

SETTLING ON NOVA SCOTIA: EXPLORING THE MEANING OF HOME AFTER
RELOCATING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Social Anthropology

at

Dalhousie University

Halifax, Nova Scotia

April 2024

Abstract

Since 2016, Nova Scotia has experienced an upswing in migration to the province after decades of out-migration. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this phenomenon, with an estimated population growth of over 20,000 people to Nova Scotia from provinces outside of Atlantic Canada between 2022 and 2023 (Statistics Canada, Table 17). Based on theories of place and migration, this study seeks to answer the question “how have people navigated their changing sense of home since moving to Nova Scotia during the Covid-19 pandemic?” In doing so, this study serves to gain a better understanding of why this trend in migration has occurred and what the experience of those who moved to the province has been like. Through a qualitative analysis of seven semi-structured interviews, this study finds that migrating was a response to changes already occurring to one’s sense of home rather than the other way around, and that Nova Scotia presented itself as a uniquely appealing place to find community. These findings are interpreted in the context of wider narratives of place, and with an eye to concerns about Nova Scotian identity.

Key words: Migration, Place, Home, Identity, Nova Scotia, Covid-19 Pandemic, Multilocal Places, Narratives of Place, Authenticity

Acknowledgements

To my participants for so generously and honestly sharing your experiences with me. To Dr. Martha Radice and Dr. Karen Foster for providing constant reassurance, accountability, and advice. To Dr. Brian Noble and Dr. Liz Fitting for the class discussions that always found a way into my ideas. And to Dr. Laura Eramian and Dr. Liesl Gambold for the pointers on relevant literature.

To my Honour's cohort- maybe the real thesis is the friends we made along the way! I loved brainstorming, scheming, commiserating, rehearsing, and celebrating with you. To my parents and brothers, my roommates, and my friends who were forced to talk about the meaning of home more than anyone should ever have to- your insights made this thesis what it is. (And to Puddleduck, who I'm sure if she could talk, wouldn't have let me drone on for so long.) To Kate Beaton: *Ducks* and everything it stood for was there in the first glimmers of a thesis idea and the last sentences that I wrote.

And to everyone that has made Halifax feel like home:

Thank you!

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Surveying the Area: An Introduction

Where is home? This simple question often comes up as a cursory means of getting to know someone new. But why do we ask it? What does its answer say about us? In looking into these questions further, the concept of home reveals itself to be an entanglement of social histories and contemporary issues. Anthropological studies have shown that what and where we call home is informed by societal expectations (Cuba & Hummon, 1993), colonial ideas of race (Rodman, 2001), and economic shifts (Whalen & Li & Eisen, 2021). To go one step further, anthropologists have recently argued that there is in fact no universal understanding of home, and instead that this concept is ever-changing and context specific (Mallett, 2004, p. 84). What then, informs our choices to move and our processes of making home in a new place? How can we explore the concept of home to untangle the larger social processes of a specific context? In combining the most recent research on home in anthropology with a local perspective, this research study seeks to answer: how have people navigated their changing sense of home since moving to Nova Scotia in the Covid-19 pandemic?

By conducting seven interviews with participants who moved to Nova Scotia during the pandemic, I was able to ask about what made Nova Scotia desirable, how people rationalized their decision to move, how they perceived their welcome to the area, and what their relocation has changed about their lives. I position their answers as a means of filling research gaps on the concept of home in Canada and the concept of home as it is affected by global disasters such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, my research uses home as a window into the narratives of place surrounding Nova Scotia and the socio-political processes that underly them.

I hope these findings help to spark larger conversations about the province's feelings towards newcomers to the area, to conversations about where we as Canadians feel we have a

right to move, and about how we can better navigate changes to our homes in the future. As someone who moved to Halifax during the Covid-19 pandemic from Ontario, I feel that there is a desire for more engaged conversations about the ethics of moving and the realities of life in Nova Scotia as a ‘Come-from-Away.’ Furthermore, as someone who moved to Nova Scotia from a small town, I believe that conversations around rural migration are ever more important as people attempt to cope with increasing globalization, wealth disparity, political strife, and climate breakdown.

Building a Foundation: The Literature of Place, Migration, and Home

Nova Scotia in the Covid-19 Pandemic

In 2020, the world was forced to contend with the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in government mandates to close public spaces and limit travel and socialization to curve the spread of the deadly virus. Canada entered into its first lockdown in March 2020, and various nation and province-wide shutdowns would occur over the next several years (Government of Canada, 2023). Nova Scotia, along with New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland & Labrador decided to keep provincial borders restricted longer than many other Canadian provinces and only allowed travel between the Atlantic region in what became known as the “Atlantic Bubble.” This Atlantic Bubble successfully limited the spread of the virus and led to lower Covid-19 rates than the rest of Canada between July and November 2020 (Ross, 2020; Grant 2020).

For decades, Nova Scotia had been an area that experienced heavy out-migration (Whalen & Li & Eisen, 2021). However, a recent shift in in-migration was compounded when the Atlantic bubble’s lower Covid-19 rates, along with its large rural areas and relatively affordable housing, made Nova Scotia a more desirable place to live for Canadians outside of

Atlantic Canada (Weeden, Hardy & Foster, 2022). This coincided with the rise in remote work (a means of mitigating in-person contact at work), which enabled many individuals to pursue this move to Nova Scotia without having to find new employment (Ferreira, 2020). This group of new arrivals to the area has been contentious, as locals contend with the housing crisis (McKenna, 2023).

For many, these new arrivals brought up questions about who had the right to live in Nova Scotia. In a study of Michigan, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada, the Covid-19 pandemic was shown to have caused widespread “urban flight” as those who were able decided to leave cities in favour of the lower Covid-19 rates and relative seclusion of rural areas. In each of these areas, authors Weeden, Hardy, and Foster write that this made clear several pre-existing tensions about who has the “right to be rural” (2022). In Atlantic Canada, where nearly half the population lives rurally, the historic loss of key industries and the reliance on the tourism industry means that many communities are particularly dependent on their ability to accept visitors. Despite this, the Atlantic bubble was maintained for several months and people were encouraged to stay in Halifax and their respective provinces much longer due to general pressure from the public and politicians (Weeden, Hardy & Foster, 2022, p. 737). In this case, the right to live rurally was reserved for those already living rurally, who’s communities were “shaped by legacies of colonialism; histories of extractive and productivist economies; neoliberal restructuring of global, national, and regional economies; and globalization and urbanization,” (Weeden, Hardy & Foster, 2022, p. 733) but who in the context of a global virus found themselves in a desirable location for those in urban areas.

