most often stated by participants for leaving the reserve included:

- Education
- Escape Violence
- Seeking Substance Rehabilitation
- Escaping Poverty
- Reserve Housing Shortages

Employment and health related issues, as discussed in Chapter Two of the literature review, have been mentioned in the existing literature as some of the main reasons for reserve to urban migration. Other than treatment for domestic violence and substance

addictions, none of the participants in this study stated that health issues or health services were reasons for leaving the reserve for urban places. Also, unlike the findings of other studies, employment was not mentioned as a reason for migrants leaving their reserves for cities.

4.2.1 Education

While all of the participants left their reserves for a post secondary education, ten of the fourteen research participants stated that education was the most important reason for their migration away from their reserve. Some of the research participants suggested that getting an education was part of a broader socio-economic strategy. For example, one woman said that obtaining a higher education was the only means to achieving a higher salary at work:

I came to the city for education ... because of my employment at the band office; they put us under salary grids when before they hadn't done that and it was according to education and work experience and I didn't think I was getting anywhere with that and I needed a higher education to get more of a salary. I'm still employed, I'm just on an educational leave (#4).

While this participant saw education as a means to overcome salary grids imposed on her, another participant spoke of obtaining a higher education as a way to achieving promotion in her work place and as a means to broaden her options for other employment opportunities.

You know you can work somewhere where you start at one level and work your way up, but we (she and her husband) didn't have the education to back us up and that way you are stuck with an agency at a lower level, and if you go elsewhere and don't have the education you're not going to get hired. I had a permanent job there back home and I quit because we both decided we wanted to go back to school. We had to do it just to give ourselves other options (#9).

Another participant said she moved to the city to obtain an education so she could one day be duly credited and recognised for the work she does.

Education is the only way I could get a manager's position because I'm not related to any Chiefs and others like that. I wanted those letters that would follow my name. Ya know in all the years I've worked, I've never been the one to be given full credit for 'hey this is what she did.' I did proposals and research for the proposals, but it was him that signed his name in the end. So I thought ok, I'm going back to school (#10).

A point to make here is that these women had to leave their communities in order to advance in their community's work force. We do not know if these women would have left their communities in the first place had their circumstances with their reserve employment not forced them to make a choice. Of all fourteen Registered Indian participants, none of them mentioned moving away from their reserves in pursuit of a professional trade i.e. hair styling, welding, or interior design.

While education is seen as a means by which to gain employment for eventual long-term financial security, the analysis of this research also found that the short-term financial security from student loans and band funding was an additional attraction to obtaining a higher education. One participant reflected back to her younger years when she left her reserve to attain a higher education; she stated that the monthly financial support Indian Affairs guaranteed to Indian students helped her and her family escape poverty. "I moved because of poverty and education, my husband couldn't provide for us ... and Indian Affairs were really good" (#1). Another woman said "When you go to school you can get money every month" (#2). And one other woman commented, "I came for an education, but it also helps us to eat. We eat, we go to school, and life is good" (#3). One of the younger women talked about her education in relation to their

finances and her husband's inability to support her and their daughter;

...he wasn't working at the time...and I didn't want to live on social assistance, so I took on the responsibility of taking on the financial part of looking after the family. I figured if he's not going to get a job then I have to be able to support my daughter and myself, so I wanted to take my education... band funding isn't much but...you know in the long run it will pay off...and it will carry me and my daughter through until I'm done (#13).

These types of responses make it difficult to assign a single reason to the decision to migrate; we do not know all the underlying reasons that influence migration and we do not know to what extent monthly financial security from education initiatives influences migration away from reserves. The existing literature does not appear to address this particular topic; perhaps for fear of potentially feeding into negative stereotypes, but considering the poverty some people face on reserves, it is understandable that monthly financial security would be an attraction and/or advantage to off-reserve education.

Statistics do not provide this kind of detail and explanation about reasons for migration. When we review statistics that indicate education as a reason for Registered Indian migration to cities we need to acknowledge that there are other variables involved under the guise of education. It is these finer details of Registered Indian women's migration that will speak to the needs and wants of Registered Indian women in their migration, and also, greater details speak to the significance of reserves in their migration.

4.2.2 Escaping Domestic Violence

While six of the research participants said that domestic violence was a reason that some women leave their reserves, only two of the women claimed domestic violence was the primary reason for their migration. One of the women said she left her reserve

to escape “a violent relationship...” (#7).

I wanted to do something; I wanted to make life different for myself and for my kids. Basically I was running away from a very difficult situation and hoping to go to school. Besides, there was no place for me at home on the reserve to stay, or safe enough to stay (#7).

Another participant also feared ongoing domestic violence so she left her reserve in search of an urban women’s shelter that would provide her with temporary lodging and counseling services.

Sometimes you can get counseling on the reserve when you have had violence acted on you, but there was really no place for me to go to get away from him, he could always find me there, so I had to leave for the city for a safe house to get better (#2).

One participant speculated; “I think some women get assaulted and they are in the wrong relationships so they leave” (#9).

The idea of women leaving rural places for urban destinations because of domestic or other violence is not mentioned in the general migration literature, which indicates that it is unlikely that Registered Indian women were included in any main-stream models of migration. Just as the two women from this study spoke of violence and how that prompted their or someone else’s urban migration, Cooke and Belanger (2006; p.145) suggested an “often-ignored” factor of female migration away from reserves is domestic violence. Humiliation and community gossip may be contributing aspects that cause women to leave their assailant/s and their reserve communities.

4.2.3 Substance Addictions

Substance addictions also cause people to leave their reserves. One research participant confided that her children would have been apprehended into government care had she not sought rehabilitation in the city.

I started drinkin eh, and then they were going to take my kids away to the foster care system so I had to do something to get my life back. That's what got me to the city; I had to go to rehab. And I haven't left the city since, only for visiting (#6).

One other woman shared that she also left her reserve seeking help with her substance addictions; she was single and unattached.

The first time I moved from the reserve I wanted to go into a program to quit drinking and the whole nine yards. So I started on my healing journey and it took me nineteen months. I had to leave the reserve because the programs that were on the reserve weren't enough to help me... (#10).

These two participants were the only two out of fourteen women that attributed substance rehabilitation to their own personal migrations. Other women commented also that drugs and alcohol were a problem in reserve communities. Considering both women said they 'had' to leave their reserve in order to overcome their problems brings attention to migration that may not have occurred had they been able to get the help they needed for their substance addictions in their own communities. The general migration literature on rural to urban migration does not attribute substance problems as a reason for migration, yet within the Aboriginal communities substance difficulties are serious issues, and these difficulties are contributing to movement between rural and urban places.

4.2.4 Escaping Poverty

Some of the women in the research sample stated that poverty was also a consideration in Registered Indian Women's migration away from their reserves.

...I guess some women also need to leave the reserve because they are so poor and can't get ahead on the reserve. It's hard to be poor and not be able to feed your kids (#6).

Another elderly woman said:

We have to think about the poverty too. There are lots of people who leave their reserves hoping to run away from being so poor. Sometimes people are so poor they have nothing to lose so they try to make a life in the city and hope it is a better life (#8).

The lack of employment and educational opportunities on many reserves make it difficult for some people to stay living on the reserve. The poor economic state of these reserves ultimately influences migration away from some reserves and some women end up leaving. Lee (1974) suggested that places with poor economic opportunities experience net out-migration.

4.2.5 Reserve Housing Shortages

The last in the list of reasons for migration away from reserves is the shortage of reserve housing. Two of the research participants included reserve housing shortages as a reason for leaving their rural reserves. One woman said:

I see especially with young people on the reserve, they can't have their own place, they don't have their own place...especially single moms, single parents. They wouldn't be able to have access to housing on the reserve. They have to live under somebody else, however when they come to the city they would be able to get their own place. There are no apartments on the reserves for people to rent (#7).