In examining the social theories and popular commentary on recent migration to Nova Scotia, it is clear that underlying this phenomenon are a number of social and historical processes

that make this a unique context. While the literature I examined addresses many of these processes- the urban/rural divide, the economic motivation for migration- there exists a clear gap in our knowledge about how the people migrating to Nova Scotia understand how these factors affected their decision to move and how this informed their experiences of the province once they had moved.

The Anthropology of Place:

In order to study why and how a wave of migrants moved to Nova Scotia, it was important to look critically at why I chose to study it as a province, and what this place meant for the people I was interviewing. For this reason, the anthropology of place became a key starting point for my research.

Anthropology typically saw a place as the geographical container for a group of people and relegated any mention of place to descriptions of the landscape. In *Empowering Place*, Margaret Rodman draws on geographical and political theory to recognize that place is a “politicized social and cultural construct,” (1992, p. 640). Rodman’s realization came at a time when anthropologists were recognizing the importance of places more generally. In the late 20th century, Setha Low conducted ground-breaking work arguing for the important role of space in ethnography. She suggested that the spaces we inhabit offer important insights into the meaning behind our daily activities. The “social construction of space,” or the intended goals and ideals of a space, and the “social production of space,” or the way a space is actually used and adapted, are suggested to be two main avenues for analyzing space that can reveal much about why we occupy the spaces we do, and the goals and challenges we are living out in them (Low, 1996, pp. 861-862). Rodman intends to further Low’s theories by extending their ideas beyond

architectural spaces to places more broadly- that is, not just the places we build, but those larger towns or regions we inhabit and act out specific meanings on.

To capture this idea, Rodman suggests a “multilocal” model of place. Building on ideas by George Marcus and Anthony Giddens, “multilocality” as Rodman defines it means acknowledging that different individuals and groups will have unique views of a place, none of which are more objective than the other (1992, p. 646). It also means studying the shifting boundaries of a place as enacted by the social networks in those places and being aware that people interpret new places in comparison to places that are familiar (p. 647). In sum, place as Rodman views it is ever-changing and dependent on the multiple people and viewpoints that inhabit it. Anthropologists have proven that studying a place requires an attunement to its meaning within a specific social context, rather than as an objective background setting. This study will analyze what participants say about Nova Scotia as “narratives of place” which reflect a specific social context.

Studying Migration:

The study of migration is helpful in exploring why people move, and how increased movement has complicated our ideas of home. We live in a world that is defined by movement, brought on by an increasingly globalized world amidst political strife and climate destruction. One of the most commonly accepted reasons for migrating is economic viability (Whelan & Li & Eisen, 2021, p. 2). However, Neil Thin writes that people increasingly move as a means of seeking out wellbeing (2016, p. 6). Moving as a means of improving quality of life, Thin writes, is becoming more common in older age (2016, p. 3). David Hummon and Lee Cuba compliment this idea in their sociological study of people who moved to Cape Cod in finding that older migrants to the area, compared to younger migrants, were more likely to list the local scenery

and available leisure activities as a reason for moving and had often moved from farther away than younger migrants (1993, p. 568). In terms of motivations to move, Thin writes that the positive aspects of increased movement are important to consider in dispelling the anthropological bias to problematize this “uprootedness” (2016, p. 22). Thin writes that the positive motivations and outcomes, such as increased wellbeing, are important to consider since the study of migration in anthropology has typically prioritized identifying the problems associated with movement and “uprootedness,” which in its existence threatened traditional Western notions of the family home (2016, p. 22). His research suggests that increased movement and relocation may be more than just a result of modern problems and in fact a sign of people’s sense of agency in navigating the world around them (p. 8).

Research suggests that improved quality of life is a strong enough motivation to move even in those who have a strong sense of attachment to place. Holly R. Barcus and Stanley D. Brunn find that in Appalachian communities, people with strong place attachment still migrated for economic reasons but maintained strong social connections in what Barcus and Brunn are deeming a state of “place elasticity” (2010, p. 281). This dispels the notion that people move only when they lack a strong sense of connection to their original location. Once again, the problems that anthropology tends to intuit about movement are much more complex than we might assume. People not only see migration as an opportunity for self-improvement, they are also increasingly able to forego some of the commonly accepted losses associated with migration such as decreased connection to their place of origin.

The Anthropology of Home

While migration is now an increasingly popular method of coping and adapting to life obstacles, people’s understandings of home are becoming more and more flexible to account for

this shift. In fact, contemporary anthropological theory reveals that home is a dynamic and multifaceted concept that is context specific. Tracing the evolution of the term in anthropology demonstrates that home can be a useful avenue for investigating the connections between someone's sense of a place and reasons for moving.

Early anthropologists studied homes as a means of understanding the social interactions that took place in them (Samanani & Lenhard, 2023). In the same way that geographic locations defined cultures in classic Anthropology, the physical location of the house served as the “container” for the social relations that anthropologists were really interested in (Samanani & Lenhard, 2023). Additionally, the concept of home in the West as a place of comfort and belonging went unexamined in Anthropology until the 20th century, when postmodernist, anti-colonialist, and feminist critiques began to poke holes in these assumptions and ultimately conclude that our understandings of home differ not just from culture to culture but from person to person and can reinforce these Western, colonial beliefs and systems if left unexamined.

Post-modernists were some of the first to recognize that though location and place were important elements of studying culture, their meanings were often lost on anthropologists. They made clear that defining a social group by their location, on a cultural or domestic level, misrepresents and reduces the complex and flexible nature of culture (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, pp. 4-5; Samanani & Lenhard, 2023). This problematization of location was part of a broader reckoning in anthropology with the implications of an increasingly connected world (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, p. 3) and the advent of the anthropology of space and place, as previously described (Rodman, 1992 & Low, 1996). With the onset of spatial ethnography and more complex understandings of place, the definition of home was effectively separated from the house. While the home was once equated to a specific location, there is now an awareness that

home is the relationship between the places we live *and* the complex ideas we have about it (Dowling & Blunt, 2006, p. 2).

While globalization challenged our assumptions about space and place, it also coincided with anthropology's acknowledgement of the inherent colonialism and racism of the field. For the first time, anthropologists at the beginning of the 20th century became aware of ethnocentrism, and their own Western biases (Bizumic, 2014, p 3). However, well into the 20th century, assumptions around the house and family were still ingrained in social theory. With the post-modernist shift, the colonial and capitalist values inherent in the nuclear family home became apparent to anthropologists (Samananai & Lenhard, 2023). Today, anthropological studies of the home reflect the fact that people increasingly choose to live alone, with roommates, or other people aside from their family well into adulthood as a means of cultivating community and challenging capitalist ideals (Heinonen, 2023; Laviolette & Cubero, 2011). If Western notions of the nuclear family were not superior to the relational structures of other cultures, and if today the inherent value of organizing the capitalist economy by the nuclear family is being challenged even in Western society, then the connection between homes and families is also severed.