The second participant shared that the housing shortages cause overcrowding in reserve homes, and for some it becomes too much to tolerate so some of the young people leave.

...too many people living in one house on the reserve is hard to live with. Sometimes you can have eight or twelve people in one house and you just have to move to get your own place. That's what the young people are doing these days. They can get a small house or apartment in the city or they can stay on the reserve and sleep in the same room with five other people. More of them are leaving I think

(#11).

We can infer from the research participants here that some reserves are seen as places that do not have all the things that these women need to stay on their reserves. Lack of opportunity for higher education forced some women to leave their origins, and inadequate safe places for female victims of domestic violence cause some women to leave their origins seeking safe urban places. Inadequate rehabilitation programs for substance addictions, escape from poverty, and a lack of housing on most reserves also play a large role in migration away from reserves. For some of these women the reserve is a place of inadequacies and lack of valuable services that result in their reserves, and hence their migration away from home.

4.3 Reasons for Back and Forth Migration

The research participants were asked if they knew or noticed any community members moving back and forth between their reserves and urban places and whether the participants had an explanation for this phenomenon. Thirteen of the fourteen participants said that back and forth migration was evident in their communities, and as discussed earlier in the chapter, we know that eleven of the fourteen participants are contributors to this particular movement as well.

Listed are the reasons given by participants as to why they believe back and forth migration occurs between their home reserves and cities. The most popular reason given is listed at the top of the list and the least mentioned is listed at the bottom. We need to keep in mind here that the participants typically gave more than one reason for back and forth migration. According to the research participants, the reasons for back and forth migration between reserves and cities include:

- Ties/Connection to Reserve Land
- Domestic Violence
- Lack of Independence and Life Skills
- Education
- Escaping the Law

4.3.1 Ties/Connection to Reserve Land

According to the majority of the Registered Indian women who were interviewed for this study, the frequent back and forth migration that occurs between their reserves and urban places is partially due to a migrant's personal connection to the reserve land where they grew up. One woman explained that some migrants are unsure about their connection to urban land vs. rural reserves, which challenges a migrant's comfort level. She said there is a sense of being caught between the two places.

Other people and me need to feel a part of something, to feel that land... [back and forth migration] all ties into "where am I going to feel like I'm at home?" It's like we're caught in between... I need to be a part of the land and have some space...not on pavement; it has to be on the land (#10).

Another participant also spoke of the uncertainty some Registered Indian people feel about where to live, in the country or in the city. She suggested that some migrants do not feel comfortable in the city, yet they want to experience an urban lifestyle.

According to this particular research participant, the combination of these two elements contributes to back and forth migration.

... I think a lot of Indian people need to have their reserve land... for most of us the land is part of our spirituality and freedom and I think that they want to live in the city but they don't feel that connection to the land the way some people are connected to their reserve land. I think that makes people move back and forth sometimes. It makes us unsure about where to live (#11).

One of the other women spoke of the land as an essential element of some Indian people's identity, and in turn, a contributor to back and forth migration.

The land keeps you going back. You are free ...the land is important to Indian people; it is part of who we are (#2).

One of the older research participants spoke of back and forth migration as part of a process in a migrant's decision to live on their reserve or settle in the city. She spoke of reserve land as a place for walking and running without the distractions of urban noise.

The city is hard to get used to when you spend your life in the country. You don't hear no sirens or no noise out there...and there is lots of land to walk on and run on. Some of the people that move to the city can't get used to the busy life and ... they miss the country land. I think it takes a few tries moving around (#8).

When another participant was asked to comment on the reason/s for back and forth migration she simply said, "It's the land, you can walk forever..." (#3), implying here that "the land" keeps drawing her back to her reserve.

From these responses we can conclude that some back and forth migration is fueled by desires of urban living in conjunction with the draw of a migrant's home reserve land. These women made it clear that some Registered Indian women who return back to their communities to live (if only temporarily) are not just drawn by the pull of family and friends, but that their ties to the land itself facilitates back and forth migration. They move to the city for a variety of social and economic reasons, but their ties to their reserve land takes them back.

4.3.2 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence was also mentioned as one of the main reasons for recurring back and forth migration. One of the middle aged participants stated that some women move back and forth between their reserves and cities because of failed attempts to permanently leave abusive relationships on the reserve.

Well the one thing that I know about moving back and forth is when Aboriginal women move to the city to get away from their abusive spouses or boyfriends but then go back again, and the same pattern keeps happening over and over. There are three of my cousins living at my mom's right now because they left their abusers, but when their abusers come to the city to pick them up they'll be moving back to the reserve... even my mother has been a part of that movement too; to the city, back home, to the city, back home. Every time she got tired of the abuse that's when she left with all the young children and she would leave my dad and then my dad would come get her in a few months and she would move back. It happens with lots of women (#14).

Another woman said she knows many Indian women who also leave the reserve because of domestic violence, and like herself, some repeatedly move back and forth. She stated that while some women are victims of violence some community members unfairly blame the victims for their own abuse.

...a lot more women are leaving the community because they're not happy with life on the reserve because there is a lot of domestic violence. That is one of the reasons I left the reserve...it's very difficult because too many people get involved and they more-or-less side with the men;... 'Oh she said this, and that's her own fault what happened' ... but some of them still go back(#7).

One of the youngest participants also claimed that domestic violence drives women away from the reserve but eventually some of them go back. She said,

A lot of abuse drives some women away from their reserves. How can you stay? You have nowhere to go; other people don't want you in their house because that can cause big problems so women have to leave. Everybody knows everybody else and people gossip and point fingers...but the women still love their husbands so they go back and try again (#2).

There seems to be a consensus among the women quoted here that domestic violence is somewhat of a contributor to back and forth migration. Abusive relationships are challenging to overcome, and sometimes it takes multiple moves before a woman makes the decision to stay or leave her reserve. The difficulties in healing from domestic

violence on the reserve seem to stem from the fact that most reserve communities are relatively small communities with housing shortages and a lack of appropriate support for this kind of trauma. Their difficult circumstances make it hard for women to continue to live on the reserve even if other aspects of their lives make the reserve a preferred place to live.

4.3.3 Education

A small number of the research participants suggested that there are some Registered Indian women who leave their home reserves in pursuit of higher levels of education. Apparently some of the women who leave for education and return for employment sometimes repeat this migration pattern several times, thus contributing to back and forth migration (#1, #12). While most reserves have scarce employment opportunities there is some available employment on some reserves depending on one's level of education.

4.3.4 Lack of Independence and Life Skills

One participant suggested that because young adults cannot obtain a place of their own on the reserve they do not learn any independent living skills and therefore they do not have an opportunity at independent living prior to their urban migration. Because of the lack of this skill many do not succeed when they come to the city and they eventually have to move back.

They have never lived on their own, and never learned what they need to know to succeed away from the reserve. They have a lack of life skills, social skills, independent skills, and work skills.... Then they come and screw up in the city then they have no choice but to go home, and some are single and some are young families (#1).

This particular woman was not the only participant to comment on the shortage of reserve housing, but she was the only one to make a link between reserve housing shortages and the lack of developing independent skills to succeed in the city, and consequently, facilitate return, and back and forth migration.

Another participant commented that some of the younger adults on her reserve lack independence from their parents. She speaks of her cousins in their late teens that have left the reserve and returned again. She also indicates that some young adults are migrating between their reserves and cities attempting to gain the knowledge needed for independent living.

I don't know how to say it, they are over sheltered or something, like they aren't that independent from their parents, ya know they always have to be in mom and dad's house and so ... [living in the city] scared them off. ... I think some of the young people who move back and forth are learning how to be independent (#9).

While another research participant says that back and forth migration can be fueled by negative attitudes on reserves, the daily monotony of reserve living, family tensions, high urban expenses, and the desire to change one's life, she concludes by largely attributing a lack of life skills to the back and forth movement between reserves and cities.

I think that a lot of people just want to escape the reserve because there's a lot of negativity there. There's nothing really there. I mean when you think about it...you wake up in the morning, you do the same thing over and over again everyday you are bored and once in a while you want change in your life so you move to the city, and once you get here you don't know how to budget your money. Everything is a lot more expensive and you don't get as much help and support from family members because they're just not there, so you just return back home and you know that there your bills are paid for, your house is paid for, your furniture. Your family is there whenever you need to borrow something, and then maybe like a few months down the road you have a big fight with

one of your sisters, your aunt or something and you wanna leave, you wanna leave again. I think that it's partly that. But for the most part it's just not having those skills. It's not being accustomed to city life and the expenses of city life (#13).

4.3.5 Escaping the Law

One of the oldest participants of the research also says that back and forth migration between reserves and cities makes it difficult for law enforcement to apprehend offenders. She said she knows of some people from her reserve that move back and forth to avoid settling down in hopes they will not be found.

Ya they move back and forth to get away from the law mostly too. They run away. The troubles they get into. They go hide in the city then they hide on the reserve, I know that part. The ones I know they do that eh (#6).

4.4 Summary and Conclusion

The participants' migration movements show that these women have similar migration patterns to other Registered Indian migrants. However, the women's descriptions of their reasons for migration show a lot of complexity in their motives and complexity in the conditions of reserves that encourage migration away. Especially interesting are the reasons migrants give for leaving the reserve. They are often the reasons that a migrant will likely return to their reserve (temporarily or permanently). For example, some migrants leave their reserve for higher education to improve their employment status and options on reserve, then they return hoping for better employment circumstances on reserve. Domestic violence causes some women to leave the reserve yet it is the perpetrators they sometimes return to be with. Housing shortages on the reserve influence people away, young people want to gain independence and skills to live

on their own yet it is a lack of independence and skills that contribute to unsuccessful attempts at living in the city.

The generalised migration model, as discussed in the existing literature for permanent rural to urban migration does not seem to describe or fit the permanent reserve to urban migration of Registered Indian people. Registered Indian migration away from reserves is not simple because this population does not necessarily fit with the migration models of mainstream society. Furthermore; Registered Indian migration cannot be simply explained as permanent or return migration, as it has been clearly demonstrated in this chapter that the migration of some Registered Indian women far exceeds one or two way movements. Also, as mentioned, circular migration between reserves and cities has been a migration pattern of Indian people for many decades (Lurie, 1967) and from what we have learned from the women here is that it seems little has changed regarding circular movements not just with their own lives but also the lives of their friends and families. Circular migration perhaps is one of the most important migration patterns of Registered Indian people, more specifically Indian women.

Some of the women were left with little choice but to leave their reserves; they were almost forced to leave if they wanted to improve their lives. They did not have any options to stay and obtain higher educations, nor did they feel the programs and/or options to escape violence and to heal from that violence were adequate enough for their needs so they had to leave their reserves. The output of the final analysis process revealed that education is linked to almost every factor of migration in one way or another. Whether education was said to provide long and/or short term funding, personal achievement, livelihood, employment promotion, employment opportunities, or a means

to heal from domestic or substance abuse. For this research then, education was consistently an overlying and underlying theme of Registered Indian women's migration.

CHAPTER FIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESERVE

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores how participants described, in their own words, the significance of their reserves in their migration. Thus far there have been no studies done on this topic. In order to provide a context for what participants said about their reserves, they were asked questions related to their home communities and about their migration away from those communities. The analysis of the responses from the research questions have been divided into two categories: *Elements Affecting Women's Connections to their Reserves* and *Perceptions of Reserve Communities*.

The tables provided in this chapter distinguish between the participants who claimed they will return to their reserve to live permanently and those who claimed they will not return to live permanently. While the small sample numbers makes it impossible to show firm conclusions, dividing the data into these two categories provides a context connecting relationships to the reserve with intentions about where the participants will live permanently or temporarily. While this chapter provides some quantitative information, the emphasis is on generating an understanding of the participants' migration based on their explanations.

5.1 Elements Affecting Women's Connections to their Reserves

The research participants were asked a series of questions that attempted to find

out some of the experiences migrants had that made them feel more connected to their community. The series of questions addressed the participants' voluntary community participation, reserve housing situations, and language (Mother-tongue) abilities. It was somewhat expected that voluntary participation in community events, secure reserve housing, and the ability to speak one's language would mean that women would tend be more connected to their roots of origin and likely to live on their reserve permanently. Important to note, however, is that only three participants said they would return to their reserve to live permanently, while eleven said they probably would not return to their reserve to live permanently.

Table 5.1 Elements Affecting Women's Connections

	Community Participation Voluntary/ Personal	Secure Reserve Housing	Speak Mother Tongue
Participants Who Will Return To Their Reserve Permanently n=3	1	3	2
Participants Who Will Not Return To Their Reserve Permanently n=11	2	6	8

5.1.1 Community Participation

Questions regarding community participation asked whether or not the research participants were involved in their communities (i.e. taking part in organising or attending special events, sports events, ceremonies, or programs etc.) prior to their first migration away from their reserve home. The expectation was that participants would

describe their voluntary participation; however many also spoke about activities they had participated in because of their employment.

The first column of Table 5.1 represents the women who indicated they were voluntarily involved in their communities prior to their migration. Below are their comments.

I started dancing powwow when I was a little girl and that's how I took part. I danced until I was a teenager and then I had other things to do I guess. I haven't done anything like that as a grown woman, only as a girl, but I used to make bannock all day at community sports days when I lived there when I was an adult (#2).

This research participant said she will return to her reserve to live permanently. Another woman said:

...ya I used to dance powwow when I was a small child. My grandmother used to make my outfits for me and she made my moccasins. My auntie took those dresses and she said they are in the museum now, but that was a long time ago. I still danced when I was in my twenties until I left the reserve (#6).

This woman said she will not return to her reserve to live permanently. Another woman who claimed she will not live in her community again said:

Sports was a big thing for me, well for all of us really. The whole northern communities would get together and have two week sports events, those were really good. That was a good incentive you know, to keep us in school and we got to travel and play sports. We worked bingos to raise money for ourselves to travel, lots of people came to those. ... I also helped raise money for other sports teams when I got older, but then I moved away (#14).

These women have indicated that they were actively involved in their communities as children and as young adults prior to their migration, but as adults their participation declined and they eventually moved away from their communities.

While eight of the research participants said that they were involved with their

communities as mandated by their employment, three women explained how difficult it can be to actually participate in organising community functions and gatherings. One woman claimed to have been on multiple community organisation committees prior to her migration, all of which were linked through her employment. She said her one attempt to get involved with her community outside of her employment was eradicated by program financial difficulties.

Ya I was on committees at work over there. When I left I was on about ten of them. Once I was on a recreation committee not with work, but it was one of the things that was cut financially so the program ended (#4).

Another woman said she did not think there was much opportunity to get involved as there are people who get paid to organise community social events. She said:

They don't ask for all the people to help. Just usually the people that work on the reserve do the organising and things like that. ... I helped out with community things at work (#3).