The study of home has also always been emotionally laden. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson write that home traditionally referred to “a safe and still place to leave and return to” (1998, p. 6). Studies of those moving to new areas often associate the success of making a new home with a feeling of belonging (Cuba & Hummon, 1993, p. 548). However, while our definitions of home as tied to the house and the nuclear family were being challenged, feminist scholars were also realizing that it was not necessarily the safe haven that these assumptions implied. Feminist scholars in the 20th century showed that the nuclear family was upheld on the

unpaid emotional and physical labour of women (Dowling & Blunt, 2006, p. 12). As Samanani and Lenhard write “emphasis on interpersonal relationships, on belonging, security, and worth, and on power and contestation, remain rooted in the house, as a physical space, but move beyond it in emphasizing the subjective dimensions of home” (2023, *Re-making home: feminist and critical approaches*). In recognizing the subjective experiences of home, scholars have argued that conceptions of home must include negative experiences of domestic life. The home can be both a place of belonging, safety, comfort, but also of alienation (Blunt & Varley, 2004, p. 4).

Today, anthropologists attempt to define home in ways that do not depend on its physical manifestations and account for the wide variety of subjective experiences of home around the world. Rapport and Dawson suggest that a more accurate study of home in the context of increased movement “comes to be found in a routine set of practices, a repetition of habitual interactions” (1998, p. 7). They continue by explaining that in a globalized world, people often come to define home as “where they best know themselves” (1998). Others suggest that home exists in our minds as a type of nostalgia for the past (Dowling & Blunt, 2006, p. 212) or as an idealized future that one strives for (Ahmed, 1999 as cited by Samanani & Lenhard, 2023; Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 246). As Shelley Mallett attempts to summarize in her overview of the various conceptions of home, “the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people’s relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things” (Mallett, 2004, p 84).

Tracing the study of home from early anthropology to contemporary studies demonstrates how common definitions of home are informed by our problematic social histories, just as they are reshaped by our attempts to challenge these ideas. Not only do our understandings of home reveal the legacies of colonial, patriarchal rhetoric, the way we understand and use home today

to represent our ideals, our nostalgia, and our identities also means that home is a useful connection point for investigating how personal narratives might intersect with the wider stories of a place.

Measure Twice, Cut Once: Methodology for Going Beyond Personal Anecdotes

I began my research process by relying on my own experience as a migrant to Nova Scotia. Conversations I had with other friends who had moved here along with local literature and journalism informed my interest in the lack of clarity migrants had about their reasons for moving, on the contentions around authentic and inauthentic views of Nova Scotia, and on the history of Nova Scotia as a have-not province that was suddenly experiencing in-migration. An essential through line of my research process was therefore in working to establish truth beyond my own personal insights while allowing this situated knowledge to serve as a useful starting point.

I first decided to narrow my research population to people that moved to Nova Scotia from other Canadian provinces or territories outside of Atlantic Canada, and who moved between March 2020 and March 2022. This narrowed population size felt appropriate for the time limits of the Honour's project and also allowed me to study the specific phenomenon that I was interested in which was a sudden reversal of Nova Scotians moving to other Canadian provinces. These dates were chosen based on the fact that the first lockdown began in March 2020 and the last Covid-19 wave that saw heavy restrictions in the area, the Omicron variant, ended around March 2022. I recruited participants primarily using the snowball recruitment method. This involved posting advertisements on Instagram and Facebook stories, as shown in Appendix A and B. I also put physical posters up on campus and asked friends to spread the word. In the end, I was able to interview seven participants, most of which heard about the study

from friends or on social media. For one of my participants, I decided to adapt my initial time span as she had moved to Nova Scotia in June 2022 and I felt that this was close enough to have experienced similar levels of pandemic restrictions and a sufficient amount of time living in the province.

All participants initially reached out to me on either Instagram or Facebook, at which point I confirmed that they met the study criteria and then moved communication over to email in order to send them the consent form, explain the full scope of the project, and schedule an interview. Due to my reliance on the snowball recruitment method, this process involved special attention to ethical standards of confidentiality by being careful not to disclose any participants' identities or data to anyone else, including those who may have recommended them to me. At this point, I chose to conduct interviews either over Zoom or in a public location. While my initial research plan had involved interviewing at the participant's household, I had by this point recognized that my research interests lay less in the material culture that this method was developed for and found that this was more convenient for my participants and allowed me to interview those outside of Halifax more easily. In the end, two interviews were conducted in study rooms on Dalhousie campus, and five interviews were conducted over Zoom. In conducting my interviews over Zoom, I used my note taking as a natural reminder to leave more time for responses. Although the data I collected from both types of interviews were equally rich, interviews over Zoom did tend to be shorter.

Interviews ranged from 36 Minutes to 1 hr and 16 minutes and were semi-structured. I asked all participants some variation of 27 overarching questions, as outlined in my interview guide in Appendix D. I prioritized asking each participant about how they defined home, where they felt they most belonged, and why they decided to move here. Most other questions were

dependent on how talkative the participant was, what they seemed to find most interesting about their move, and the flow of the conversation. Throughout the interviews, I used my iPhone and a hand-held recording device in order to have two audio records of the meeting. I also took handwritten notes in order to stay engaged, and as a means of relieving pressure when participants needed more time to think about their answer and to note any physical dynamics that an audio-recording would miss.

The analysis process often began soon after my interviews had been conducted with the transcription process. I use Otter AI to auto transcribe my audio files, at which point I listened through the file to correct any transcription errors and re-acquaint myself with the data. Once all my interviews were transcribed, I used NVivo to begin finding key themes. In order to do this, I used established techniques to highlight for repetitions, metaphors, ‘missing data’, and a priori themes from the literature (Bernard & Ryan, 2009, pp. 101-123). The themes that I coded included mentions of the ocean, repeated use of the word “settled,” and references to home as being defined by people or routines as seen in the literature.

Throughout my analysis process, it was important to be mindful of my study group’s limitations. Of the seven people I interviewed, all were white, and five of them were under the age of 30, all of which moved to Halifax. A majority of my participants also identified as women, and all were originally from either British Columbia or Ontario. I paid special attention to the fact that all participants were white given that numerous studies indicate that race can affect how welcomed people feel in Nova Scotia. I also considered age in my analysis considering that age and life stage are known to factor heavily into a person’s reasons for moving. This meant, for example, that my finding that all of the participants found Nova

Scotians to be welcoming could not be stated without the qualifying factor that whiteness likely played a role.