One of the other research participants shared that she was involved in many community social events because her Grandma was serving on band council, but she also said that it is difficult for people to take part in organising community social gatherings when there are numerous people doing the organising. She also indicated that a change in reserve politics can also mean a social change for the community.

...my Grandma was always on band council and so she was always doing stuff and I lived with her so of course I got to know so much of that and did that stuff, even when I lived in the city I'd be back home...and she'd always be setting something up; Veteran's Day, Heritage Day...and ya know even when you don't start out organising...you end up organising. Not so much now though, it's a different political atmosphere now. And it's difficult to actually get involved when there's so many different people running things in the employment sectors (#5).

While most of the participants participated in their communities through their employment these three participants suggested it is not easy to become involved in community participation unless it is mandated through one's employment. Of the three women who participated in their communities voluntarily only one said she will move back to her reserve permanently. And of the eight participants who claimed to be involved with their communities through their employment, six participants said they will not return to live in their communities permanently and two women said they would return to live in their communities permanently. Whether community participation was mandated by employment or was voluntary, it does not appear that community involvement affected or was linked to a participant's desire to return to the reserve to live.

5.1.2 Secure Reserve Housing

The women who were interviewed for this research were asked whether or not there would be housing available for them if they chose to return to their communities to live or if they would have to find their own accommodations if they decided to move back to their reserves. At the time of their interviews nine participants had secure reserve housing, and the remaining five participants said they did not have secure reserve housing. (Table 5.1)

Of the nine participants that claimed to have secure reserve housing, only three of the women were adamant that they will return to their reserves to live permanently. Two of these three participants explained their situations. The first woman said:

My mom has a band house. She has had it for the past twenty-two years, but because she moved to the resort..... she has someone living there who was not legally adopted or anything but she is kind of like my sister. She has always lived there so she looks after the

house, but my mom says that she will give the house to me so that me and my family can move in there and she will sign the house over for me. So we plan to move in there ...I always knew that I would move back, and I always knew that I would have a house there. If something terrible happens or something goes wrong we still have a house where I can go back to. I always have had that security and also it is a comfort that no matter what happens at the end of the day you have a place to go to with your kids (#9).

The second woman who claimed she will return to her reserve permanently said,

Yes I have a house to go to anytime I want. I own a trailer there actually, but it is like band housing. I have loaned it out to somebody; my niece, just while I am living in the city. But it is in my name and it is my house and I will live there with my kids when I move back. ...It makes me feel more relaxed knowing I have a place to go to (#4).

The remaining six participants who claimed they have secure reserve housing indicated they are comforted knowing they have a reserve house to go to if need be, but moving back to their reserves permanently was not foreseen in their future. One particular migrant claimed she will never move back to her reserve unless her circumstances become financially debilitating for her in the city.

... I have always got a place to go and nobody can chase me away from there...On the reserve I always have a home whether I have money or not, so that is a comfort. ... If I go broke in the city then I'll move back to my house, but no other reason (#1).

Another migrant says that although she plans to leave the country and go overseas to explore career opportunities she will keep her band house on her reserve. She says securing a reserve house was part of the plan for her future since she was a young teenager.

It's kind of funny actually 'cause before I graduated from high school I planned my whole life out. That's kind of funny that I would do that. You can't get a house on the reserve unless you have children, right? So my plan was to graduate from high school, have a child and get married, make sure I have a kid before I leave, and get a house, then leave the reserve, go to university, get my education, and come back,

but now I'm not going back there, but I'm going to keep my house anyway (#13).

One of the older participants spoke of three secure reserve houses that she and her partner have on their reserve, but she said they would never move back there.

Bill got his own house on the reserve eh. I don't know if there's anybody living there but they're supposed to renovate it for him. But his daughter doesn't want to rent it out just in case he moves back. We have another option there too eh, his other daughter offered us her house 'cause she got a new one, and my grandmother's old house is there too and it's in my name. So we have three places to stay. Too hard for us to live there though and its kind of dull living there, but its nice that we got the houses (#6).

So while this woman and her partner have ample housing options on their reserve, they have no intention to move back to their reserve. She commented however that it is nice knowing they have secure housing options, which likely serves as a level of comfort for them.

The five women who said they have no secure housing on their reserves also said they would not return to live on their reserves permanently. One woman talked about her situation and explained why she has no secure housing on her reserve anymore.

I don't have housing cause I gave my house away to my sister. And I'd probably be denied another house because I gave my house away which is something they didn't tell me (#7).

Another woman said she did not have a secure dwelling before she migrated to the city, and she has lived off her reserve too long to apply for housing now.

Ah its been too long, they won't gimme a house and I never had one before I moved; always lived with my parents. ... It would be too hard to move back with no house (#8).

One other woman simply said, "No, there is no houses there for anybody" (#14).

There does not appear to be a connection between planning to return permanently and lack of secure reserve housing. All three of the women who said they would return to the reserve permanently had secure reserve housing, but there were also six who had secure reserve housing who did not plan to return permanently.

5.1.3 Ability to Speak Mother-Tongue

Although the participants were not asked if they spoke their Mother-tongue language most of the participants eventually disclosed this information during the course of the interview. Table 5.1 illustrates the final analysis of participants who could speak their Indian language. Of the fourteen women interviewed, ten could speak their Indian language and four could not. Of the ten women who could speak their mother-tongue, eight women said they would not return to their reserve to live permanently. In the context of this research one could speculate then that speaking one's mother tongue is not a major factor affecting return migration.

While the majority of the research participants did not discuss in detail their ability or lack of ability to speak their mother-tongue, one woman who claimed she will permanently return to her reserve to live said she made a conscious choice not to leave her reserve until her children could speak their Indian language.

I speak my language. I grew up speaking it and most of my relatives speak it too. I stayed on my reserve until my kids knew their language, then I moved away for my education. I miss not speaking my language here in the city. It is nice to call home and talk to someone who knows my language (#4).

Another woman who claimed to speak her Indian language said she is fortunate she had a relative who passed on the language to her, but unlike the woman quoted above, this woman stated she will not move back to her reserve to live permanently.

I'm very fortunate my grandmother gifted me with my language and I can give the same gift to my grandkids. It's something I can teach them and its never too late to learn ... it gives you a sense of identity (#10).

We cannot say that the ability to speak one's mother-tongue is a drawing card for a migrant to return to their origin to live; only two of the three participants who said they will return to their reserve to live permanently could speak their Indian language. Noteworthy is that the majority of the participants represented in this research have been back and forth migrators throughout their adult lives and the majority of them speak their Indian language; perhaps indicating that there is a connection to cultural language with respect to maintaining connections and attachments to roots of origins.

5.2 Perceptions of Reserve Communities

The research participants were asked a number of questions that elicited some of their perceptions of their individual reserves. The analysis of the personal perceptions of a participant's reserve provide us with information that gives us a closer look at the possible significances of one's reserve in their migration and whether or not those perceptions are related to decisions about where to live. The first question the participants were asked in this section addressed whether or not each woman believed their reserve community was a close personable community; i.e. are there social gatherings on their reserves? Is there community support for various needs? Is there available Elder support? etc... The second question probed for perceptions regarding whether or not the participants thought there were equal opportunities on reserves for women compared to men. Each of these questions hoped to produced responses that would offer insight into the migration of the fourteen participants and their feelings about their reserves in the migration process.

Table 5.2 Perceptions of the Reserve

	No Community Closeness	Evident Community Closeness	Equal Opportunities for Women and Men on Reserve	Not Equal Opportunities For Women and Men on Reserve
Participants Who Will Return To Their Reserve Permanently n=3	1	2	2	1
Participants Who Will Not Return To Their Reserve Permanently n=11	5	6	4	7

5.2.1 Community Closeness

The research participants were asked if they thought their reserve community was a close personable community when they lived there. The responses given by the participants generated two categories; those who claimed there was no community closeness on their reserves, and those who claimed there was evident community closeness on their reserves. Table 5.2 illustrates that six women believed there was not a sense of community closeness on their reserves. The remaining eight women believed community closeness was evident among their community members.

Of the six women who perceived community closeness was not evident in their communities one participant attributed the lack of community closeness to the proximity of her reserve to an urban place, and hence, more off-reserve attractions. She also saw northern communities as being more personable and close than southern communities.

She explained:

The proximity to the city and after they opened the casinos too that destroyed the family and community structure, and the north is removed from that so they still rely on each other. That's the difference between the southern reserves and the northern reserves; the northern reserves do a lot of social functions. People on our reserve don't think of each other, they haven't for a very long time (#1).

This participant stated she will not return to her reserve to live permanently. More of the women from northern communities indicated that people in their reserve communities were closely involved with each other at the community level, whereas most of the southern women reported their community members were not close in community relationships and unity.

Another research participant who said she will not live in her reserve community permanently again, suggested that alcohol consumption played a part in the diminishing close relationships of her reserve community. She commented,

We used to be more involved in the sports and used to have ball games, pow wows, bingos, and old people we could talk to, but now the drinking has come through and things have changed, and nobody is close anymore. Back in the day there was no drinking and everyone had time for each other (#6).

Another woman saw the loss of community closeness on her reserve as a consequence of depleted community programs, due in part to changes made by people who have attained higher levels of education. This woman said she will not return to her community to live permanently.

Back when I was living there as a young one, back then they had a lot of closeness; programs for the community. However, there was big change overs. ...the people that were running things there they had a lot of activities for the Elders, for the youth, and for women, and even for the entire family. They organised activities and they also had workshops and they had a women's circle. However much

of that depleted. A majority of the people changed, they left. I don't know for what reasons, but now they have a whole new different people; people with degrees and stuff that aren't doing the job that the people without the degrees did before. Things were more effective with the people without the degrees. And now the people with the degrees are out there and they are only there for the money. They sit there (#7).

One of the other participants expressed why she felt her community is not "together."

She stated;

The reserve means tough times for me. It's like it's hard to get off the reserve and do something with your life. Lots of people talk about negative things about you and people argue and drink ... the community isn't together (#3).

Another research participant felt that the diminished close community relations on her reserve was partially due to the increasing population on her reserve.

With a fast increase in population it is difficult for the community to be close and friendly and know each other. ... More people means less togetherness. ...It was close when I was younger but not anymore (#9).

This woman claimed she will return to her reserve to live permanently, and stated she is looking forward to moving back. While all six of these women ultimately agreed that their communities are not united as they once were, each woman attributed the lack of community closeness to different reasons.

The second column of Table 5.2 illustrates the responses of the eight women who said they felt their reserve communities were close. One woman shared that her reserve is fortunate because the community has invested in outside business ventures and therefore the community has extra money to do things they otherwise would not be able to do. She said the ability to have available money for kids in sports, the likelihood of a multiplex activity centre, the rich history and traditions of her people, and initiatives

for a home care centre keeps her community close in relations and communication.

Yup, we are definitely a close community. We're lucky, we have a few business ventures which allow us to do a lot more than what the government gives us money to do, and like I said, the sports, there's always money for sports. And I remember when my Mushum (Grandfather), he had a house and he lost his leg, and so he had to be moved to the neighbouring town, they had a home care center, and the reserve allowed him to keep his house because it really bothered him to know that he didn't have anywhere to come back to. So ya it was hard for the reserve. I can understand it because it's an empty house and somebody needs to be in there, but he also needed that peace of mind so they allowed him to keep it and they even built a ramp so if he ever could come back, ya know. And now they're building a home care center, right on the reserve. And there are discussions of trying to build a multiplex center, to play hockey, basketball, whatever. All that stuff builds a strong community ... I mean just the people and the land, I ... know so much about our history, I know so much about my family's history. I can't describe how it is to go home and be with my people and my community... I don't have to worry...as I do in the city about...issues like my dog running around, everybody knows my dog, and...people come and grab my baby and say I'll be right back, you don't have to really worry... And the history, the stories Elders can tell, they remember everything about you, you remember everything about them. They can tell me about my grandma. There are stories that I've never heard. That community spirit is just there (#5).

This participant said that although she would like to move back to her community to live permanently someday, that likely would not happen. Another woman who said she will not return to her reserve explained that community means family to her.

My reserve signifies family to me. One hundred percent family. It's the family and friends and roots. Just being there you know, it's wonderful. I miss my nieces and nephews; I miss everyone (#12).

One of the women debated with herself as to whether she felt her reserve was a close reserve. At the end of her debate she decided her reserve was close, but not like it was in the days of her great grandmother.

I'm not sure how to answer that question eh. I think some of us are close, but I don't know about everyone all together. Sometimes we

have community meetings and many people come together to make decisions for our community but then two days later you hear that some of them got drunk and started stabbing each other. That doesn't seem like being close to me. ... People come together for celebrations and births and deaths, but then a lot of the people gossip about each other. I think there is lots of negative stuff, but there is lots of positive to, so I would say we are a close community, but not like it used to be when my mom's grandma was alive (#11).

This woman claimed she will not return to her reserve to live permanently.

Of the three women who shared that they will permanently return to their reserves to live, two of them spoke of the closeness they felt regarding their reserves. One woman spoke of the communal care-giving and trust in her community in relation to her children.

She stated;

We're all related so I'd say we are close. Plus we have a baby-well clinic, a youth clinic, an Elder's session, groups for men and groups for women, the health department does that for us; makes all those programs. ... We are a close community. There is so much family... there is more family...more togetherness...closer to your traditions... and more access to wild food that you're used to having...and for the children, the freedom to roam around and to go in and out... You know that they're out there and somebody will look after them (#4).

Another participant also viewed her reserve community as being close; she related the closeness of her reserve due to most people being related and the friends she and her husband have.

Most of us are related so we are all close, I have many aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, almost the whole reserve (Laughs), ... we get together for lots of different things like turkey dinners and fishing derbies...and I have friends there too; my really good friends. I miss my friends and all the things I shared with my friends. My friends and my husband's friends, we're both friends with the same people (#9).

Like the women who stated different reasons as to why they believed their reserve communities are not close, the women who do believe their communities are close in

relations and unity also have different reasons for why they believe so. The consensus among the two groups seems to be that the situations now-a-days are not like they were in the distant past when there was less alcohol, lower reserve populations, and less economic and urban distractions. We can infer that a migrant's feelings of community closeness for her reserve does not necessarily play an important role in whether that migrant decides to leave their origin for an urban destination, as all of the participants have left their reserves for urban places at some point(s) in their lives.

5.2.2 Equal Opportunities on Reserve for Women

The overrepresentation of Registered Indian women in urban places is, according to the literature, a partial consequence of fewer employment opportunities for women on reserves than there are for men. In light of the available literature, it was expected that the analysis would find issues of inadequate reserve employment opportunities and inadequate adult educational opportunities. The analysis found participants feeling frustrated over reserve politics, issues of discrimination, and concerns of nepotism. Table 5.2 shows that six of the participants believed there are equal opportunities for women and men on rural reserves. The remaining eight participants do not believe there are equal opportunities for women and men on reserves.

Six of the participants believed women and men have equal employment and/or educational opportunities on their reserves, and only two of these six participants claimed they will return to their reserve to live permanently. One woman thought there were more females working on her reserve than males, but she said that band council is primarily made up of males so she believed there was a gender balance within the reserve work force. This participant is adamant that she will return to her reserve to live

permanently.