Inspection: Analyzing Personal Narratives and Narratives of Place

Over the course of seven interviews, participants were asked about their current living situation in Nova Scotia, their experience of moving here, how their expectations compared to the reality of their move, and about how they define home and belonging considering this move. This data was collected in hopes of answering the question “how have people navigated their changing sense of home since moving to Nova Scotia during the Covid-19 pandemic?” In reviewing the data, three main themes emerged demonstrating that the process of moving was a continual give and take between their personal aspirations for home and what their realities could offer. Firstly, the interview data showed that a change in people’s sense of home preceded their move to Nova Scotia, and secondly, that specific stereotypical views of Nova Scotia led to the idea that life in Nova Scotia met many of their aspirations of home. Lastly, Nova Scotia was assumed to be and inevitably became a place that was easy to find belonging in. Essentially, this analysis illustrates how people made the decision to move to Nova Scotia, how they have lived their lives here since, and what socio-political processes underlay their ideas of place to demonstrate how these seven participants “settled” on Nova Scotia, in all senses of the word.

Defining Home

As shown in the literature review, any study of home must necessarily contend with the fact that home has an ever-evolving and context-specific meaning. Asked to define home for themselves, participants typically spoke first about home in an emotional sense. One participant said that home is “the place that I come back to. It's like, that's where I reset. It's where I relax. It's where I recharge.” Two others echoed this sentiment, saying that home is “somewhere safe.

And where I feel comfortable. And Wi Fi, but that's kind of being funny. Um, somewhere where I feel like I can just decompress from the day. Somewhere I feel safe, and relaxes me,” and for another: “the comfort of being in a spot with no inhibitions, like it's just a nice, a nice feeling.” These sentiments perfectly echo the more traditional meaning of home that Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson defined as “a safe and still place to leave and return to” (1998, p. 6).

Notably, one participant was open about the fact that adapting their understanding of home after moving is something they are still making sense of today. She explains,

“... like growing up, and this is probably a little bit unrelated so you can stop me if it's off topic but like, growing up I tended to be very like... we moved only like a few times with my mom, and my dad we moved a lot. But with my mom, every time we moved, I kind of like, got attached to the home we were living in just because it was familiar, it was comforting. And you know my mom had to very much be like, ‘well, you know, like, even when we move, we're bringing all our stuff like, you know, I'm gonna be here, like, you know, we're bringing our dog, your room is gonna look the same. It's just gonna be in a different place.’ So like, I think I've always had a hard time because- it's still new. But like, you know, we're still bringing everything that... but it's new. So, I think like, yeah, I still feel that way in terms of like, okay, but this is what I'm used to. So that's what I associate with home. But I think I've also come to learn that, it's not necessarily location, but more who's with you. And yeah, so I think, it's more the, again, the people that are home for me. If that makes sense. Moving somewhere, and yeah, just having that community, that those people... that's what I think would be home for me.”

This quote demonstrates the fact that for at least one participant, relocating did not immediately lead to a change in where “home” is. This might also be an example of what Barcus and Brunn would call “place elasticity,” or the maintaining of social connections in places that a person has strong place attachment to, leading to the sense that both places are home (2010, p. 281).

This participant eventually seems to conclude that people, and not location, are the defining factor in feeling at home. Others came to this conclusion as well, stating “I think home is like people more so than place... and I think it's...I don't know, I think a big piece of it is connection,” or more specifically, “it's where I... my husband is. So, for me, it's like... if we're

able to be together, then I'm okay.” Yet another participant elaborates “home, to me, is where you feel yourself. And you feel, I guess seen. Yeah, where you feel seen, where you feel calm.”

In summary, the participants’ definitions of home reflected the fact that they had all recently moved sometime in the last four years. Additionally, it became apparent that home comes to represent an imagined ideal for people- nobody defined home for themselves in a way that encompassed the difficulties of moving and readjusting to a new place. Instead, they defined home in terms of the positive and stabilizing feelings they were able to create for themselves (Ahmed, 1999 as cited by Samanani & Lenhard, 2023; Dowling & Blunt, 2006, p. 246).

“What are we staying here for?”

In coming to understand each of the participants’ moves to Nova Scotia, it became clear that it was not as simple as the move having prompted new adaptations to their understanding of home, but that their move had been a method of navigating some sort of change or dissatisfaction with their previous iteration of home that was often accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic. For five of the people that I interviewed, their graduation from high school or university was linked to their decision to move.

For those graduating from university, one participant explained that their move to Nova Scotia was born out of the realization that “I don't have to just like, go go go to the next, quote unquote step, I guess, you know, typical step in life.” Two other participants had recently graduated high school in British Columbia and chose to attend university in Halifax. While moving to university is a common reason for uprooting oneself in becoming an adult, in both cases their moves coincided with or were part of a shift in their whole family’s home. In Spencer’s case, his parents had moved out of his childhood home when he was 16 and would move again after he had left for school. In his own words:

“after I left, they moved like four or five days after I came here. You know, the house that we had lived in, for like, two-ish years, it was a rental house. And we always intended it to be a short-term thing. And, like the house really didn't fit our needs very well. But then they moved into a house that was much smaller, because I have two siblings and my parents were like, ‘We don't want to be sad empty nesters who have like four empty bedrooms in the house just waiting for our kids to come back for a week every year.’ And so, they moved into a smaller house. There wasn't as much space for me. And so that was one reason but like, I still, there was still going to be a bed for me if I went back. I think mostly it was that I didn't have any [BC] friends that I wanted to... that I wanted to be with.”

In other words, their dwelling had changed, their need to stay home while in high school had changed, and their sense of community had changed.

For Rebecca, their hometown had grown significantly since their childhood, and soon after their move to Nova Scotia their parents also moved to a new house. The effect of this was that it seemed to reinforce the need to create their own idea of what home is:

“It definitely feels like it's kind of weird because my family at home sold our childhood home this summer. And so, we moved. And so now it's like... my Halifax home is kind of more of a settled home. I have my own space at our new house. I think my parents were... like, downsized because I'm one of five. And there's only one of them living at home now. So, they have this much smaller house and like, I don't have a room there. Which makes sense, because I don't live there anymore. But it's definitely weird to go home and be like, oh, yeah, I sleep on the couch now. And then come back here. And it's like, oh, yeah, but this is actually kind of home. Because my stuff's here, and I'm settled here.”

Jackie experienced something similar to Rebecca but at a different stage of their life. Throughout her adulthood, her hometown had become a commuter town to Toronto, leading to feelings of alienation. She explained:

“I grew up living 45 minutes from the large, large city of Toronto and I grew up in a small town which turned to a big town pretty fast because people were realizing that we could be a commuter town. And it turned into that. And you were just one of many. You were just sort of thrown in the whole multicultural... I don't know how to describe it. You were just one of millions....”