I would say that there is more females in working positions...band council though, they are all male, but I think that's just, hmmm I'm not sure. The band council are male but most of the working positions are female. In the band office there's probably a split between men and women. I know at the clinic there's more females. Most office jobs are occupied by women. ...The women work in the office, but the higher up political jobs are more occupied by the men, but they've served as councilors for so many years they keep on getting re-elected because they're good council. One of them is my uncle and another my grandfather. Besides, I think it would be easier for a man to be a councilor because it requires a lot of traveling and you'd have to be a single person without kids to travel if you're a female (#4).

Here the participant defended the fact that more men are on band council and in power positions; she indicated that this situation is acceptable because in her perception women hold more service jobs than men so it is acceptable for the men to hold the decision-making positions of band council. Additionally, the research participant suggested that it is easier for men to hold the councilor positions because there is a lot of traveling involved with such positions and the men do not have to concern themselves with childcare. She suggested that only a single woman without kids might be able to hold a councilor position. This particular participant believed there is employment equality between women and men on her reserve.

The other participant who stated she will permanently return to her reserve in the near future also spoke of the equality between men and women on her reserve.

I think there are some jobs that would rather take or hire men than women; those are more the labour kind of jobs, but there are jobs out there for women. There is the agency I worked for and the Community Help Place, and Aboriginal Head Start, and Group Home and Family Safe House; all those provide jobs for everyone. ...There is always agencies that need workers; TA's, and Secretaries. ... I think there is an even mix of people working (#9).

One woman suggested that there is equality between men and women on her reserve and she said that her reserve serves as a model for other reserves. This woman stated she will not move back to her community.

Ya for sure there are equal opportunities, it's very well distributed. There are males and females who all work together as a team now, which is unbelievable because there was a time it was terrible, but the Chief is just unbelievable and there's lots of respect for him and what band council does. ... I think that's what a lot of reserves are doing now; looking at our reserve as a model and how men and women work together (#12).

Not all of the research participants saw things the same way as the women above. Some of the women expressed themselves openly about the inequalities and gender issues they believe exists in their reserve communities. One of the younger research participants shared her frustration with inequality issues on her reserve;

There's a lot more men working. I don't think there's even a woman on council... Ya know they're all men. I think the community feels that men are supposed to be the leaders. Like its traditional or something. And the men who are on council have...an elementary education. Which is sad because you know, they're the ones making the decisions for the community and if they don't know, they don't understand. Usually they are really old men that have the positions on council. We need to get some educated people. Like some younger, like especially out of university. And some women, I mean they have to have some compassion for the community. You have to see what's going on, the women don't do the important jobs (#13).

One other participant said there are no women on band council on her reserve; "there needs to be a lot of change, there are no women on council" (#7). Another woman said that even her husband is frustrated that band councils are primarily comprised of men and they do not have any women serving their communities on political levels (#9). One of the older research participants said there are typically no women on band councils because women are "second class citizens." She stated; "it's rare that females get into the

political scene even though they are the educated ones” (#1). This participant said that changes are desperately needed on band councils, and that women need to be more assertive than what they are. Another woman said; “It seems that the men are in power and the women are behind the power, which is always how it is, but it’s not equal on our reserve” (#5).

Discrimination is one of the reasons that some women move off reserve said one of the participants. She continued saying; “All kinds of discrimination goes on, it’s just like abuse” (#11). Another participant talked in detail about discrimination on her reserve;

There’s some discrimination on the reserve I think. I know in the summer when the jobs open up at the reserve, it seems to be the men who get them because they do the official hiring. Endless to what they were doing, or what they can be perceived to do, and the women are working at the secretarial roles which are quite limited (#5).

When this participant was asked if the women are treated equally on her reserve she did not hesitate in saying; “Certainly not on my reserve.” For this woman though, the discrimination is not just evident in male/female relations but she felt that male sports activities on her reserve sometimes rank higher than education.

You’re commended for being a man, who plays sports and who’s known because active roles you can perform like labour. And even education is not held in the same regard as sportsmanship. My husband is a hockey player and he has an education degree, and he’s seen as a hockey player first and then a teacher. He is sponsored by the reserve and he plays on the reserve team and they just went to Toronto for the national championships and they won and they were supported by the reserve. But, if you ask some of the women who I know out there who have a tough time making it from week to week they don’t really get that much help ya know. A lot of them haven’t been out of the province, and definitely not on a plane, so I think there is that discrimination (#5).

One participant who was asked whether there was employment and/or educational equality between men and women on her reserve said there was not a balance and that nepotism was a problem.

Unfortunately it is all about nepotism and the envy and jealousy ... We need balance. We need the men and the women to work together in First Nation's communities to work toward community healing and community spirit. That is never going to happen when all positions of decision making are filled by men (#10).

While six women said there was equality between men and women on their reserves, the remaining eight participants did not. Given the small sample numbers we cannot say that equal opportunities or lack of equal opportunities on reserves is an important consideration for migration, but we can clearly see that gender inequalities on reserves has evoked some strong emotions from the research participants, which indicates that the inequalities women face on reserves may be included as one of multiple reasons a migrant chooses to leave the reserve.

5.3 Summary and Conclusion

The description of Registered Indian Women's connections to their reserves and also their perceptions of reserve life shows that the significance of one's reserve not only varies with each participant, but is also multifaceted. The level of community participation migrants were involved in prior to leaving their reserve did not prove to be related to the migrants' decisions to leave their reserves or return to their reserves. For two-thirds of the participants, having secure reserve housing was not associated with a desire to return to the reserve, nor was secure reserve housing enough to keep the participants from leaving the reserve in the first place. This raises the question whether more available housing on reserves would actually prevent reserve members from leaving

their reserves in the first place.

The personal perceptions the research participants had of their reserves did not seem to relate to a desire to return, but there is no question that the level of community closeness (or lack thereof) and especially the inequalities between Indian men and women on the reserves evoked some very strong emotions from many of the participants. In one case, the lack of equality and respect between Indian men and women on the reserve was the sole reason for the migration of one woman away from her community. While quantitative studies provide readers with a numerical description of migration, we must consider what those numbers represent and in what context. As we have learned from the women in this study, as described in their own words, the significance of their reserves in migration is varied and complex. There is no question that the participants' relationships to their reserve communities are connected to intentions about where they will live permanently or temporarily.

None of the factors we would expect to influence a decision to leave the reserve and/or return to the reserve do so in a straightforward way. There is significant movement back and forth between reserve origins and destinations though, so reserves remain important to most, but not enough to make most decide to return permanently. Circular migration seems to best describe the migration of the Registered Indian women interviewed for this research.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

Migration studies have become popular within academia since the Industrial Revolution, and as such the evolution of migration studies has brought us to study different cultures and their patterns of movement. Difficulties arise however when those patterns of movement are misinterpreted by others outside of a particular cultural group, or when that movement is only described in a quantitative way. The high rate of Registered Indians' back and forth migration between reserves and cities has been perceived by some as an indication that Registered Indian people cannot cope and adjust to city life and/or to main stream society. This misinterpreted and misunderstood movement is only exemplified then by quantitative studies which are significantly undescriptive.

The three main types of migration patterns; *primary*, *return*, and *circular* all describe (to different degrees) most Registered Indian migration patterns, but it is the back and forth movement that is more commonly referred to as *circulation* that seems to best describe the majority of Registered Indians' movement between reserve and urban places. Geographers Boyle et al (1998) suggested that the importance of circular migration has largely gone unrecognised and that this type of migration pattern should not be underestimated as in some cases the value of connection a migrant has to their place of origin may be symbolised by the back and forth movement, whereby urban

migrants remain loyal to their rural origins. Other scholars question whether Registered Indian circular movements between reserves and cities represent attempts to maintain connections to their home reserves or whether their migration represents a lack of intention to move permanently in the first place. Additionally, Norris (2003; p. 63-64) suggested that the high rate of circular movement into and out of cities should not be ignored, as the high rate of movement has given the impression that urban places are increasing in Registered Indian populations, which is not necessarily the case. False impressions and misinterpretations may contribute false information to policy making and program initiatives. Prout (2006) also suggested that not only in Canada is there significant circular migration among Indian people but also the same is true of Indigenous people in Australia. Prout said that repetitive back and forth movements should be considered in policy making decisions for Aboriginal people.

We learned from Moch (1989), Beaujot and Kerr (2004) that understanding the migration processes can only be accomplished by looking beyond quantitative numbers and delving deeper into individual characteristics. While some scholars believe that circular migration may be a reflection of strong community ties, there is also speculation as to whether the seemingly *unsettled* nature of circular migration may be representative of weak community ties to some people as well. The available literature suggested that urban places are constructed on traditional territories deeming urban places an extension of Indian homelands (Lurie, 1967; Monture Okanee, 1992; Lobo, 1998; Peters, 1996; Newhouse and Peters, 2003). Monture Okanee (1992) said there is a false distinction between those who live in the city and those who live on the reserve, meaning there should be no distinction. Although these mentioned scholars acknowledged that urban

places dwell on traditional Indian territories we do not know if these ‘urban traditional territories’ somehow affect contemporary urban migration or even whether rural traditional territories affect contemporary migration in either way. Research on Registered Indian migration patterns has gradually started moving away from an assumption that migrants intended to assimilate when they moved to cities and that a return to the reserve meant failure, but there is little known about the phenomenon of circular movements of Registered Indian people and what the contemporary assumptions of those movements are.

As stated earlier, it is widely acknowledged in the literature that there are more Registered Indian women who move from reserves to urban places than there are Registered Indian men. For this reason, and with the intention to gain insight on the role of the reserve in the migration experiences of Registered Indian women, fourteen women were asked similar open-ended questions pertaining to their migrating experiences from their reserves to their urban destinations.

Of the fourteen women interviewed, eleven were contributors to circular migration, which coincides with the existing literature. Most of the participants indicated that distance between their origins and destinations was not a significant factor in the decision to leave their reserves, but Cooke and Belanger (2006) noted that the distance between reserves and cities does affect the possibility of migration, just as it affected some of the participants’ visits back to their home reserve; whether it was the actual distance or the financial cost to facilitate the travel of that distance.

Half of the research participants knew people living in their destination cities prior to their migration, but for the most part it did not make a difference in anyone’s

decision to leave their reserve. The women interviewed here spoke of the differences between Registered Indian women and Registered Indian men, and according to these women the men are not as likely to take risks and relocate away from their reserves, as the women have stronger desires to make changes for themselves and for their children. In this light then it is understandable why most of the research participants' migration was not influenced by whether they knew someone in the city prior to their migration; the women are apparently more likely to take risks.

The reasons a migrant chooses to leave his/her reserve are varied and complex, and there seems to be multiple reasons for each participant. The research participants depicted some reserves as places that lack in valuable services, which some women needed to stay on their reserves. Lack of opportunity for higher education forced some women to leave their origins, and inadequate safe places for female victims of domestic violence cause some women to leave their origins seeking safe urban places. Inadequate rehabilitation programs for substance addictions, escape from poverty, and a lack of housing on most reserves also play a large role in migration away from reserves. Some of the reasons migrants gave for leaving the reserve were somewhat similar to the reasons that a migrant would likely return to their reserve (temporarily or permanently). For example, some migrants left their reserve for higher education to improve their employment status and options on reserve, then they returned hoping for better employment on reserve. Domestic violence causes some women to leave the reserve yet it is the perpetrators they sometimes return to be with; housing shortages on the reserve influence people away, young people want to gain independence and skills to live on their own yet it is a lack of independence and skills that contribute to unsuccessful

attempts at living in the city. Although education was a main factor of migration for the Registered Indian women of this research, there were varied reasons why each participant chose to pursue a post secondary education. Whether education provided long and/or short term funding, personal achievement, livelihood, employment promotion, employment opportunities, or a means to heal from domestic or substance difficulties, education was the overlying factor.

It was established in Chapter Four that education was a consistent shadowing factor in the migration process of the women interviewed for this research, and the significance of their reserves in that migration process was further explained in Chapter Five, whereby the analysis of the responses from the research questions were divided into two categories: *Elements Affecting Women's Connections to their Reserves* and *Perceptions of Reserve Communities*. The tables provided distinguished between those who said they would one day return to their reserve to live permanently and those who said they would not return to their reserve to live permanently. Dividing the data into two categories provided a context connecting relationships to the reserve and intentions about where the participants said they would live temporarily or permanently.

Whether community participation was mandated by employment or whether it was voluntary it did not appear that any community involvement affected or was linked to a participants' migration. Nor was there an apparent connection between migration and whether or not one had secure reserve housing. Three women who said they would return to their reserve to live permanently had secure reserve housing, but there were also six women who also had secure reserve housing who said they would not return to their reserve to live. It appears secured housing was not enough to keep them on their reserves

in the first place or they would not have moved away. There was no solid support suggesting that speaking one's mother tongue (or not) was a factor in primary or return migration, but we might consider that since the majority of the participants have been consistent back and forth migrators and the majority of them speak their Indian language, then perhaps there is a connection between cultural language and maintaining connections and attachments to roots of origins.

Aspects of community closeness and how the participants perceived the ties and closeness of their communities proved not to play an important role in migration. The consensus among the participants indicated that current situations on reserves are not like they were in the distant past when communities were closer; a time when there was less alcohol, lower reserve populations, and less economic and urban distractions.

Six women said there was employment equality between men and women on their reserves, the remaining eight participants disagreed. Being that the sample numbers are small we cannot say that equal opportunities or lack of equal opportunities on reserves is a specific consideration for migration, but it is clear that issues of gender inequalities on reserves have evoked some strong emotions from some the research participants, which indicates that the inequalities women face on reserves may be included as one of the reasons a migrant chooses to leave their reserve.

The significance of the reserve in the participants' lives seems to be holistic in nature; it centers on family, community, land, and histories. The significance of the reserve in the migration process seems to be varied and complex and none of the factors we would expect to influence a decision to migrate between origins and destinations do so in a clear-cut way. We do know from the women in this research that the migration

that occurs between reserves and cities is not necessarily an indication that an individual or family cannot cope in the city.

Circular migration seems to best describe the migration of the Registered Indian women interviewed for this research. We know that reserves largely remain important even if a migrant chooses not to live on their reserve permanently. Reserves are not just places of misfortune and hardship; they are places of culture, language, community, and beautiful landscapes.

One of the most challenging aspects of this research was finding scholarly literature on the significance of reserves in migration, and what those changes in geographic locations (rural to urban and circular) meant for Registered Indian women. There seems to be sufficient demographic information available, but that alone is not adequate to describe Registered Indian migration.

Deciding how to organise the data and how to present it in a way that best represented the women's voices was also somewhat challenging. The women so willingly provided me with rich conversations and it was difficult deciding which of their words I should use to express their voices, which could not be entirely captured by someone else in the first place.