Her dwelling had also changed in that her husband had retired from farming and her two children had moved away, prompting her to ask, “what are we staying here for?”

For another participant, their previous location had simply not felt right. In her own words: “We just didn't really connect. Like, we just didn't have a sense of home there like, whatever. And again, it... which was really funny for us, because we've moved all over the place... We've lived in, you know, Ontario, Quebec, BC, Alberta.... And we just knew, both of us. We were just kind of both on the same page that Alberta wasn't... wasn't it.” Combined with the fact that she and her husband had already moved several times and developed a more “transient idea of what home is,” she felt and continues to feel no problem in relocating in order to find the right fit.

In summary, each of the participants I interviewed communicated in some way that their previous iteration of home had changed due to several factors including growing into adulthood, changing family dynamics, urban expansion, change in life stage and goals after graduation, and lack of identification with a place. In some cases, the Covid-19 pandemic had exacerbated this change in home to create a desire to move. While participants did not say that they were attracted to move to Nova Scotia because of its unique Covid-19 rates and regulations, (with one participant specifically noting that this was not a motivator) the pandemic did seem to create the opportunity to consider moving.

For Rebecca, her move to Nova Scotia was the end result of a pivot in life goals she made during the pandemic. She explained:

“prior to the pandemic, I thought that I was gonna go to university in Calgary for theater. And then, um, yeah, theater and then, like, theater education. And then the pandemic hit. And, um, that was 20... summer 2020. And I didn't want to take University online, and I knew that, for myself, that would probably not be a really great plan. And so, then I ended up... ended up not going. And then through the pandemic, um, ended up deciding I wanted to pursue science...”

While the pandemic and regional restrictions may not have been direct causes for her move to Nova Scotia, this participant does seem to think that the pandemic led to a re-evaluation in her goals which would eventually lead to her decision to apply to a science program in Nova Scotia, the same province that her sister was attending university.

For another participant, the pandemic allowed the time for a move they had been contemplating for a while. Jackie recounted how she drove West to stay in British Columbia near her son during the summer of 2020 to explore the possibility of moving there, before ultimately deciding on Nova Scotia as the more economically viable option. Erin described how the onset of Covid-19 lockdowns made her realize that she wanted her life to ‘slow down.’ She continues:

“So it made me realize, like, if it's not like... when we were all forced to stop, I was like, ‘Oh, this is really nice.’ And then I realized that I could be doing things while at that slower pace and still be functioning and productive, and you know, all that jazz. So yeah, that was really nice. And when things started to pick back up in Ontario and stuff like that, I was like, ‘oh no, I don't like this.’”

Sophia wondered aloud during the interview if she would have moved to Nova Scotia at all had it not been for the pandemic which forced her to finish the last years of her undergraduate degree at home with her parents: “yeah, maybe I would have wanted to be closer to home because that was like, as I was doing my undergrad it was like- I kind of want to move back home. So yeah, I think it did, I think being there for a year and a half, I was just ready for something else.”

Canada’s Ocean Playground

In each interview, I asked participants if their move to Nova Scotia met their expectations. When I asked this question to Olivia, she responded: “I think so. Honestly, I don't think I had too many expectations when I moved here. My... I was mostly focused on finding somewhere to live and then, like making it through the first year of my Master's. But, you know, the stereotype of like, ‘oh, everyone's so nice.’ And most people are nice. Yeah, um, I guess it

did meet my expectations.” This echoed the feeling I had gotten from most participants, which was that there were few memorable expectations about moving here. On several occasions, this question revealed almost no thought about the place they were moving to at all: “I don't know. I didn't really know... I don't really know what I expected when I moved to Nova Scotia. Like, I think... I don't know I was like, ‘oh, yeah, I'm gonna go to school.’” At most, this question elicited thoughts about the students’ expectations for their university program.

Sophia offered some insight into the lack of response to this question when she elaborated, “I think, I like... I kind of came in with like, sort of an idea but also not really. Like I didn't really have an expectation when I moved here. I truly did not know much about Nova Scotia or Halifax, at all, before moving here. I was just like, "being on the East Coast seems fun." That was truly my only thought. Right? And like people saying that it was nice.” If there was little expectation about moving here, and little knowledge of the province at all, then why move across the country? The answer may be more apparent in the references that each participant made to the stereotypical image of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians that they recognized in their lives here.

As in Olivia’s response, many participants acknowledged that their descriptions of life in Nova Scotia, often of what they liked about it, matched common stereotypes about Nova Scotians. Not only does this suggest that participants might have had a stereotypical understanding of what Nova Scotia was like before they moved, the fact that these were most often positive stereotypes seems to suggest a link to the tourism industry’s effects on how Nova Scotia is viewed by the rest of Canada. In other words, perhaps the lack of expectations for Nova Scotia that each participant communicated was a lack of easily explainable and defensible reason to move rather than a lack of thought at all.

The first theme that echoed the tourism industry's view of Nova Scotia was that of proximity to water. In each of the interviews, participants made references to the ocean, the water, or the beaches. They mentioned their desire to be near them, their healing effects, and their beauty, even for those that the ocean was not visible or present in their everyday lives. Erin summarizes how this idea was instrumental in their decision to move:

“I had a lot of good memories of the East Coast, like vacations and visits and stuff. And I knew I wasn't cut out for fast paced life. Um, and I knew I wasn't cut out for the slow pace of you know, the prairies. So, as someone who always needs to be living near water, I realized I could move to the East Coast as long as I found a job and a place to live.”

Sophia expands on this same idea:

“it was just like, ‘oh, I could go there for a couple years and come back.’ Um, but yeah, I think like the fact that it's close to, close to the ocean, the like lifestyle that was associated with it.” She later continues “... I think it's just, there's something nice about being close to a body of water. I think like, that's my favorite part. It's peaceful. It's nice.”

Another theme which appeared explicitly in four interviews and implicitly in two others was the notion that life in Nova Scotia was “slowed down,” or at least quaint and small compared to the rest of Canada. In referencing the recent snowstorm at the time of this interview, Olivia exclaimed: “I was telling my friends from my program, who have also since moved away... they live in bigger cities like Toronto and stuff. And it's much more fast-paced there. And yeah, I feel like it's, everyone's just like, ‘yeah, you can just take a day off. We'll just close down. That's fine...’ and I'm like ‘what do you mean all the classes are canceled?’ That's absolutely insane to me.” Sophia explained that the province felt slowed down not just in lifestyle, but in how the province runs: “I think like there's a lot of things that feel slow here in terms of... I don't want to say like politics, but like certain you know, there's stuff that like happens in Ontario first, and then here, we're kind of like, we feel behind.” Erin, who had explicitly sought out Nova Scotia as a place that would allow her to live at a slower pace, went so far as to say that

Ontarians moving to Nova Scotia risked bringing their fast-paced ways and changing the culture of Nova Scotia:

“like a lot of times in Ontario it's like... ‘I need it now,’ you know, like, ‘it's service, I need it now.’ Whereas here, now doesn't mean now. So like, I think that's one of the things is just, just having a little bit more patience with like, stuff happening. And then I had to, I had to leave behind... I actually left behind a lot of bad things. So, a lot of like the worries around missing events or missing things or, or stuff like that.” They continued later, “I always say when tourists ask or when people visit, like, the most important thing when visiting is you eat good food, you talk to good people, and you just rest. And for tourists, they're like, ‘ha, ha, that's amazing.’ But I'm like, it kind of is true.”

For some, the slower pace of life here was the result of moving to rural Nova Scotia from a more urban area. Clara explained:

“I think it definitely slowed us down a little bit. Like I said, you know, not living in a city with the convenience and accessibility. It definitely makes you sort of prepare your days and your weeks a little bit better. And yeah, it's just it's... just slowed us down, I think a little bit. We've just, we spend less money here, I think. It makes sense. Just less take out, less going here, doing this, running errands...”

Jackie had summarized her view of Nova Scotian culture here when she professed,

“They're like... it's always like camping here. It's always like a makeshift, kind of- it doesn't matter what you're wearing. Doesn't matter if you show up a little bit late. It doesn't matter that they've run out of coffee because don't worry, someone else has some. It's okay if something burns, it's okay if you... if you've had a little too much to drink, that's okay. It's okay if you come to a potluck with nothing because next time you'll bring two things. It's always just okay. And it's like, oh my gosh, it's so great.”

This last quote seems to say that the culture here feels more casual, less pressured, and perhaps more community oriented. With its evocation of adventure, its proximity to the ocean, and its slow pace of life, moving to Nova Scotia meant a chance at life in “Canada’s Ocean Playground.”

It is important to stress that these idyllic views of Nova Scotia are very persuasive, and that this analysis does not suggest that any participant was being fickle in their decision to move.

In fact, throughout these interviews it became clear that people were willing to face a lot of discomfort in pursuit of these ideals. Despite the fact that people experienced loneliness and missed their families, felt that it took them around a year to feel comfortable, faced significant housing challenges, and some experienced the ill health or death of a family member from afar, my participants were willing to move and still expressed gratitude in having done so a couple years later. This image of Nova Scotia, despite any inaccuracies, suggests that there was a strongly felt need that was lacking in participants' previous homes.

Additionally, the ideas that each of these participants had of Nova Scotia, although sometimes stereotypical, cannot be dismissed as completely random. As historian Ian McKay explains, the tourism industry creates images of a place which then take on a life of their own and become intertwined with the reality of a place: "modern tourism means the triumph of a sort of epistemological relativism- is this a 'real' event, we are often made to wonder, or merely a 'pseudo-event' for the tourists?- and a totalizing integration of aesthetic and commodity production." (McKay, 2014, p. 30). Nova Scotia's reliance on the tourism industry means that these ideal images of itself have become integrated and intertwined with the real lives of Nova Scotians to the point of being indistinguishable. The capitalist driven tourism image of Nova Scotia is thus a clearly distinguishable narrative of place present in each of my participants' personal narratives of home.

The Right to be Nova Scotian

In every interview, participants expressed the importance of building connections in a new home and the feeling that Nova Scotia had a distinct sense of community. Spencer remarked that they were surprised by this feeling:

"I definitely think that it was... just like the sheer community of it all, but like... there's really like, everywhere I go I know somebody pretty much. And, you know, it still

happens like every time I meet someone new, and then I see them somewhere else. And I'm like, 'what the hell?' Like... And yeah, so I think that that was probably the thing that surprised me the most. I knew that it was small, but it was like, 'Okay, there's still like, I think 500,000 people in like the HRM?'"

Erin recounted an instance of this same phenomenon and how it felt distinct enough for it to feel "fake":

"Yeah, there are like, certain moments where I kind of just go, 'oh, cool, this is my life.' Like, I had been on the bus coming home from work in the spring. So of course, it was gorgeous. And that was lovely. And, I had run into a friend getting off the bus. And it was just a quick like, 'hey, hey,' you know, that was kind of cool. And previously, that day, I had run an errand at work, and had run into like two people I knew just randomly in the street of downtown, and I was like, 'what the heck, I feel like I'm in a show,' you know? And then as I'm walking to my apartment, a guy goes by on a bicycle and just goes "[Erin!]" like just going past. And I knew that person as well! Also, it was the funniest way to like, say hi, like just zooming past on a bike. But like, it was at that moment... It was gorgeous. I was walking past a graveyard. And, and I just kind of had a day of like, not mentally hard conversations, but it was just like... running into people I knew in, in big city, "big city," the city. And I felt very like... at home. Yeah, I felt very blessed. Like, I was like, 'oh, this is dope.' You know, this is kind of cool. Like, I have a lot of connection. And it felt fake. It felt fake, yeah."

While the level of interconnectedness they would experience once they moved here surprised them, it was also something they had assumed about Nova Scotia. All participants emphasized that a defining part of what attracted them to the area and what their actual experience here had been was the sense of community.

On the other hand, participants all recognized that the sense of pride Nova Scotian's had for this community meant that you might be on the outside as a newcomer to the area.

Participants remarked that the generational family and community ties were so tight knit that they would probably never feel they had a right to call themselves Nova Scotian. As Clara explained,

“What people have told me is that like, because we're having a baby any day... even our baby wouldn't be considered a true Nova Scotian. Because it's not ingrained enough, I guess, emotionally. So, it's like, our baby would still be a ‘from away.’” She continued, “People will also see like... at my job, they'll see like my last name on my nametag and they'll immediately identify -you're not from here, where are you from?”

Despite this, Clara, along with all other participants, assured me that she felt a strong sense of connection here. The warm welcome that all my participants received is likely an effect of all my participants being white. In other studies of newcomers to the area, people of colour have been shown to experience a sense of alienation and otherness as a result of their race (England, 2018). For my participants, there was a notable duality in their sense of welcome here- they experienced a firm sense of integration into the community, just as they remarked on the sense of pride to be Nova Scotian that would keep them forever marked as a “come from away.” This duality shines light on how underlying social narratives impact the experience of migrants to the area. While being white establishes a certain level of ease in moving to Nova Scotia, moving here from outside of Atlantic Canada also brings up questions related to the “right to be rural,” and in this case, the right to be Nova Scotian.