In hindsight I would have asked my participants more questions that explored their views about the possible connection between speaking their mother tongue and ties to their community, but it was not something I thought about prior to developing the interview guide. I would have asked the participants for their views on the idea of cities being places of extended Indian territories. Additional questions about gender differences regarding migration away from the reserve would have been interesting to

explore deeper. Perhaps asking questions about the migrant's ties to the city (if any) would have given comparative insight to the reserve, as these issues are not well described in the literature.

Understanding the role of the reserve is important for public policy as settlement patterns show that urbanisation is increasing and it may be that policy makers conclude that less attention should be paid to reserve economies. Yet these places remain important for many migrants, and it is important not to focus on one area at the cost of another. Furthermore, we learned that populations on many reserve communities are also increasing. Relying on quantitative studies alone may lead to misinterpretations for program initiatives, affordable urban dwellings for low income individuals and families seeking temporary or permanent city life. There have been many misinterpretations about Aboriginal people for many years and with the knowledge and skills, and protocols we have in place for qualitative studies there is no reason for any further misunderstandings and misinterpretations. It may be that the circular migration we observe going on between reserves and cities has never had anything to do with the ability to cope as an urban dweller.

This research calls for additional qualitative studies on the migration of Registered Indian people – not only Indian women. A comparative study of Indian men and Indian women's migration would provide valuable details that would richly compliment quantitative studies and inform migration research, as well as challenge migration researchers to think outside of mainstream society. Not all migration theories and models can be applied to different cultures.

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APPENDIX A INTERVIEW GUIDE

Please let me know if there are any questions you do not want to answer and we can bypass them.

1). Is this the first time that you have lived in the city? Or have you lived in the city before? If so, why did you move back to the reserve? Why did you return to the city the second time? How many times in total have you moved from the reserve and returned to the city to live? (If question is applicable).

***If the participant has moved to the city more than once the same questions will be asked, but the participant will be asked to reflect on past moves in the order that they occurred until the most recent move.**

2). Did you move to the city with anyone?

Probe: Spouse, children, other family members, friends, alone? Did any of these people affect your reason for moving?

3). How long did you live on the reserve before moving to the city?

4). How far are you from your reserve?

5). Did distance play a role in your decision to move?

Probe: Were you more likely to move because your reserve is not too far from the city? Or did it not matter?

6). Was moving to the city a difficult choice for you to make? If it wasn't a difficult choice than was it a relatively easy choice to make? Did it take you long to decide?

Probe: Leaving home, friends, family

If applicable: Ask same questions about moving back to the reserve.

7). Was there any one specific reason that caused you to move or were there multiple reasons? What was the most important reason?

Probe: Better access to services? Healthcare? Education? Employment? Family? Other?

8). Did you know anyone from your reserve that lived in the city when you moved to the city? If so, did it make a difference in your decision to move?

9). Do you return to your reserve often for visits? If so, how often? If not, how come?

Probe: Is transportation a problem?

- 10). Do you have any intention on moving back to the reserve?
- 11). If you did move back to the reserve would there be available housing for you? Or would you have to find your own accommodations? Or do you have another home there already, aside from your home in the city? If so, please explain this situation.
- 12). In what situation would you consider moving back to you reserve?
Probe: retirement, family, etc...
- 13). When you made the initial move to the city did you intend to move back to your reserve someday or was your intention to remain in the city permanently?
- 14). There is some research available that suggests that there is a high rate of back and forth migration between reserves and cities. Have you noticed this type of movement from the people you know? Perhaps yourself....
If so, do you have an explanation as to why people make such frequent moves back and forth?
Does the frequent in and out migration cause any problems that you may have noticed?
What kinds of problems?
- 15). Were you actively involved in your reserve community when you lived there?
Probe: Taking part in organizing special events, sports, ceremonies, or programs.
- 16). Is the reserve community where you are from a close personable community?
Probe: social gatherings, community support for various needs? Available Elder support?
- 17). Statistics indicate that more women move off reserve than do men. Why do you think this is so?
- 18). In your opinion, do you think men and women leave the reserve for similar or different reasons? Please explain.
Probe: family or employment etc...
- 19). Do you think men and women have the same opportunities on the reserve?
Probe: education, employment, Band council duties? Are they treated equally? If not, do you think there is a possibility this might be (in part) associated with the higher rate pf female migration?
- 20). What are the advantages of living on the reserve?
- 21). Did you think about the advantages and disadvantages of your reserve when you decided to move to the city?
- 22). What did it mean for you to move away from your reserve?

Probe: Was it something you hoped you would never have to do or was it something you had looked forward to? Or perhaps it was something you never really thought about.

23). Can you tell me if your reserve has an explicit or significant meaning to you? Positively or negatively. Please explain.

24). If a young adult (ages 18-24) asked your advice about whether or not they should leave their reserve to move to the city, what do you think you would say to that person?

I have a few demographic questions I would like to ask you before concluding the interview, please feel free to let me know if there are questions you would rather not answer.

Demographic Information

25). Age group: 25-29
30-39
Over 39

26). Marital Status when 1st moved to the city:
Legally married
Separated
Divorced
Widowed
Common Law
Single (Never married)

27). What is your legal status now?
Legally married
Separated
Divorced
Widowed
Common Law
Single (Never married)

28). Are you currently raising children?
If so, how many?

29). Are you currently employed?

30). Could you please indicate to me what yearly personal income category you are in: Please indicate A, B, or C etc....

- A) \$0
- B) Less than \$1,999
- C) \$2,000 - \$9,999
- D) \$10,000 - \$19,999

E) \$20,000 - \$39,999

F) \$40,000 and over

This concludes the interview, thank you very much for your time.

**APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *From Reserves to Cities (and back): The Significance of Reserves in Registered Indian Women's Migration*. Please read the form carefully and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Supervisor: Dr. Evelyn Peters

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The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the significance of reserves in Registered Indian women's migration patterns. The researcher will conduct a tape-recorded interview with you (unless you would prefer the researcher to take notes rather record the interview). The interview will take no more than an hour of your time. At any time during the interview you may shut the tape recorder off if you so choose. The interviews will be conducted at a place preferred by you so long as it is a safe environment for both parties. An honourarium of \$10 will be gifted to you and travel expenses within the city (i.e. taxi or bus services) will be refunded by the researcher if necessary/applicable.

There are no known risks to you involved in the research. Your name will only be recorded on the consent form; audiotapes and interview transcripts will contain no reference to you or any reserve community that may be mentioned during the interview. The data will be stored in a locked room at the University of

Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Evelyn Peters (thesis supervisor). The data will be held for five years after which time it will be destroyed. You are entitled to a copy of the research findings if you choose to have a copy sent to you. In the event that you do not fit the required criteria for the study the data will not be included in the final analysis.

You will be given the opportunity to review the final transcript if you so choose. You will be asked to sign a transcript release form acknowledging by your signature that the transcript accurately reflects what you said or intended to say. You will be reminded that you have the right to withdraw any or all of your responses.

The research findings will be shared with you if you so choose. The research results will also be reported in a thesis, and will be presented at a colloquium to fulfill M.A. requirements. The data will be reported in aggregate form and therefore you will not be identifiable. As well, the consent forms will be stored separately from the audiotapes even though the audiotapes will contain no reference to you; this procedure will ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

You may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you contributed will be destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point; you are also free to contact the researcher at the numbers provided above if you have any questions at a later time. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on August 17th, 2004. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services at (306) 966-2084. Out of town participants may call collect. Any participants interested in obtaining the results of the study are free to contact the researcher and the results will be submitted to the participant.

Consent to Participate

I have read and understood the description provided above; I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records. I also acknowledge that I have received a gift of ten dollars and any expenses I may have incurred for travel within the city.

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

(Signature of Researcher)

**APPENDIX C
TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM**

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Pamela Irvine. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Pamela Irvine to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date