Finishing Touches: Concluding Thoughts and Future Research

Nova Scotia is a province that has experienced decades of out-migration. The wave of Canadians that have moved here since 2019 has brought with it questions at the heart of what it means to be Nova Scotian. As a migrant to Nova Scotia myself, I have attempted to explore these questions through the stories of those that moved here. In doing so, I found that my initial research question, “how have people navigated their changing sense of home since moving to Nova Scotia during the Covid-19 pandemic?” was based on an inaccurate assumption; my participants’ senses of home had begun to change due to various reasons including population growth, life transition, and Covid-19 lockdowns that preceded their move. Participants were

drawn to Nova Scotia for its unique image as “Canada’s Ocean Playground” -an ideal home for adventure, healing, and community. And finally, Nova Scotia proved to be especially welcoming because of my participants’ identities as white Canadians.

Due to the small population size of my research and the lack of diversity within the participants I was able to interview, there is room for further research into the experiences of people of colour moving to the province, the experiences of those that move to rural areas in Nova Scotia, and the experiences of those older than their 20s who move to the province. Nevertheless, my research highlights that for white Canadians who moved to Nova Scotia during the pandemic, Nova Scotia presented itself as an ideal home away from home. The underlying narratives within these personal aspirations for home reveal something of what it means to be Canadian today; they are based in colonial ideas of place and privileged access to place, and yet they serve to provide a sense of agency as participants grapple with the problems of the modern world- expanding cities and loss of local identity, a global virus, and an ever-worsening housing crisis. Further research might not just serve to fill in the lack of diversity in perspective, but also to ask more questions about how healthy connections to home and place come to be threatened, about what home ideals reveal about our unmet needs, and about why so many Canadians felt the need to move across the country to be able to access these ideals.

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Appendix A: Poster- Facebook/Physical

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

**DID YOU MOVE TO
NOVA SCOTIA BETWEEN
MARCH 2020 AND
MARCH 2022?**

If you...

- moved from another Canadian province/territory outside of Atlantic Canada*
- are 18+*

**PLEASE CONSIDER PARTICIPATING
IN A STUDY ON *THE MAKING OF
HOME IN NOVA SCOTIA***

Interviews will be 1 to 1.5 hours at a location and time convenient to you.

**Contact me at
Elizabeth.MacDougall@dal.ca**

This research is being completed by an undergraduate Honours student at Dalhousie University.

 **DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**

Appendix B: Poster- Instagram

**Did you move to Nova Scotia
between March 2020 and
March 2022?**

**If you...
are 18+ and
moved from another
Canadian province/territory**

**Please consider participating in
an anthropological study on *the
making of home in Nova Scotia.***

Interviews will be 1 to 1.5 hours
at a location and time
convenient to you.

**DM or email me at
elizabeth.macdougall@dal.ca**

Appendix C: Consent Form

Making a Home in Atlantic Canada CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in an anthropological study on the subject of home and identity in Atlantic Canada. This study will be conducted by me, Elizabeth MacDougall, in fulfillment of the requirements of the Social Anthropology Honours program at Dalhousie University. The purpose of this study will be to illuminate the process of making a new home after relocating to Atlantic Canada. It seeks to answer questions such as: how are peoples' identities linked to their sense of home? How do we find belonging in a new place? And how do we build connections to new environments?

You may participate in this study if you...

- are 18+ years old
- moved to Nova Scotia between March 2020 and March 2022
- lived in Canada outside of the Atlantic provinces prior to moving to Nova Scotia
- want to discuss your experience of moving and settling in NS

Participation in this study will involve a 1 to 1.5 hour, semi-structured interview about your experience of moving to Nova Scotia during the Covid-19 pandemic, and your perspective on living here since then. The interview will be conducted at a time and location convenient to you, including the option of an online interview over Zoom. The interview will be audio recorded and I will be taking hand-written notes.

Please note the following:

1. Participants' identities will be protected. I will not be using your name and will remove any identifying information when I write up the results. If I quote you, I will use a pseudonym and remove any other identifying information. Your data will be kept private and will only be accessible to me before being anonymized. All audio recordings and notes will be stored on my personal OneDrive account, will be deleted from any handheld recording devices, and will never be stored in the cloud.
2. If you participate in an interview by Zoom or Teams, there is a risk of loss of personal privacy from the use of internet-based communications. The risk is no greater or lesser than when using these applications for other purposes.
3. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose to leave the interview at any time, or not answer questions. You may also withdraw your data from this study at any point up until March 1 2024, at which point I will have integrated your data into the analysis of the study and submitted them to my Honours supervisor according to program deadlines.
4. The final thesis will be accessible on the Dalhousie website. You may also contact me (at elizabeth.macdougall@dal.ca) for a copy.

There will be no direct benefits or compensation for participating in this study. However, this study may contribute to general understanding of the experiences of newcomers to Nova Scotia.

The risks associated with participating in this study are minimal and not greater than those you might experience in everyday life. These include discomfort in discussing difficult topics related

to the Covid-19 pandemic or moving such as anxiety, financial worries, or loneliness. You are welcome to skip any questions you prefer not to answer, take a break, or stop the interview at any time.

If you have any further questions or concerns about your participation in this study, please email me at elizabeth.macdougall@dal.ca or call me at 613-662-4925.

Alternatively, you may contact my Honours supervisors in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University; Dr. Martha Radice, at martha.radice@dal.ca or (902) 494-6747; or Dr. Karen Foster, at karen.foster@dal.ca or (902) 494-3130. Any further questions about the ethics associated with this study can be brought to Catherine Connors, Director of Research Ethics at Dalhousie University, at ethics@dal.ca or 902-494-1462.

Participant's consent:

I have read the above information and I agree to participate in this study:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Checklist:

- Explain and sign Consent Form
- Ask for permission to record
- Introduction
- Record on phone and audio recorder

Introduction:

Before we start the interview, I want to thank you for your time. I also want to reiterate that your participation is completely voluntary, meaning any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering can be skipped, and we can stop the interview or take a break at any time. By conducting this interview, I am hoping to find out more about the experience of being a newcomer in Atlantic Canada, and in Nova Scotia specifically. I will begin by asking simple questions about why you moved here, before moving on to more in-depth questions on your ideas of home and sense of identity since moving here. Do you have any questions?

Questions:

1. When did you move to Nova Scotia?
2. Do you live alone or with other people?
3. Where were you living before Nova Scotia?
4. Had you ever moved previously?
 - a. Where did you grow up?

5. Can you tell me a little bit about where you live now?
6. Why did you decide to move here?
 - a. Did you have any previous connections to Nova Scotia?
 - b. Have you ever previously lived in Atlantic Canada? Nova Scotia?
 - c. Did the Covid-19 pandemic influence your decision to move here at all? If so, how?
 - d. What was it like to move here during ongoing Covid-19 restrictions?
7. Can you describe your arrival to Nova Scotia for me? Give me an incite into the logistics of moving here.
 - a. Did you face any challenges in moving here?
 - b. What did you enjoy about the process of moving?
8. Were there any objects that were important for you to take with you on your move?
9. What was your first impression of your new home?
 - a. Do you think your view of your new home has changed at all since then? If so, how?
10. What do you like about living here?
 - a. What do you dislike?
11. Did your move to Nova Scotia meet your expectations?
 - a. What about it surprised you?
12. Do you know any other people that moved to Nova Scotia recently?
13. Could you tell me about your average day since you moved here?
14. What do you think it means to be Nova Scotian?
 - b. Do you consider yourself a Nova Scotian?
15. How has your life changed since moving here?
 - a. How has it stayed the same?

- b. What were you hoping your decision to move would change for you?
16. Tell me about a time you felt glad to have moved.
 17. Tell me about a time you regretted having moved.
 18. Where do you see yourself living in the future and why?
 19. Where do you feel most at home?
 20. What does home mean to you?
 - a. Where do you think you got this idea of home?
 - b. Has this changed since moving? If so, how?
 21. Where do you feel you most belong?
 - a. Why?
 22. Do you feel attached to where you live now?
 - a. What are some things you did to get to know your new location?
 23. Do you feel a sense of community in your new area?
 24. Tell me about the house you live in now.
 25. Do you have any other thoughts about home that you feel like we've missed?
 26. Finally, I'd like to ask a few more questions about yourself.
 - a. Can I ask how old you are?
 - b. Would you describe your gender as female, male, nonbinary, or otherwise?
 - c. How would you describe your ethnic or cultural background?
 - d. Do you belong to a religion that is important to you?
 - e. What do you do for a living?
 27. Is there anything else you would like to share before we wrap up?

Appendix E: Research Ethics Board Final Report



ANNUAL/FINAL REPORT

Annual report to the Research Ethics Board for the continuing ethical review of research involving humans / Final report to conclude REB oversight

A. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This report is (<i>select one</i>):				
<input type="checkbox"/> An annual report		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A final report		
REB file number:	2023-6956			
Study title:	Making a Home in Atlantic Canada			
Lead researcher (named on REB submission)	Name	Elizabeth MacDougall		
	Email	el634814@dal.ca	Phone	613-662-4925
Current status of lead researcher (at Dalhousie University):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee/Academic Appointment		<input type="checkbox"/> Former student		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current student		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):		
Supervisor (if lead researcher is/was a student/resident/postdoc)	Name	Dr. Karen Foster		
	Email	Karen.foster@dal.ca		
Contact person for this report (if not lead researcher)	Name			
	Email		Phone	

B. RECRUITMENT & DATA COLLECTION STATUS

<p>Instructions: Complete ALL sections relevant to this study</p> <p>Study involves/involved recruiting participants: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, complete section B1.</i></p> <p>Study involves/involved secondary use of data: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, complete section B2.</i></p> <p>Study involves/involved use of human biological materials: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, complete section B2.</i></p>
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B1. Recruitment of participants

Not Applicable

B1.1 How many participants did the researcher intend to recruit? <i>(provide number approved in the most recent REB application/amendment)</i>	10
B1.2 How many participants have been recruited? <i>(if applicable, identify by participant group/method e.g. interviews: 10, focus groups: 25)</i>	
a) In total, since the beginning of the study: 7	
b) Since the last annual report: 7	
B1.3 Recruitment for this study is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> complete; or <input type="checkbox"/> on-going	
B1.4 Data collection from participants for this study is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> complete; or <input type="checkbox"/> on-going	
B1.5 Communication with participants related to this study is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> complete; or <input type="checkbox"/> on-going	

B2. Use of secondary data and/or biological materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
B2.1 How many individual records/biological materials did the researcher intend to access? <i>(provide number approved in the most recent REB application/amendment)</i>	
B2.2 How many individual participant records/biological materials have been accessed?	
a) In total, since the beginning of the study:	
b) Since the last annual report:	

C. PROJECT HISTORY

<i>Since your last annual report (or since initial submission if this is your first annual report):</i>
C1. Have there been any variations to the original research project that have NOT been approved with an amendment request? This includes changes to the research methods, recruitment material, consent documents, study instruments or research team. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain: All participants found it easier to conduct interviews either over Zoom or in a public space. No interviews were carried out in participants' homes, as described in my REB application.
C2. Have you experienced any challenges or delays recruiting or retaining participants or accessing records or biological materials?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain:
C3. Have you experienced any problems in carrying out this project? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain:
C4. Have any participants experienced any harm as a result of their participation in this study? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain:
C5. Has any study participant expressed complaints, or experienced any difficulties in relation to their participation in the study? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain:
C6. Since the original approval, have there been any new reports in the literature that would suggest a change in the nature or likelihood of risks or benefits resulting from participation in this study? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain:

D. APPLYING FOR STUDY CLOSURE

Complete this section only if this is a FINAL report as indicated in section A

D1. For studies involving recruitment of participants, a closure may be submitted when: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> all research-related interventions or interactions with participants have been completed <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (this study did not involve recruitment of participants)
D2. For studies involving secondary use of data and/or human biological materials, a closure may be submitted when: <input type="checkbox"/> all data acquisition is complete, there will be no further access to participant records or collection of biological materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A (this study did not involve secondary use of data and/or human biological materials)
D3. Closure Request <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am applying for study closure

E. ATTESTATION (both boxes *must* be checked for the report to be accepted by the REB)

I agree that the information provided in this report accurately portrays the status of this project and describes to the Research Ethics Board any new developments related to the study since initial approval or the latest report.

I attest this project was, or will continue to be, completed in accordance with the approved REB application (or most recent approved amendment) and in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2).

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Submit this completed form to Research Ethics, Dalhousie University, by email at ethics@dal.ca at least 21 days prior to the expiry date of your current Research Ethics Board approval.
2. Enter subject line: REB# (8-digit number), last name, annual (or final) report.
3. Student researchers (including postdoctoral fellows and medical residents) must copy their supervisor(s) in the cc. line of the annual/final report email.

RESPONSE FROM THE REB

Your report will be reviewed, and any follow-up inquiries will be directed to you. You must respond to inquiries as part of the continuing review process.

Annual reports will be reviewed and may be approved for up to an additional 12 months; you will receive an annual renewal letter of approval from the Board that will include your new expiry date.

Final reports will be reviewed and study closure acknowledged in writing.

CONTACT RESEARCH ETHICS

- Phone: 902-494-3423
- Email: ethics@dal.ca